Exploring Local Linguistic Scenery amongst Superdiversity

A Small Place in the Global Landscape

Svetlana Atanassova

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INTRODUCTION

The present book is the result of four years of fieldwork and ethnographic research in the public linguistic landscape of the city of Veliko Turnovo in Bulgaria. It is rooted in the study of language use and interaction in shared urban environments from the perspective of linguistic landscape studies (LLS). Most research in this area takes as its object of research metropolises and large cities. In these places, people from all over the world congregate driven by various motives—finding a better job, a better way of life, or better professional realisation. Therefore, this book focuses on what remains on the "other side"—namely, public inscriptions that one can find in smaller towns and places. Since "small" and "big" are relative concepts and "better" implies a myriad of interpretations, it would be more appropriate to refer to places that are not considered to be big metropolitan centres as "the other part" of the dialogue between huge metropolitan conglomerates and the rest of the world.

Smaller urban places are equally affected by processes like globalisation, mobility, and political dynamics, and this inevitably influences the atmosphere of their public space. In the first place, smaller places are part and parcel of the transnational flow of people, and the spread of products and cultures across the world is reflected in the landscape of every city. Secondly, new forms of communication—online and in non-shared contexts—create the need to use languages other than one's own, whose knowledge and acquisition is often partial and incomplete. Thus, finally, by breaking the boundaries of their own language and of the foreign languages they study, local users resort not to the use of named languages but to the use of linguistic repertoires (a set of linguistic features and other semiotic resources). The third factor, mobility, is by default discussed in terms of people congregating in big super-cities rather than as people moving away from big cities to smaller places. However, this process can also be looked at as people going in the opposite direction. This implies either "being at home" and keeping in touch with friends and relatives who stayed there through the use of modern technologies (the internet and smartphones) or leaving big cities and metropolises and exploring different ways of life.

Linguistic landscaping studies is a branch of sociolinguistics that studies language in social space. The central object of study is no longer the individual speaker but the physical space inhabited by people. Language

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and space are explored in conditions of mobility, globalisation, and superdiversity. Qualitative LLS research in this area is associated with the names of Elana Schohamy, Adam Jaworski, Jan Blommaert, Ben Rampton, and other scholars, whose works, in turn, are rooted in the ethnographic traditions set by Dell Hymes, John Gumperz, Ron Scollon, Suzie W. Scollon, and others. The enterprise of making a linguistic portrait of a place in the broader panorama of the global landscape eventually implies the study of the linguistic landscape from the perspective of superdiversity. First discussed by Stephen Vertovec (2006) and envisaged by J. Blommaert to be "diversity within diversity," superdiversity is characterised by mobility, complexity, and unpredictability. It makes concepts like social, cultural, and political diversity even more complex. Within this context, language becomes, as J. Blommaert (2012, 8–10) writes, "a tool for detecting features of superdiversity." Related to superdiversity is the concept of transnationalism, which refers to the increasing tendency among migrants to maintain ties with their countries of origin. In this way, people are no longer rooted in only one country at any given time. They develop identities and social relations in multiple national contexts and, as a result of this, new forms of multilingual communicative behaviour emerge—referred to as translanguaging, polylanguaging, crossing, and transidiomatic practices (cf. chapter 6, 3). Thus we cannot neglect the study of the linguistic landscape of smaller urban places by focusing only on huge metropolitan centres. Since the tendency is for people to be in contact with their native countries, since life is mobile, local urban scenery cannot remain untouched by the process of globalisation, and deserves to be the object of research along with big cities and super-cities. As a result of such processes, global and non-native values and practices interact with local ones to create unique scenery.

Language in public space resides in signs. An important characteristic of signs is their indexicality. A public sign is usually created by a person (or a group of people) who are responsible for its making and emplacement. They choose the materials out of which the sign is created, select the language for the inscription on the sign, and, finally, make the entire design, including colours, fonts, and layout. The sign is emplaced in public space with the purpose of being seen and interpreted by someone else, which means that it has a particular function. Therefore, a sign always bears traces (indexical clues) revealing the historical processes that brought it into existence. At the same time, a sign contains clues (also indexical) about the way it has to be interpreted. This means that the most important component of our analysis of signs in public space will be their doubly indexical nature (Blommaert 2012, 53–54).

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The study of public inscriptions eventually involves the study of literacy. Issues surrounding the ability to read and write are extremely important for the social interpretation of globalisation and nationalism. Benjamin Spolsky (2009, 29) explains that literacy is related to semiotics, and we cannot neglect it in our study of all instances of written signs, including tickets, receipts, advertisements, and other written objects, because in all of them, language is the most significant component. In this respect, the choice of language for writing in public is significant in multiliterate areas. Literacy practices are always contextualised and are socially and culturally sensitive. The particular area where I carried out my research brings into focus two mainstream types of literacy—one is the ability to write in a foreign language, and the other is the attempt to write one's own language or to produce one's own voice by means of the employment of a foreign code. These two types of literacy practices are manifested in two main ways of public writing—mirror imaging and translanguaging, discussed in chapters 5 and 6.

The ethnographic research of the local landscape is based on the assumption that human action is situated (contextualised). My first inspiration came from Jan Blommaert's (2012) study of the Belgian town of Antwerp. I adopted the analysis of a place as a complex and polycentric sociolinguistic system, consisting of different layers. This system is best studied from a historical perspective—not as a static phenomenon but as the result of a process of becoming. I also draw on R. Scollon and S. W. Scollon's model of ethnographic analysis. It takes into consideration three essential components. The first component is the emplacement of discourse and language in the landscape. This emplacement is socioculturally authorised. The second component is the interaction order, which means "the set of social relationships we take up and try to maintain with the other people who are in our presence" (Scollon and Scollon 2003, 16). The third component is the historical body, embracing the life experiences of individual social actors. Out of the interaction of these three forces emerges discourse as social action. A public sign is an ethnographically situated object, which is historically grounded and generated. This kind of nexus analysis gives us the ground to consider public space as an assemblage of various discourses. The internal and external forces that shape this complex system are constantly changing. Public space as a sociolinguistic system is dynamic, fragmented, and never fully completed. This immediately implies that it is difficult to describe thoroughly. However, I hope that I have managed to map the most salient features of the public landscape of Veliko Turnovo and to prove that they reveal an urban space that is dynamic and

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responsive to the challenges of globalisation and superdiversity in its own unique way.

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CHAPTER ONE

LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPING STUDIES: THEORETICAL PRINCIPLES, METHODS OF RESEARCH, AND ANALYSIS

1. Linguistic landscaping studies

Linguistic landscaping studies (LLS) is a branch of sociolinguistics that straddles a wide range of disciplines. Starting from the study of language in its social environment, which itself is an interdisciplinary enterprise, it overlaps with anthropology, social geography, urban studies, and other disciplines. LLS brings into focus a different component into the field of analysis—the physical spaces that individual speakers and groups of speakers inhabit and in which they communicate by using language and other systems of communication. The study of linguistic diversity is firmly grounded in the tradition exploring the relationship between language, culture, and thought. The new focus of interest—space—forms a different triad of relationships: the one between people, language, and space. Although LLS emerged as a quantitative study, the analysis of language in space cannot be reduced to simply being indicative of the number of languages spoken in a certain place and of the groups of people using these languages. The people using the language in a given milieu need not be the true bearers of this language. A more precise definition of the object of analysis of LLS will then be the ways in which people adopt the use of different linguistic forms. Such a use, in turn, can be regarded, as Jan Blommaert and Ben Rampton explain, as indicating the people's alliance with or detachment from different linguistic groups, aggregations, and ideologies (Blommaert and Rampton 2011, 5).

2. Space as an agent

Speaking about agentivity, we can regard space as an instrument of power. W. J. T. Mitchell remarks that the linguistic landscape, which can be observed in public space, does not merely symbolise power relations. It

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itself is "an instrument of cultural power" (Mitchell 1994, 1–2) and as such is independent of human intentions. Space is not something fixed that we can only observe and describe but something that works as a cultural practice.

Space as an instrument of power is one aspect of agency. Signs in space construct social reality. They are real social agents and, as such, they have real effects in social life. The meaning of signs is always specific, "tied" to the place where they reside, and is rarely general (Blommaert 2012, 47). Public inscriptions both reflect and regiment the structure of the space in which they operate. All public places are organised in a certain way and signs are one of the means that help to maintain this organisation. They select who is addressed by a message and indicate the intended audiences. A message on a public inscription is never neutral and always displays the relationships between social structure, power, and organisational hierarchies. Jan Blommaert elaborates on the metaphor of space not as a neutral canvas but as a social arena in which communication takes place. The author writes that we need to change our idea of it as a background, against which interaction takes place, and to consider it as an important factor in human communication. Physical space is socially, culturally, and politically loaded (Blommaert 2012, 7). The signs that exist in it turn it into a non-neutral zone. The social milieu becomes a material force generating specific identities, actions and meanings, which circulate in social, cultural and political life. Space is a normative and social actor (though not human), which imposes its own rules on communication (Blommaert 2012, 38–45). Such rules include possibilities, restrictions, and normative expectations about communication and about the relationships between particular spaces and the signs abiding in them. We normally expect certain signs in certain places. When signs are in "their" place (e.g., "entrance" on a door), we interpret their meaning in a habitual way. This reflects our expectations of "normalcy" for different places—we know, for example, which way to go in and which way to go out, how to cross a street, how to queue to pay at the cash desk in the supermarket, what to do at the doctor's, or how to perform any other activity.

The perspective of analysing space as an instrument of power and as a social actor makes it historical. It is full of expectations, norms and codes regarding people's behaviour and is closely associated with cultural traditions. Space is controlled by people and at the same time, it controls them. If we analyse this relationship deeper, we will see that it is indexical. Social, cultural, and political structures are inscribed in the linguistic landscape and the landscape reflects these structures. It is the link between space and our normative expectations about how to behave there that

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characterises space as agentive and historical. Our shared expectations about what to do in different places are rooted in history. People before us behaved there in a certain way and we know about it; therefore, we try to act as they did. The process of getting used to such forms of behaviour is called "enskilment" (Blommaert 2012, 37). Due to our enskilment, we are able to act appropriately and normally in different places. In this way, space is turned into a historically configured phenomenon. From a diachronic point of view, a space is semiotised and at the same time semiotises. It is turned "into a social, cultural and political habitat" (Blommaert 2012, 22). In this political habitat "'enskilled people' co-construct and perpetually enact the 'order' semiotically inscribed in that space" (ibid.).

3. Linguistic landscape

The term "linguistic landscape" is used to refer to all the linguistic objects that occur in the public space (Ben Rafael 2009, 40). It includes all types of inscriptions and written signs one can find there. The linguistic landscape comprises road signs, street names, shop inscriptions, public building inscriptions, school names, and so on. While the originally quantitative approach to LLS focused on counting and mapping publicly visible languages and studied their distribution over a specific area, qualitative analysis is a semiotic approach. Unlike quantitative analysis, it does not study how the absence or presence of certain languages is related to specific populations and communities but seeks to explain the patterns of social interaction between people in a particular space. In a semiotic approach, the focus of analysis is the signs themselves. They are analysed as multimodal objects, both individually and in combination with each other. It is written signs in combination that make the linguistic landscape.

Public space includes the linguistic landscape, but it also comprises two other components—architectural buildings and flows of passers-by (ibid., 42). These last two components are independent of social interaction. The architectural units accumulate over time. The extent to which people as passers-by (not as social actors) are visible in public space (walking around shops, for example) fluctuates according to the climate and cultural habits. The most important component of urban life that is directly influenced by people as actual social actors is the linguistic landscape. It is dynamic and constantly changing. In it, new items spring up quickly and some of them shortly disappear. New institutions and shops open, businesses go bankrupt, stores and cafés are closed, renewed, or reopened. These processes are particularly active in central areas in large cities, in which countless actors with different motivations act in various ways. In big urban centres,

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"numberless actors speak to mass audiences." From this perspective, the linguistic landscape can be seen as a mechanism of controlling behaviour by valorising norms and expectations, which the linguistic items stand for and symbolise (ibid., 44).

4. Public signage

4.1. Materiality of public signs

The study of signs in public space means the study of their different aspects—from their materiality to problems like literacy, agency, and historicity. R. Scollon and S. Scollon propose a framework for an extensive study of the material aspects of public signs. Their research focuses on semiotic resources like emplacement, inscription, and visual semiotics. Emplacement (Scollon and Scollon 2003, 142–65) is a central concept in explaining the function of the signs. By "emplacement" we mean the actual semiotic process that produces meaning from the specific location of signs in the material world. A sign by itself has only a potential meaning. This meaning can only acquire social and semiotic realisation when the sign is emplaced in a particular place on earth. Inscription (Scollon and Scollon 2003, 129–41) covers meaning systems that are based not only on the words but also on the physical aspects of the signs—fonts, physical substances, layering, and others. Visuality (Scollon and Scollon 2003, 82–105) is not restricted to the purely physical aspects of public signage. It covers not only modality based on colour exploitation (saturation, depth, illumination, brightness), but also the construction of a depicted life, the representation of real action and interaction in visual images. The attention of analysis is directed at the ways in which visual images index the real world and on the way social actors index these images.

4.2. Semiotic aspects of signs

Stepping away from the purely material study of signs entails studying different ideological positions, frequently expressed through the choice of language code. Outlining such aspects of linguistic landscaping as a branch of sociolinguistics, B. Spolski points out that the study of public multilingual signage is a valuable tool for the analysis of language choice and language policy. Some of the key issues of this study are the focus on literacy, the exploration of agency, and the problem of counting signs (Spolski 2009, 29–33). The study of literacy fits the study of signs into the general study of semiotics where choice of language is a fundamental

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aspect. Within the sphere of purely linguistic choices fall problems like the actual command of the language that has been chosen, spelling mistakes related to this, and the density of public and private literacy. A general belief is that the denser the literacy, the more likely it is to see more signs in a given area. Therefore, an important criterion for the classification of public spaces is the density of signage in general. Then, there comes the contrast between verbal and non-verbal signs. This criterion is more likely to be indicative of the existence of language power rather than evidence of literacy.

The observation, counting, and analysis of actually finished signs leave the analysis of public signage incomplete. There emerges the need to explore the processes by which particular signs are produced. The study of agency becomes an important aspect of their study. In the first place, we can try to interpret why a particular sign-maker chose a specific language. We can also attempt to trace the decision back to the sign initiator, which can become very complicated in the conditions of the globalised world. Identifying the participants and their motifs in the process of sign production is of critical importance in the study of public signage as it can give insight into the motivations for their choices. These problems are discussed at length in chapter 6 in relation to the particular landscape.

4.3. Counting signs and sign boundaries

An important aspect is the counting of public signs in the sense of identifying the boundaries of an individual sign (Spolski 2009, 32). Simply, this could also mean deciding what to count as a single sign. Some signs seem to be unproblematic, for example, street names. However, looking at new boards with street names in Veliko Turnovo will show that identifying sign boundaries is not an easy matter. Materially, such signs have inscriptions on two different plates—one bearing the name of the street and the other providing information about the name. Such inscriptions (shown in figure 4.1) have two material realisations, but there remains the question of whether we should consider them as two different signs or as one sign. The real question, then, will be what criterion we should use to delineate one sign from another—the languages used or the material body on which the inscription occurs. I consider the "indexable" unit (Scollon and Scollon 2003, 2–6) that lies behind a sign to be the governing principle in identifying the sign boundaries. If the indexable is a street and both signs index this same street, then they should count as one complex sign.

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4.4. Historicity

Signs, just like the places in which they occur, have a history. In this sense, every sign is considered to be indexical as it points back to its origin of emergence (Blommaert 2012, 53–57). We can judge the reasons why a language was used as the preferred code and thus we can make inferences about people's ethnolinguistic identity and language behaviour. We can also focus on linguistic items that occur on public inscriptions and discuss them in terms of their cognitive saliency, syntactical, and semantic aspects and pragmatic functions. Finally, we can study the relationship between normative linguistic behaviour and people's actual linguistic usage. Thus, observed actual usage may manifest persistent patterns that defy normative expectations but at the same time find justification for their employment.

5. Major theoretical approaches to LLS

5.1. Geosemiotics

In *Discourses in Place*, R. Scollon and S. Scollon maintain a theory that studies the materiality of signs in place. This theory, *geosemiotics*, is an ethnographically oriented model of analysis that is defined by the authors as "the study of the social meaning of the material placement of signs in the world" (Scollon and Scollon 2003, 110). The primary interest of their research is not to show how language is embedded in context (the indexicality of language), but to show how meaning is inscribed in the real and physical world. The focus is on the indexable world, which includes situational structures, layout, and designs, social role performances and sign equipment (ibid., 111). The authors explain that the meaning of "signs" is not restricted only to language but includes other semiotic systems as well. Social action is the product of the interplay of three broad semiotic systems—the interaction order, visual semiotics, and place semiotics (Scollon and Scollon 2003, 7). The focus of geosemiotic analysis is not on the text itself, but on these three semiotic systems.

Within the framework of geosemiotics, social action takes place in the material world and in real space. Participants in social action bring their real bodies into the spatial domain. Their bodies have their histories. This means that they have experience, different types of knowledge, and motivations for their actions. The movements and positions of these real bodies in space follow certain normative patterns of behaviour. Participants in social action interact closely not only with each other but also with space and in space, which is an aspect of the surrounding world. There exists a

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very close relationship between the bodies of the participants and the space in which they communicate, referred to by K. Basso as "interanimation" (Basso 1996, 55). The spatial world, which is a material environment, is full of objects and signs. During their lives, people learn how to use social and physical space and how to communicate there. They create an order of interaction with each other. The relationship between people, space, and interaction order is referred to as a nexus. The term was introduced by R. Scollon (2001, 140–71) to include all the constellations of linkages that human practices form (Scollon 2001, 142). Human action is seen within the history of practice and these nexuses of practice are the central resources that form personal identity. Blommaert argues that the nexus understanding of interaction is the result of the relationship between the historical body and historical space:

> It is the actual order of communicative conduct that ensues from enskilled bodies in a space inscribed with particular conditions for communication. It has very little existence outside of it, and the elements of the triad now form one ethnographic object of inquiry. (Blommaert 2012, 40)

The concept of "interaction order" originates from Goffman's dramaturgic analysis but Scollon and Scollon use it in a modified way (Scollon and Scollon 2003, 16–17). They understand it as "a semiotic system of discourses in place" (ibid., 17). The semiotic systems, which we find in a public space, are part of the sign inventory we use to produce our actions in the world. People make use of all the meaningful signs that are available for them in the material environment to build their actions. The resources to which people resort in order to construct the interaction order include perceptual spaces and interpersonal distances as well as the sense of time and the construction of the personal front (Scollon and Scollon 2003, 45–64). The elements of interaction order include eleven types of interaction, among which, being on one's own, being together with each other, standing in a queue, service encounters, platform events (ibid., 61–62). The second semiotic system is based on G. Kress and T. van Leeuwen's visual semiotics. The focus is on texts (scripts), pictures, images, and other kinds of visual objects and their arrangement in the landscape. The goal is to find out how these elements are combined to produce meaningful wholes for visual interpretation (Scollon and Scollon 2003, 82–105). The third component, place semiotics, is interested in the location of semiotic aggregates (systems of meaning) not in persons or visual artefacts, but in public space, including architecture, urban and landscape planning, and

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other aspects of place semiotics such as choice of code and materials, sign emplacement, and so on. (ibid., 116–39).

As can be seen, geosemiotics is not limited to language but includes other sign systems as well. All these external elements exist outside language. Language points to them and is used in them. The term “geosemiotics” implies that this is the study of the “indexability” of the material world. The concept of indexability is not identical with the concept of indexicality. It is different from the conception that a linguistic form is indexical by contiguity with an object. Indexicality is about language and about the way, in which it is inextricably bound and dependent on context (cf. Hanks 2018). Indexability is about the material world that is being indexed by language. Geosemiotics is rooted in the real, physical, material world in which we live and act. There is a general set of conventions on how and where meanings may be inscribed there but it is not rigid. The process of inscribing meaning in the material world is referred to as to “emplacement.” Shop signs and road signs are the most widespread type of public signs and can be used as an illustration in explaining what counts as indexable in geosemiotics. A one-way sign will mean nothing until it is erected on the pole on a roadway. In this case, the indexable is the roadway and it is “this roadway” and “all its associated meanings that give the geosemiotic meaning to the sign.” That type of indexability is called emplacement (Scollon and Scollon 2003, 115).

5.2. Mapping technique

The mapping technique is an approach to linguistic landscaping that studies diversity in multicultural contexts. This method was proposed by M. Barni and C. Bagna (2009). Their approach is multidisciplinary and is rooted in sociology, statistics, geography, and information technology. It relies on triangulated data collection, which allows interpretation from different points of view (Barni and Bagna 2009, 129–30). Signs are studied in terms of their static visibility and vitality (inscriptions on motor vehicles are also considered to be static). All collected data are georeferenced (their precise location identified by geographical co-ordinates). Georeferencing is performed on two scales—synchronic (the daily changes of a menu) and diachronic (regular observation over time). From the analysis of the static dimension the researchers produce linguistic maps in a digital format. This calls attention to the static intensity of presence of languages in the social space. The authors conclude that the occurrence of monolingual signs indicates that such signs are usually intended for people belonging to a specific linguistic community. The presence of a single language on public

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signage signals that it has the prestige and autonomy to stand alone. If two or more languages are used, then the sign is intended to make the message comprehensible to people belonging to different linguistic communities. This multidimensional framework is applied to the initial analysis of the semiotic and textual functions of the signs. It relies on the textual genre to identify the function of an inscription in the communicative landscape (posters, leaflets, menus, announcements, or regulations). Taking into consideration the external position of a sign is similar to the discussion of emplacement by R. Scollon and S. Scollon. Its semiotic function is interpreted according to its position and degree of visibility (to a large group of people, to a limited group of people, to a specific community, etc.). Apart from the purely physical aspects of space, the social space is also considered. Spaces are classified in terms of the different social classes that inhabit them—urban and rural areas, commercial and industrial areas, posh residential quarters, ethnic neighbourhoods, and so on. This criterion is a reliable indicator of the degree of distribution of a language over a given territory. "Domain" refers to the contextualised spheres of social life (public, educational, entertaining, work-related). It takes into consideration aspects like who produced the text, for whom, and what the function of the sign was intended to be. For each domain, there is an inventory of potential contexts—public services, courses, entertainment, sales. The criterion of place visualises the specific spatial arena where communication takes place—restaurant, cinema, shopping centre, or another place. The framework offers detailed criteria for dividing the semiotised space into components—social place, domain, and place (ibid., 131–34)

The linguistic analysis of the collected material has two dimensions—macro-level and micro-level analysis (ibid., 134–36). The two-fold analysis is particularly useful in situations where more than one language is used. The dimension of macro-linguistic analysis identifies the language or the languages present in the landscape and the communicative functions that they perform. The communicative functions can generally be informative or symbolic. The language to which the author intended to ascribe semiotic importance (using size and style of lettering) is the relevant language. This language may be different from the semantically dominant language, which most fully conveys meaning when more than one language is used.

> The presence of languages, their various combinations and modalities within a text, load the language or languages found in it with different symbolic values and functions. (Barni and Bagna 2009, 135)

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The ancillary languages are subordinate to the dominant language. They can have explanatory function (translation into local languages or into a global language), informative function (provide additional information on products), or grammatical function (when they adapt the words of the dominant language to their own grammatical structure) (ibid.).

Micro-linguistic analysis comes after the entire data sample is analysed. It includes grammatical analysis and usage classification. This analysis can be very helpful when we want to identify whether, for example, a word is treated as a loanword. More generally, we can use it when we want to identify language boundaries. In addition, the use of a lexical unit may or may not be indexically related to the presence of a group of immigrants who have entered a society. It may be an indicator of the influence exerted internationally by a specific sector of a given culture (e.g., cuisine) (Barni and Bagna 2009, 137).

5.3. The linguistic landscape as a gestalt

From a sociology-of-language point of view, as discussed by E. Ben-Rafael (2009), language signs that fill public space can be regarded as social facts. A social fact is a reality related to and marking social life independently from the will of the individual (Ben-Rafael 2009, 43). The linguistic landscape is a phenomenon that belongs to social reality. Its sociological study focuses "on the articulation of linguistic symbols" in public space and on the forces that shape them (ibid., 40). Their variations can be regarded as the result of different social phenomena. Ben-Rafael explains that the apparent disorder of a public space is taken for granted and is viewed as one whole, usually called "the centre," "the shopping area," or "downtown" (Ben-Rafael 2009, 43). Thus, the linguistic landscape is perceived as a gestalt. *Gestalt* refers to "observations of different phenomena understood as elements of one structured setting" (ibid., 43). This entails that the overall pattern made of different objects is not identical to the sum of its individual constitutive elements and exhibits properties of its own. The gestalt effect comes from the items appearing and functioning together and, as such, they tend to be seen as one whole:

> Personal preferences and inclinations, external fashions and new styles locally designed all influence choices of LL designers in their selection of sizes, colours, phrasings and wordings. These designers act as different actors to one another as they are independent shopkeepers, public relation officers, marketing experts, officials in public administrations, school masters, individual professionals, and many others. Nothing warrants the

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> congruence of these actors' tastes and considerations though altogether and without any preliminary consultation, each of them contributes to create this overall picture of the place most often perceived by passers-by as a "forest" of signs. (Ben-Rafael 2009, 43)

5.4. Ethnographic approaches

A great part of the research in the field of linguistic landscaping is anchored in the traditions set by the anthropologist Dell Hymes. Dell Hymes remarks that there is no unified conception of ethnography and emphasises that one of the major characteristics of ethnography is its validity (Hymes 1996, 7–19). Validity depends upon accurate knowledge of meanings, which people ascribe to terms, events, persons, and institutions. Such meanings are not uniform, but are "subject to change, reinterpretation, and recreation" (ibid., 9). In addition, they may be implicit or explicit. Finally, the deepest meanings and patterns may not be talked about at all. Ethnography cannot be restricted to just collecting facts. It seeks to explain the connections among them and to discover their place in the lives of people. Ethnography can be defined as the "interface between a specific inquiry and comparative generalisation" (ibid., 19). Research in this field is supposed to be cumulative (based on long-term observation), comparative (carried out across communities and involving past experience), and cooperative (involving others) (ibid., 17–22). In his study of myth, D. Hymes outlines two ethnographic approaches (Hymes 1981, 274–76). The first approach pays great attention to detail and is based on a universal theory, which tries to explain the essence of myth. The second approach takes the verbal genre on its own and studies its role in the lives of people. It seeks to describe its structural characteristics and functional role ethnographically, i.e. within individual cultures.

Dell Hymes (1986, 59–65) designed a mnemonic grid (bearing the acronym SPEAKING) to be used as a guideline for ethnographic analysis. Thom Huebner offers an adaptation of Dell Hymes's speaking grid for the analysis of public signage (Huebner 2009, 72–84).

According to it, "setting and scene" refer to the immediate context of an inscription in a public landscape. This component focuses on the way the nature and content of a sign are affected by its orientation to readers. It determines the quantity of text and number of images and the type of language. The discussion of setting and scene is closely related to geosemiotic analysis of signs' emplacement discussed above.

"Participants" (discussed in chapter 8 in relation to the local landscape) includes two large groups—agents and audience. Agency can be

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performed in two main directions—top-down and bottom-up (Spolski 2009, 31). Institutional agencies exhibit control and their performance in public space is top-down. Bottom-up participants are individual and corporative actors; although they act autonomously, their action is still performed within legal limits. The impression might be that top-down signs will be more influential, but in fact, the situation is quite different. For example, globalised markets and companies like KFC "often exert more pervasive and lasting influence on language choice and language use than government policy" (Huebner 2009, 74). The distinction between top-down and bottom-up is not absolute, but socially situated. For example, a sign posted in a lift in an office building will be top-down from the perspective of the tenants. But it will be bottom-up from the perspective of the national government (ibid.). Audience is part of participation. Each item in a linguistic landscape reflects and requires a particular audience. In this way, some signs recruit large audiences. Others are accessible to limited groups. "Audience" does not imply passive participation by simply reading public inscriptions. More often than not signs are designed with respect to the expected needs of the intended audience.

Signs in public space may have different "ends." Discussing the ends that signs in public space may have will lead to a discussion of sign typology. Some signs (street names, road signs) stand in a public space to identify streets, buildings, monuments, and other places and physical objects. Very often, they also have an informative function. Other signs (billboards and advertisements) have a persuasive function. Such signs promote products, events, and services. The primary function of regulatory signs (warning and prohibition signs) is to regulate social action and behaviour in the public realm. Finally, there are signs whose primary end is to challenge social authority. Herein fall graffiti, usually considered a transgressive form of discourse.

"Act sequences" concern purpose and form. This component corresponds closely to what is discussed as visuality and code preference (based on the visual design framework of G. Kress and T. Van Leeuwen). It focuses on the spatial organisation of the elements within a given sign where certain elements are more prominent. Meaning is created by the physical positioning of the text with respect to the other two signifying elements in a sign—photographs and headlines, belonging to different semiotic systems. They are arranged with regard to their salience, meaning, and information value. Visual clues, including size of images, sharpness of focus, level of detail, tonal contrast, colour contrasts, and cultural symbolism determine salience. Here also belong font type, font style, foregrounding, colour, sharpness, and upper versus lower case. Information

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value is a linguistic dimension. It concerns the pragmatic distinction between given and new, real and ideal, central and marginal. The pragmatic parameters are related to the components of visual grammar. In this way, left is associated with given, right with new. The top is the place of the ideal, the bottom, of the real. The nucleus of the information will occur in the centre, the additional items, in the margin. The placement of each element of the message within this three-part system contributes to the overall value and meaning of the sign (ibid., 76–77).

"Key," referring to the tone, manner, and spirit of the act, is encoded in the message through the amount of text, the explicitness of the message, and the choice of code.

"Instrumentalities" include register and code. In the field of LLS, register comprises word choice, orthography, and syntax. A sharper linguistic analysis will presuppose the analysis of the use of imperatives, commands, questions, parallel structures, ellipsis, substitution, and incomplete sentences. Special attention to the structure of the noun phrase will reveal unique register features like complex pre-modifying structures made up of noun phrases, adjective phrases, adverbial phrases, and prepositional phrases. These pre-modifying structures operate as independent clauses in the main part of a piece of writing. In addition, noun phrases or print ads share unique word order features—the product or trade name will come in an early position in longer expressions. Analysis on the lexical level will include analysis of pronouns, indexing the relationships between reader and hypothetical speaker/author. Billboards, which are part of the linguistic landscape, share these register characteristics. Public notices exhibit different characteristics. They rely on the use of deictic terms. As they frequently employ more than one language, the analysis of code will rely on the analysis of multilingual signs—the use of different scripts, lexical units, and grammatical structures (ibid., 80–82).

"Norms" and regulations are related to the analysis of interaction order. Norms can be norms of interaction and norms of interpretation. The norms of interpretation are rooted in the system of beliefs of a community. Their analysis requires the collection of qualitative data from the population. Regulations that are related to authorities may dictate the physical characteristics of the signs, or may make decisions about their emplacement and language choice.

"Genres" are the last component of the grid. Linguistic items in public space may belong to different textual genres, the most common among them being ads, notices, warnings, and inscriptions of identification. Inscriptions of identification, warnings, and notices depend heavily on their immediate context for interpretation and will contain a large number of

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exophoric deixis. Advertisements are generally independent of their immediate context. Plaques are a very characteristic genre. A plaque is an ornamental tablet, typically of metal, porcelain, or wood that is fixed to a wall or other surface in commemoration of a person or event. They are officially loaded with historical significance and in my environment they are exclusively monolingual (I believe the same to be true in other places, too).

Ethnographic methods of research are often criticised for being eclectic. Jan Blommaert (2007, 2011, 2012), however, argues that ethnography is not restricted only to a certain set of methods of research, but is an autonomous theoretical position, presupposing a particular interpretative stance. It focuses on human conduct in its entirety and minute particulars, not trying to reduce its complexity to a set of essential features. Ethnography is a theoretical position, which is characterised by the assumption about the situated (contextualised) nature of human action. It accepts complexity and comprehensiveness and assumes that we can successfully "explore macro-structures through micro-detail" (Blommaert 2007, 18–21).

Space as a "historically configured phenomenon" (Blommaert 2012, 29) and as a material force operating on human behaviour is a central object of research in an ethnographic theory of linguistic landscapes. The aim is to find out how space is filled with signs by people, and how these signs, in turn, influence people's behaviour. In R. Scollon and S. W. Scollon's model of geosemiotic analysis, this relationship is explained through the concept of "nexus analysis." One of its most important aspects is the theorisation of embodiment, conceptualised in the term "historical body" and the theorisation of "space as agentive and non-neutral" (Blommaert 2012, 29–30). J. Blommaert (2012) adopts the conceptualisation of the nexus between historical bodies, historical space, and the interaction order that is grounded in them. These are the key concepts that allow ethnography to take the "uniquely situated events it describes" and use them in the interpretation of higher-order structural and systemic regularities (ibid.). The ethnography based on nexus analysis helps us use the analysis of the unique and the particular to make generalisations about larger-scale social, political, and cultural phenomena. J. Blommaert and B. Rampton elaborate on this perspective, distinguishing two mainstream approaches to the ethnographic study of landscape (Blommaert and Rampton 2011, 11–15). One of them is linguistic ethnography, focusing on everyday communicative practices. The other one is the study of language and communication exploring the interaction between normativity and semiosis. The outcome of ethnographic research and study is to reach the stage where scholars and researchers can make "cumulative comparative generalisation." This will

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enable them to explore how "the orderly and partially autonomous aspects of language and interaction reduce superdiversity's potentially pluralizing impact on communication" (Blommaert and Rampton 2011, 13).

The objectivity of ethnographic knowledge is an important aspect of research. J. Fabian points out that it does not lie in the logical consistency of a theory or in the givens of data but is rooted in human intersubjectivity (Fabian 2001, 14). Ethnographic knowledge is "based on what is intersubjectively and communicatively produced" (ibid., 15).

J. Blommaert points out that valid ethnographic research requires that the notion of practices should not be artificially separated from that of products. Practices always yield products. Products contain traces of practices. They can disclose the nature of such practices and can, in turn, themselves yield practices. Every text displays features of its unique context of production. It also has the potential to move across contexts. Even when a text is detached from the original context of its use, we can still make contextualising inferences about it (Blommaert 2007, 19). Ethnographic analysis is a reliable analytical perspective regarding the fact that we are living in a global world, characterised by mobility and unpredictability. Close ethnographic inspection helps us deal with this unpredictability.

5.5. Ethnopoetics and voice

Ethnopoetics is a subfield of ethnography that studies linguistic structures and their functions in social context. Originally, it emerged in the study of oral myth performance by D. Hymes (1981). It focuses on stylistics and poetics and includes the study not only of words, but also of paralinguistic phenomena such as metrics (measure, including syntactic parallelism and framing), vocables, and patterns of repetition. There is a concern with the aesthetic and evaluative dimensions of people's lives. The structure of a text is studied in terms of lines and stanzas instead of paragraphs. Ethnopoetics is closely related to the study of voice. Usually, the change of a voice or speaker will mark the beginning of a new verse, line, or stanza. Variation of voice will usually lie in a variation in grammar or in a stylistic device, which at first glance might seem insignificant (ibid., 318–322).

J. Blommaert (2007, 21–33) embraces ethnopoetics and the analysis of voice in his studies of grassroots literacy. Ethnopoetics originated as an analytic strategy aimed at identifying inherent aesthetic forms in oral narratives. Spoken narrative is considered to be a level of linguistic structure exhibiting consistent patterns of use. Similar patterns can be detected in written texts, therefore this analysis can be extended to the study of texts in general. Following Hymes's analytic strategy, we should look for principles

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of organisation that are emic. They reflect the particular patterns that have been followed by the author when the text has been constructed. The patterns reflect judgements about the function and validity of the particular textual resources that have been used and the language or code that has been chosen. They also reflect the local beliefs and perceptions of what linguistic resources are and what their use reveals about the act of communication and about those who participate in it. By observing such patterns of language use, we can indexically infer all kinds of contextual features and judge the ways in which people organise communicative resources to produce specific meanings. The analysis described above is called an analysis of voice (ibid., 22–23).

The analysis of voice represents the particular and specific ways (often divergent from dominant norms of usage) in which people produce meanings. Voice is "the capacity to make oneself understood in one's own terms, to produce meanings under conditions of empowerment" (Blommaert 2007, 23). Sometimes some people's voices are not taken into account because the texts they produce reflect an unfamiliar pattern. However, the use of an unfamiliar pattern does not entail the absence of a pattern. When we say that a text makes sense to someone, we mean that it makes sense in a specific way. A text makes sense through the particular pattern of use of linguistic and stylistic resources that reflect the specific context and participants. When we neglect or reject the use of different resources, we say that difference is converted into inequality. Then, the emic forms of textual organisation become politically loaded. Ethnopoetics advocates the recognition of variation and variability, considering them to be natural features of societies. Recognising variation in cultural behaviour can bring about many potentially equivalent solutions to problems that arise from the misunderstanding of different aspects of diversity (ibid., 24).

5.6. The sociolinguistics of complexity

Another perspective on the study of space is to explore it as a sociolinguistic system, as "a meaningful system-of-meanings" (Blommaert 2012, 21). In a similar vein, R. Scollon and S. Scollon analyse the public landscape as densely packed with several different discourses in a dialogical interaction with one another, forming a semiotic aggregate (Scollon and Scollon 2003, 180—189). J. Blommaert defines public space as a sociolinguistic system (2012, 15–24; 2014). As such, it is not unified but is characterised by polycentricity and fragmentation. There is interaction between the different fragments. In addition, sociolinguistic systems are mobile. For example, one language variety may have a high value at one point and be considered a

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stigmatised accent in another (2014, 11). Finally, sociolinguistic systems are dynamic and subjects of historical changes. The value and the function of the particular aspects of a sociolinguistic system are the outcome of historical processes of becoming. Different features of the system change at different speeds. Communication in these systems is a synchronic act. We have to synchronise features from the system that carry different indexical potential and interpret them as a single meaning. Synchronisation is a very important characteristic of sociolinguistic systems because it helps us resolve their polycentricity. Blommaert uses the term "fractal recursivity" (Blommaert 2012, 17) to explain the fact that if a phenomenon occurs on one scale-level, it is bound to resonate at different scale levels. To synchronise phenomena happening at different historical levels means to perform an act of interpretation. To interpret means to reduce complexity, to bring together different historical layers into a nutshell of "one 'synchronic' set of meanings" (ibid). An example of the struggle to reduce complexity is the position of monoglot ideologies, in which linguistic and cultural policies advocate uniformity, standardisation, and homogenisation. Following these principles implies bringing the sociolinguistic system to a finite state. In reality, due to the never-ending dynamics, the sociolinguistic system can never reach this state of equilibrium. In it, there is always the tension between two controversial tendencies—the tendency to reach uniformity and the tendency towards heterogeneity.

A sociolinguistic analysis of the type discussed above can help us describe and interpret layered and many-sided phenomena. It presupposes the development of a new branch of sociolinguistics—the sociolinguistics of complexity. Through it, we can observe and record different types of social change—from the momentary and evanescent variations (that may go by unnoticed by the general public) to the slow and gradual processes of profound linguistic, cultural, and social metamorphosis. The analysis of the linguistic landscape in this framework can reveal how the landscape reflects the complexities of the sociolinguistic system it houses and controls.

The signs that occur in public space are "chronicles of complexity" (Blommaert 2012, 19–21). The description of one particular space as a sociolinguistic system requires detailed attention to both the minute features of single signs and systemic relationships that exist between signs. The synchronic analysis of the linguistic landscape can freely be combined with long-term ethnographic observation. The fact that we can compare public signs to chronicles that document change leads us to one important aspect of LLS, which distinguishes it from traditional sociolinguistics. This is the emphasis that it puts on literacy. Originally, studies in sociolinguistics and anthropology were biased towards spoken language. Now this bias is replaced

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by an attention to literacy and its specific role in human communication. This presupposes a transition from the analysis of narrative literacy to visual literacy or literacies, following the model of G. Kress and T. van Leeuwen (1996). Within an ethnographic framework, literacy practices need to be seen and understood as contextualised, as socially and culturally sensitive. Things become complicated when they are moved into the field of globalisation. When literacy products like texts and documents "travel" from one society into another, difficulties may arise but adequate tools for analysis may help solve the problem (Blommaert 2007, 31–32).

6. Social actors, historical bodies, and the author

A person acting in public space is not a straightforward concept. There are three important aspects of this concept. In the first place, a person is a physical body, located in space and time. Secondly, a person is a social human, a concept discussed in the work of M. A. K. Halliday (1978). Finally, a person has sociocultural and psychological knowledge, called for short history. All three aspects of a person are integrated into the concept of habitus, introduced by P. Bourdieu (cf. Jenkins 1992, 40–64), and are brought into the process of social action. Scollon and Scollon (2003) and J. Blommaert (2012) draw on the idea of habitus when they construct their concept of the social actor, acting in public space. They refer to it as the "historical body." The actions of the historical body in social space are explained through processes like "semiotic enskilment" and "somatisation" of social and psychological states and cultural practices (Blommaert 2012, 33–38; Scollon and Scollon 2003, 45–54).

There is one type of social activity that deserves separate discussion. This is the aspect of sign creation called authorship. Thus, B. Spolski remarks that the author need not be the same as the sign initiator or the owner of the sign (Spolski 2009, 30–32). It is also different from the person who wrote the text and from the person who made its artistic design. It is difficult to say which aspect of authorship is more important because the author of a public sign is typically a diffuse and multiple entity. D. Malinowski discusses authorship as a general phenomenon in the light of theories of performativity with particular reference to multimodality in discourse and communication and Hallidayan social semiotics. The author of public written inscriptions is in control of the meanings of written messages only to a certain extent. The attention falls on "the complex and agentive ways" in which the street landscape itself produces meaning (Malinowski 2009, 108). The domain of human agency behind the linguistic landscape is anonymous. The author's intent in the creation of meaning is

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the product of the dichotomy of two forces. The first one is the dominance of one linguistic code over another in bilingual (or multilingual) signs. The occurrence of two or more codes in one sign has symbolic and political significance. The second guiding force is the distinction between officially authored (top-down) and individual (bottom-up) signs (ibid.).

Despite being nameless, authorship in a linguistic landscape is a social action. The relation between dominant and non-dominant codes is explained in terms of power relations between dominant and subordinate groups. Social action implies the presentation of self. Actors in public space have community identity markers strongly imprinted on them. Finally, social action in producing signs in the linguistic landscape is affected by the theory of good reasons (Malinowski 2009, 110).

There is the question of how to discern authorial intent from connotative meaning. D. Malinowski (ibid.) relates this distinction to the dichotomy between symbolic and indexical sign meaning. Within the scope of LLS, a sign can index the presence of a language community. In such a case, the language of that sign is not intentionally chosen by an individual author but indicates the performance of a standard social practice. Respectively, the symbolic use of a foreign language can lend an exotic air to a café, shop, or restaurant and can be seen as a deliberate manipulation by the sign-maker.

There is an analogy between the authoring of shop signs and the performance of speech acts. Malinowski (2009, 115) discusses two alternative views of performance in public space. One is based on J. Austin's theory of speech acts performance (Austin 1962). The illocutionary force of utterances is backed by the speaker's sincerity of intention. The emplacement of a bilingual sign with a specific linguistic and visual message can be compared to a speech act. Therefore, a bilingual sign in public space cannot be said to have truth-value. We can talk about success or failure to elicit a response to the sign. The "felicity conditions" for public inscriptions include in the first place the appropriate emplacement in an environment with similar signs. Then, there are the legibility of the text and the relevance between the sign's content and the type of goods or services offered by the business. The inclusion of another language on the inscription can be intentional. It can be designed to create an affective response among readers. P. Bourdieu offers an alternative conception (Jenkins 1992, 99–115). According to this view, "felicity conditions" are not features of the utterance and are not related to the intentions of the individual speaker. Illocutionary acts are acts of institution and cannot be realised unless they reflect the whole social order behind them. Bourdieu does not deny the speaker's (writer's, sign-maker's) intention, but discusses them in relation

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with larger social forces that determine the success or failure of an utterance. In conclusion, we can say that, according to the two positions discussed above, authorship in linguistic landscapes is "mutually constituted by individual intention and social convention" (Malinowski 2009, 116).

Malinowski (ibid., 116–19) explains that the views of both Austin and Bourdieu can be referred to as deterministic, because of their focus on the felicity conditions that predetermine the success or misfiring of an utterance. There is a view of speech as an embodied action, which focuses on the ways transformative meanings are performed that escape the speaker's control. Such meaning is called "meaning-in-excess" (ibid., 118) and it is produced not only in speaking but also in writing. The difference comes from the fact that we cannot see the "source" of the message or the "writer" in writing. Due to this absence, the meaning-in-excess is produced by the materiality of writing itself, which includes the use of different fonts, colours, sizes, and spatial configuration. This diversity gives the inscriptions the potential to mean beyond control. The different communicative modes employed—linguistic, visual, and spatial—interact in complex ways producing multiple meanings. These modes transcend the initial intention of the author.

> . . . speakers are involved in a transformative process whenever they give voice, intentionally or not, to words that bear histories and point to futures that surpass the scene of the utterance. Critically, the outcome of this process is, because of the unique context of utterance and embodied production of language, uncertain. (Malinowski 2003, 118)

In the parallel that can be drawn between speech acts and multimodal texts, we can also say that the meanings emerging from both speech acts, which are at the same time bodily acts and the multimodal texts that dwell in public space, exceed the intent of the speaker and do much more than merely reproduce and reflect social structure. In this framework, the opposition between the denotational value of language and connotational meaning of the images becomes an important factor in the representation and interpretation of a singular meaning across different semiotic modalities. Therefore, authorship in the linguistic landscape "appears to have been produced in dialog between human interlocutors, a changing social setting, the various communicative modes present in the linguistic landscape of street and shop signs, and the interrelationships between therein" (Malinowski 2009, 123). Any interpretations of symbolic content and code choices may result as much from the agency of landscape as from that of the individual.

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7. Proper names

Proper names are an essential component in the study of the LL. They are extensively used and comprise shop names, brand names, product names, and the names of social, political, and historical figures (for example, streets that bear the names of national heroes). Names are usually written with an initial capital letter. L. Edelman (2009) points out that their role in the landscape is not to transmit actual information but to appeal to emotions. Foreignness in general and foreign names in particular are associated with good-quality products. That is why businesses choose foreign names to promote goods and services. They believe this will create associations and attract customers. Brand names play a central role in advertisements. The language of proper names is used to give a product or a shop a foreign flavour. They are difficult to analyse in terms of the language in which they are written. Because languages have no clear-cut borders, due to genetic relatedness and language contact, many names belong to more than one language. Proper names are frequently displayed in a foreign language and it is important to know that with them connotation is more important than denotation. Proper names are more easily borrowed from another language than common names. The use of proper names in the public landscape deserves special attention because although they are linguistic objects, they often "cannot be ascribed to a specific language," or, sometimes, "are not in a language at all" (Edelman 2009, 149). Sometimes the interpretation of a name will depend on the language or the languages that a person knows. For example, the name of the shop Inkognito, shown in figure 1.1, can be interpreted as correctly spelt from the point of view of a person whose language recognises this spelling. From the point of view of an English speaker, however, the name will be interpreted as either non-English or wrongly spelt English (the expected spelling being that with a "c," "incognito").

In addition to this remark, the author points out that a name can be a Chinese proper name in any context, but not necessarily a proper name in Chinese (ibid., 146). Edelman discusses two possible ways of analysing names (ibid., 149). The first is to accept that they belong to no language and, respectively, that they cannot be ascribed to any specific language. The second is to treat them as other words (which implies that they can be borrowed, translated, transcribed, etc.). For example, a brand name like Gucci can be taken as a sign that stands on its own (decontextualised). In such a case, it could be treated, pronounced, and interpreted as Italian, English, German, or another language. This will be a type A analysis. In a type B analysis, however, this will be a monolingual sign in Italian. A type

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Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.2.

B analysis may prove to be difficult to carry out in a superdiverse world, where phenomena like translanguaging are the guiding principles of language usage. The second type of analysis (B type) can be relevant in the discussion of phenomena like sign reflection and the creation of mirror

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images (chapter 5). In the inscription in figure 1.2 the name of the fashion boutique is singled out from the rest of the shop sign by being written as a Bulgarian name (in Cyrillic script). The approach for singling out the name from the rest of the inscription by means of the use of two languages is not uncommon in the landscape I describe here. The common pattern, however, unlike what is seen in figure 1.2, is to have the word for the place (the café, shop, hotel, etc.) in Bulgarian, while the proper name itself occurs in a foreign language (see chapter 6).

Proper names, as L. Edelman further points out (ibid., 142), play a great role in advertising and in the linguistic landscape. Since a large part of the landscape is formed by shop signs, there are many inscriptions displaying the names of shops. Then, there are the various posters and advertisements on which different products are promoted. The products that are being promoted have names, too. Therefore, we cannot neglect the question of the language in which an inscription is written and the language or the script in which the name occurs. The manipulation of different scripts and letter sizes makes a name distinct and sets it apart from the rest of the inscription. The difference between the advertisements that we see in newspapers and magazines is that shop signs and billboards are displayed in public space. Their primary function is not informative but persuasive. The main function is to urge customers to buy the products or services that are being promoted. The use of particular languages in advertising in public space makes a significant contribution to persuading customers. Through this use, products and services are associated with the corresponding groups of people and audiences. The languages that appear on shop sign advertisements do not necessarily reflect the languages that are actually spoken by the speech community for which an advert or a shop sign is meant. Edelman uses the term "impersonal multilingualism" to refer to the use of a foreign language that is not intended as a means of verbal communication, but appeals to people's emotions (connotational value). A person may not understand the denotational message of an inscription but they may associate it with certain stereotypes about the people who speak that foreign language (Edelman 2009, 142). The association with the foreign language will be activated and transferred to the product. Thus while the word "boutique" in figure 1.2, which retains its French spelling in English, evokes the connotative meaning of exquisite fashion taste, the Bulgarian name, singled out in enlarged letters, emphasises the name of the designer, who owns the boutique.

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8. The world of superdiversity

LLS presupposes the study of linguistic signs in the contemporary world of superdiversity. Introduced by Stephen Vertovec to explain the phenomenon of the "diversification of diversity" (Vertovec 2006, 1), the term "superdiversity" implies that the structure of modern societies is far from homogeneous and is immensely complicated. We observe new and complex forms of migration, which lead to people making use of new forms of communication (the internet and mobile phones). Distance communication transforms the places where we live into entirely new environments, characterised by mobility and a constant change of norms and values (Blommaert 2012, 8–10). In another article, Stephen Vertovec explains that the term "superdiversity" is widely employed by scholars working in different fields and has acquired numerous interpretations (Vertovec 2014). Superdiversity naturally leads to people getting involved in transnational networks. This process engenders altered forms of identity, community formation, and cooperation. As a result, important paradigm shifts in the study of language in society emerge. The poststructuralist study of language in society includes not only the component of multiculturalism but also the component of superdiversity.

We analyse the linguistic landscape from the perspective of social, cultural, and political diversity. Within this milieu, our modern world of superdiversity is characterised by "mobility, complexity, and unpredictability" (Blommaert 2012, 10). Mobility and complexity refer to new forms of migration, while unpredictability is related to knowledge. Our knowledge about societies is not a constant. It needs to be revised and updated. Thus, language becomes a reliable tool for detecting and analysing changes of use in the conditions of superdiversity (Blommaert 2012, 8–10).

The study of language in the conditions of superdiversity is historically rooted in the works of anthropologists like Dell Hymes, G. Gumperz, and M. Silverstein. Of central concern in this field is the study of language, language groups, and communication involved in processes of mobility, mixing, political dynamics, and historical embedding. In a similar way, the study of superdiversity intensifies the relevance of the ideas of social and cultural theorists like M. Bakhtin, P. Bourdieu, M. Foucault, and E. Goffman.

8.1. Languages in the context of superdiversity

J. Blommaert and B. Rampton assume that named languages (e.g., English, Bulgarian, Italian, etc.) are ideological constructions and are historically

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tied to the emergence of nations (Blommaet and Rampton 2011, 3–10). From this perspective, languages are conceptualised as bounded systems and the communities that speak them are thought of as bounded communities. The philosophy that underpins such philosophy is nation-state monolingualism. The array of substandard and transnational styles and registers are effaced in a nationally named language because they are treated as ideologically marked.

An alternative approach to this study of language is the differentiated account of the organisation of communicative practice. It centres on genres, activities, and relationships. This perspective, known as the linguistics of communicative practice, was originated by E. Sapir, Dell Hymes, J. Gumperz, and their followers. Blommaert and Rampton emphasise that language conventions are just one semiotic resource among a number. Inferential processes play an important part in meaning. Denotational and propositional meanings are not considered pre-eminent. Indexicality and the connotational significance of signs become of interest. The focus of study is directed at the relationship between signs with unstated meanings and socially shared interpretations. This makes indexicality a very promising site for the empirical study of language and ideology (ibid., 5–6).

Meaning is viewed as multi-modal and communicated not only in linguistic but also in other ways. The multi-modality of meaning applies to both written and technologically mediated communication and to speech. People are communicating more and more in diverse combinations of oral, written, pictorial, and design modes. Indexicality and multimodality help destabilise traditional conceptions of language study based on assumptions of common ground and shared knowledge. Indexical signs are given off unintentionally and more often than not speakers are totally unaware of the consequences that this might have (ibid., 6).

If, in our analysis of language, we go beyond its literal and referential meaning, we will become more sensitive to the existence of a wide array of non-shared asymmetrical interpretations. Many of them are systematically related to power. The context of superdiversity challenges traditional ideas about the possibility of achieving mutual understanding and the centrality of shared conventions between interlocutors. Peoples' diversity of origin multiplies indexical interpretation and leads to difficulties in negotiability during the process of communication. Non-shared knowledge becomes salient and this increases the awareness of one's ignorance. The management of ignorance becomes an issue of tremendous importance because it touches not just on intercultural differences but on the unequal distribution of communicative resources (ibid., 6–7).

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8.2. Veliko Turnovo in the context of superdiversity

The aim of the present study of landscape is to discover how the principle of superdiversity works in a particular location—the city of Veliko Turnovo. I explore the publicly visible items of written language located in a modern urban place in Bulgaria and try to show how these signs reflect the presence or, perhaps, the absence of a wide array of linguistically identifiable groups of people. My focus is not on languages but on linguistic repertoire. Veliko Turnovo is a place with a predominantly monolingual sociolinguistic regime. When I say monolingual I mean that the official language of the town is Bulgarian—the national language. But beneath this monolingual layer one can uncover the use of other languages, too. There is no considerable immigration to the city, but the major source of diversity in language use is foreign-language study. High school and university students in Veliko Turnovo employ a wide repertoire of languages acquired mainly through foreign-language learning. Another group of people that use languages other than Bulgarian are professionals. I use the word "professionals" in a very broad sense to include not only teachers and university lecturers but also people who graduated from language schools or attended language courses to obtain a diploma. Therefore, they use foreign languages (mostly English) for different purposes (both personal and professional) and with different motivations. Whatever the motivation for the study and use of foreign languages, multilingualism in Bulgaria is a fact that has already become the object of research and linguistic inquiry. For example, S. Stanchev and V. Belcheva comment:

> There is a considerable tendency for foreign language teaching to break away from the prototypical communicative model and to adopt a multicultural one, based on pluriculturalism. At the same time, there is another tendency for language to be discussed not only as an end of foreign language instruction, but also as a bridge between cultures. . . . however language is not only a bridge between cultures; it can be a barrier in intercultural communication, too. (Stanchev and Belcheva 2014, 180–81)

A high level of command of a foreign language (particularly English) is considered prestigious. There are students who choose to study abroad, mainly in English-speaking (UK, USA) or German-speaking (Germany, Austria) countries. Those people who know a foreign language well but stay to study in Bulgaria rely on their knowledge to find a "better job" after their graduation. This "better job" may well be abroad or in an international company in Bulgaria. Their presence in the linguistic landscape is

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manifested in the roles of author or translator (authorised), discussed in chapter 8.

Apart from the professional approach to language study and use there is a different (folk, informal) way of using foreign languages. There are the people who do not have linguistic education, but need to use foreign languages (mainly English). Because their learning is partial, they need to fill a knowledge gap. The gap does not include only linguistic knowledge. It includes skills of language use, cultural knowledge, knowledge about how to translate from their language into a foreign language, and, finally, how to transliterate names and other cultural realia. The two uses of foreign languages are contrasted in the production of two different types of public inscriptions—mirror images and translanguaged signs.

As was mentioned above, non-shared knowledge grows in potential significance for communicative processes. In the case of the Bulgarian place under discussion, non-shared knowledge takes different forms and is characteristic of both professional and non-professional users. Professionals' knowledge may include theoretical knowledge at the expense of practical skills. Practical knowledge of languages, acquired by people who travel to foreign countries to work may be described as folk (grassroots). Such people lack expertise about normative rules of language use but have practical skills. Another source of folk knowledge is found in people from the older generation who did not study English at school as a foreign language. They pick up fragments of the language from their children, from TV, advertisements, pop songs, the internet, films, or other sources. Whatever the extent of knowledge of foreign languages (or the lack of it), even in a monoglot environment, plurilingualism is a fact. Individuals' grasp of languages, styles, registers, and genres is variable and very often fragmentary. The knowledge gap brings about an emphasis on "creativity" and "linguistic profusion" and focuses on "non-standard mixed language practices." Such styles and languages do not normally belong to the speaker (Blommaet and Rampton 2011, 7). Non-standard language practices engender a linguistic diversity, influenced by new media and popular culture. Some of the scholarly terms that refer to the phenomenon are "heteroglossia," "crossing," or "translanguaging" (ibid.). The concept of heteroglossia is rooted in Bakhtin's philosophy, but linguistic diversity is nowadays frequently associated with bilingualism, multilingualism, and translanguaging, the latter being frequently associated with the creative mixing of languages and cultures. Language-mixing practices are differentiated from the conventional use of two (perhaps more languages). They are characterised by innovation that is difficult for the outsider to interpret. These new forms of linguistic diversity introduce "styles, registers, and/or languages that people know

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only from the outside" (ibid., 8). Such practices allow us "to observe linguistic norms being manufactured, interrogated, or altered" (ibid. 7). In a context like this the relationship between language and person becomes completely different. The dichotomy between "competence" and "performance" as postulated by N. Chomsky turns out to be highly idealised and applicable mostly for academic purposes. We can no longer rely on it to explain how knowledge ("knowing" a language) is different from performance ("being able to use it").

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Chapter Two

The Place—The City of Veliko Turnovo

Veliko Turnovo[1] is a city in the north central part of Bulgaria; it is famous for having been the capital of the country during the Second Bulgarian Empire (1185–1396). It is the centre of Veliko Turnovo region. Compared with Sofia and other cities in Bulgaria, it is relatively small.[2] However, the population is fluctuating. There is no immigration, but there are students, who count as temporary migrants. Some people, mostly young, are leaving the city to find jobs either abroad or in larger cities like Sofia and Varna. Others come to Veliko Turnovo from smaller neighbouring towns and villages for the same reason. Due to its rich historical past, Veliko Turnovo is visited every year by many tourists, whose short-term presence is another mobility factor that shapes the local linguistic landscape. Last, but not least, there is a tendency for people from Western European countries (mainly retired) to buy property to live in Bulgaria, which is a comparatively new form of mobility.

The city is symbolically divided into "the old part of town" and the "new part." There is no clear-cut boundary between the two parts. "The old part" includes the three hills on which the town was originally situated. The most important of them is Tsarevets Hill, where the remnants of the

[1] In the 1980s, students were taught at school that there is a difference between the English words "city" and "town." Veliko Turnovo was given to us as an example of a "town." I still refer to the place where I live as a town (it has become a speech habit), but my students insist that it is a "city." Since the study of public signs focuses on urban surroundings, I consider the distinction important. Obviously, my town is undergoing a metamorphosis under the influence of processes like urbanisation and globalisation, and the signs I explore will surely reveal this fact. In this book, I will use the two words in parallel.

[2] According to current statistics, as of 31 December 2019 Veliko Turnovo has a population of 74,572 citizens, compared with Sofia (1,270,169), Plovdiv (347,851), and Varna (336,216). The data come from the National Institute of Statistics, https://www.nsi.bg/bg/content/ (last accessed 5 December 2020).

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medieval Royal Palace and the Patriarchal Cathedral are to be seen. After restoration work, the hill was turned into an open-air museum in the 1970s. The public signs that one can see there are informational boards and regulative signs (like danger signs and other warnings). The second hill, called Trapezitsa, was recently opened to tourists (in 2016) and the same types of signs were emplaced on it, though these are still fewer in number. On the third hill, called Sveta Gora, stands the buildings of the St Cyril and St Methodius University of Veliko Turnovo. It belongs to the "old part" only symbolically. On it, there are no museums and places of historical interest. In the past as today, the lower areas between the hills are living quarters. It is there that the museums are to be found along with souvenir shops, small cafes, and restaurants. Signs attracting the attention of tourists and visitors (information boards, advertisements, inscriptions on museums, cafes, and art and souvenir shops, etc.) prevail at the expense of signs reflecting routine activities performed by local citizens. As the town spreads towards the centre, the authentic atmosphere remains almost unchanged. The public signage foregrounds those aspects of town life that appeal to tourists and foreign visitors. I assume that the modern part of the town begins symbolically at the shopping centre (Търговски център) at Nezavisimost Street,[3] leading to the city centre and from there to the modern residential areas. From this place onwards, there are no museums and places of interest and the signs in the public space reflect (presumably) the life of the local people.

Originally, LLS emerged as a study of big metropolitan centres, where the migration and mobility of large groups of people are important characteristics. Veliko Turnovo is not a megapolis. Despite this, the place I describe ethnographically and linguistically abounds in visible signs that display the use of languages other than Bulgarian. The main source of knowledge of these languages is foreign-language instruction, which does not index the presence of large communities of native speakers. In all schools in Bulgaria, the study of foreign languages (English holding the first place) constitutes a compulsory part of the curriculum.[4] Some of the high schools specialise in language studies. For example, at the High School of Languages and the High School of Mathematics,[5] languages are studied as

[3] The shopping centre (Търговски център) in Nezavisimost (Независимост) Street, https://www.bgmaps.com/map/vtarnovo.

[4] There is a regulation, issued by the Ministry of Education, according to which foreign-language instruction is part of the general education curriculum. Students can choose between English, French, German, Russian, Spanish, and Italian: https://www.lex.bg/bg/laws/ldoc/2136697599 (last accessed 5 December 2020).

[5] Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov Language School

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compulsory elective subjects. The preferred languages in these schools, apart from English, are German, Spanish, and Russian. The American Arcus College[6] is a private high school, where foreign language study is also a priority. The languages, offered there are English, German, and Spanish. In the town, there are two universities, which offer extensive study of foreign languages, too. These are the University of Veliko Turnovo and the National Military University.[7] The Faculty of Philology and Modern Languages at the University of Veliko Turnovo offers training in eighteen foreign languages.

Given this, I thought it relevant to explore how the study of superdiversity, which is a study of complexity can be applied to this particular environment. My ethnographic research of the place lasted four years (2016–20). It was originally inspired by Jan Blommaert's (2012) empirical model of landscape analysis of his neighbourhood in the Belgian town of Antwerp. At the beginning, I took pictures of public signs and inscriptions in the central part of my town and in the places of historical interest, as they abound in public signs. In the residential areas, one cannot see many signs but those that I considered of interest are included in the corpus material. As the analysis of public signs shows, Veliko Turnovo is a place where people "appear to take any linguistic and communicative resource available to them . . , and blend them into hugely complex linguistic and semiotic forms" (Blommaert 2012, 13), just as the people in huge urban areas and big cosmopolitan environments do. Landscape research has a special focus on phenomena like language choice, code blending (translanguaging), and orthography.

In general, Veliko Turnovo is a monolingual town, in which people use one language for communication; however, public inscriptions in languages other than Bulgarian abound in the linguistic landscape. The most widespread among them is English, used as an international language. Then, there is a variegated mixture of languages, including Italian (persistent in menus and in the names of pizzerias, sweet shops, and ice cream shops), German and Russian (on information boards and in advertisements in real estate agencies), and sporadic inscriptions in other languages (Latin, Romanian, and even Japanese). As I already mentioned, the use of the

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https://ezikovavt.com/%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%81/english/ and Vasil Drumev High School of Mathematics and Natural Sciences http://www.pmgvt.org/node/13.

[6] http://www.ac-arcus.com/?mod=info&pages_category=american_college_arcus &show=arcus_overview.

[7] Their full names are the St Cyril and St Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo (www.uni-vt.bg) and the Vasil Levski National Military University (https://www.nvu.bg/en/node/582).

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different languages does not index speaking communities. Their use is motivated by different factors. English is for communication and is directed to foreign visitors of the city—such as tourists and people travelling on business or for other purposes. The same applies for German and Russian (and in some cases Romanian), though their occurrence is more restricted. Italian and the other languages used occasionally have symbolic functions. For example, while Italian is associated with food and places to eat, the use of Japanese as an inscription in the cultural centre symbolises the existence of cultural relations between Bulgaria and Japan. The use of Latin, which I discuss in another paper (Atanassova 2017), is difficult to explain. The inscription stands on the canvas hiding an ugly decrepit old building. One possible interpretation of this sign could be that it symbolises human transience, but other interpretations are not impossible.

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CHAPTER THREE

THE SIGNS

1. Signs

Within the scope of semiotics, signs are traditionally classified as icons, indexes, and symbols (Chandler 1994). Iconic signs are based on resemblance to the object, and indexes are directly related to it, while with symbols, the link between the object and the sign is purely arbitrary and conventional. Signs in public space reflect all these qualities, but the most important of them is the indexical aspect. No matter whether a sign is an icon, an index, or a symbol, its meaning cannot be fully interpreted unless we know where exactly in the real world the sign is placed and how it forms contiguity with the other signs in the same milieu.

2. Functions of public signage

R. Scollon and S. Scollon explain that the meaning of a sign in place can be interpreted in two ways—through indexicality and through symbolisation (Scollon and Scollon 2003, 25–31, 117–19). If a sign makes meaning "by its geophysical placement, its physical characteristics, or its placement together with another sign or object," then we can say that the phenomenon we are observing is indexicality. When a sign makes meaning "by representing something else which is not present which is ideal or metaphorical" we call that sign symbolic. If we have an actual picture of the thing being represented, we say that the sign is an icon (Scollon and Scollon 2003, 133).

> . . . whether we consider a sign to have an indexical meaning or a symbolic meaning depends in part on where the sign is in the world as on well as our own historical or social expectations for what would be the unmarked or default meanings in that place. (Scollon and Scollon 2003, 133–34)

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We locate ourselves in the world through the signs in the city streets. They mark road regulations, determine our behaviour and label and advertise consumer products. They can signal the presence of a certain community (e.g., English speaking). They can also index a period of time (e.g., when a sign was placed). For example, in Veliko Turnovo, brown coloured street signs index that they were emplaced after the year 2000 (figure 4.1). Street signs from the socialist past are covered in blue (5.1). Thus, the colour indexes the period of creation. Finally, the actual language use can symbolise something about the product or business (Scollon and Scollon 2003, 116–9) that is advertised in a place. For example, English in the landscape of Veliko Turnovo can be used to symbolise luxury and high living standard (figure 6.3), while Italian symbolises specific kinds of food (4.5).

To interpret the meaning of a sign in the landscape, we must consider the interaction among three factors—the indexical function of the sign, the symbolic function of the sign, and the socio-historical expectations of the members of the focus group. According to Jan Blommaert a sign cannot be interpreted purely synchronically. It has its history. Every sign inevitably points towards its conditions of origin. We can “read backwards” (Blommaert 2012, 23) from signs into their histories of production. We always know their sociolinguistic, semiotic, and sociological conditions of origin. A particular place represents a synchronic snapshot of diverse signs but this diversity suggests historical layering in the linguistic landscape (ibid.). In big megapolises, some signs are produced by established and self-confident communities. Others document the presence of recently arrived and newly organised communities. In the particular place I describe, some signs point back to the recent socialist past, while others have emerged recently. Some signs index professional writing and translation in a foreign language, others are the products of grassroots practices.

3. The study of the material aspects of signs

The study of the materiality of signs is based on Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwn’s theory of visuality. According to it, signs are not mental and abstract phenomena. They are material forces and reflect the conditions of their production as well as their patterns of distribution. An important contribution of the theory is the conception of the roles of the signifier and the signified. They are relatively independent of each other and there is no intrinsic relation between them. Any time they are brought together, they constitute a new sign. The process of sign-making is metaphoric and signs are motivated (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 7–8). The authors study the

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way in which depicted elements (people, places, and things) combine to make visual statements (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 16–34). The compositional structures of such elements are used to produce meaning regularities. They also point to particular interpretations of experience and forms of social interaction. Visual communication calls for a new form of literacy—visual literacy—which becomes more and more crucial in the conditions of globalisation.

Kress and van Leeuwen note that writing is a form of visual communication. In this framework, a visual language may be dominant, but it is always controlled by the global culture in the face of technological empires or mass media. Visual meaning is indefinite, polysemous, and heavily dependent on verbal context. Language helps make the meaning definite. Communication is socially based and images are not only expressive and aesthetic but also communicative. It should not be taken for granted that visual communication is something like a universal language or a universal grammar. It is always culture-specific.

The theory of geosemitotics also takes into consideration the material aspects of signs. The compositional principles for the design of signs show that images and texts always refer to the external geo-material world in a specific way. These principles define the role of writing in the landscape.

In relation to this, the authors (Scollon and Scollon 2003, 145–55) recognise three general geosemiotic practices. The first one, "decontextualised semiotics" is universal. The term "decontextualised" means that it is used when certain forms of signs and discourses are detached from a particular place in the real-world context. Such texts, pictures, and images are clearly contrasted from the world around them and function as bounded and separate semiotic systems. The logos of products like Coca-Cola are a case in point. Such names and products are spread and recognised worldwide. The authors also point out that decontextualised signs make no reference to the place of the world where they appear within the picture, image, or textual frame they represent.

The term "transgressive semiotics" is used for signs such as, for example, a price tag that has fallen off a garment and is lying on a busy street pavement (ibid.). Scollon and Scollon distinguish between "transgressive" and "denied." The term "denied" refers to a sign, which is covered or not yet placed. "Transgressive" means "*against the expectation* or *in violation* of the public expectation" (ibid., 147). In each society, there is a system of geosemiotic rules that determines where signs should be placed and what messages are appropriate to appear on them. If we want to interpret the meaning of a visual design of a sign in public space, we cannot start from

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the sign itself. The analysis must start from the emplacement of the sign, from the place that it takes in the surrounding world. The property of transgressiveness is relative and subject to change. What is considered to be transgressive at one time and in a certain place, can itself become a semiotic system that can be used symbolically at another time and in another place. This change can be related to decontextualised semiotics.

Finally, we have "situated semiotics," which is the most important principle of geosemiotics. The term is used to refer to "any aspect of the meaning that is predicated on the placement of the sign in the material world" (Scollon and Scollon 2003, 146). Within the field of situated semiotics, we distinguish between exophoric and situated indexicality. Exophoric indexicality permits interpretation of meaning based on the placement of the sign in the material world. It refers to the process of how we construct meaning out of the relationship between the text or picture, on the one hand, and the material and physical placement of the sign in the world, on the other. This process is, as the authors explain, a particular action that is carried out by a specific person and always happens at a unique time and place. Exophoric indexicality refers to the relationship between the internal meaning of a sign and its external emplacement in the geosemiotic world, which is being indexed. The term exophoric is related to the concept of "outside," and indexes something outside the words on the inscription. An example is a no smoking sign, the meaning of which must be interpreted as "smoking is prohibited in this particular place." Road signs, street names, shop names, brand names, and regulatory signs fall within the group of exophoric signs. We speak of situated indexicality when a sign reflects the physical characteristics of the object on which it is placed (this is related most frequently to the text vector of inscriptions on vehicles).

There is an interaction between different geosemiotic systems that are employed in the composition of the signs. There are also different meaning systems associated with the presentation of language in the material world (Scollon and Scollon 2003, 129–41). The system of fonts or letterform can produce a range of different meanings in the "same" linguistic message. It includes handwritten symbols, calligraphy, lettering systems, word processing fonts, and professional typefaces, as well as size, shape, and colour. The use of fonts is particularly important in branding. It is there that the distinctive font carries the meaning to a great extent.

> . . . virtually any sign in virtually any font will have all three kinds of meaning potentially available—the meaning that comes from where the sign or font is located in the actual world, the meaning that comes from what the font, design and material symbolize, and the meaning that comes from the interpretative

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> frames of the users-viewers-readers of these signs. (Scollon and Scollon 2003, 134)

These meanings can be isolated only for analytical purposes and only to understand how the semiotic systems work. Apart from the letter form, we need to consider how the material from which the signs are made (granite, paper, iron, etc.) produces meaning. The materials out of which an object is created signal much about how we are expected to interpret its meaning. If the material out of which a sign is made is a long-lasting material such as granite, stone, iron, wood, and so on, it will signal permanence or durability. Temporality can be signalled through more "perishable" materials, for example paper, cloth, or plastic. Newness can be inferred from the freshness of the material, for example, shiny surfaces or wet paint. Perhaps, one can add further characteristics to the ways in which the material can be interpreted indexically (ibid., 135–36).

As a next step, we can discuss the layering of signs (Scollon and Scollon 2003, 137–38) We can see signs attached on top of other signs. The attachment is not meant to be part of the original design and it is usually temporary. Layered signs make sign complexes. Sometimes signs can operate through a change of state. Here belong fluorescent signs. If such a sign is illuminated, it will be interpreted as "open." If it is not illuminated, it will mean "closed." The same principle applies to traffic lights.

Finally, a public sign with an inscription can be denied (Scollon and Scollon 2003, 138–39). The simplest way to explain this is to say that the sign is "hidden" behind something for various reasons. Another way to refer to it is to call a sign "backstage" (a term borrowed from E. Goffman), which means "covered," "unfinished," or "under repair or transformation." and so on. In such a case, the meaning of the sign is not considered indexed. Signs become indexed only when they are "frontstage"—in the proper place, finished, and uncovered. In this case, signs and inscriptions become socially active. People will be able to interpret them and act accordingly.

The meaning of the material aspect of the sign can go far beyond the meaning of the words themselves. They can imply permanence or temporality, quality, and current backstage or frontstage meanings. They can also develop symbolic meanings. We can learn more about the meanings of words as they appear in public discourse, conveyed just through the material substance.

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CHAPTER FOUR

PUBLIC SIGN TYPOLOGY

1. Criteria for public sign classification

Signs can be classified according to different criteria. One way of putting signs into groups is based on the answers to two fundamental questions: "What counts as a public sign?" and "What does a sign do in the public space?" Benjamin Spolsky (2009, 25–34) offers an extensive list of the objects and inscriptions that can be considered to be public signs. The list includes street signs, advertising signs, warning notices and prohibitions, building names, informative signs (directions and hours of opening), commemorative plaques, objects (postboxes), and graffiti. The author also talks about the two basic functions that public signs (objects and inscriptions) can perform—informative and symbolic. He explores the relationship of the signs with the functions that they perform. While warning notices and informative signs are on the informative end of this classification, building signs and commemorative plaques are on the symbolic (ibid., 34). A third important criterion for classification is based on the question "Who created or who was responsible for the creation of the sign?" Spolsky explains that in this perspective signs can be government (top-down) or private (bottom-up) (ibid., 31).

Jan Blommaert (2012, 62–64) offers another "commonsense" classification, according to which signs can be permanent, temporary (event-related), and noise signs (accidental). Within the group of permanent signs fall road signs, shop signs, any permanent publicity signs, and graffiti. Event-related signs include posters announcing an event (e.g., a performance), all temporary signs (e.g., a shop sign that announces discounts), and all kinds of smaller announcements. Noise inscriptions are there by accident—cars, vans, and other readable objects (for example a plastic bag with inscriptions). Blommaert's classification relates signs and activities. It gives us insights about the social structure of the activities that happen in the public space and gives the answer to a fourth question, "What is going on in a particular place and how are the signs involved in the process of interaction?" Signs can have landmark functions—they identify a particular

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area in relation to history, traditions, and customs. Another group of signs has recruitment functions—they invite a particular group of people into interaction with their producers. A third group of signs informs audiences about the activities performed in certain places. These are, for example, discount announcements. Another category of signs has the function of a public statement. Graffiti fall here. Finally, there comes the category of muted signs, for example, a plastic bag with inscriptions containing rubbish.

A fifth criterion concerns sign emplacement. It is based on the question of where in the physical space a sign is located. Scollon and Scollon (2003, 144–46) explain that we can have situated signs and decontextualised signs. Within the group of situated signs fall common regulatory signs, notices, directions, exit signs, store names, etc. Decontextualised signs may appear in multiple contexts, but always appear in the same form. Brand names and logos (owned intellectual property) are the most distinct instance, for example, Coca-Cola and McDonald's. They may appear in the same form on posters, packages, and bags in the stores where they are sold. Finally, we have transgressive signs that stand in the "wrong" place (both deliberately or not deliberately placed). "Transgressive" can also mean that the sign is in the place, but is in some way unauthorised. Examples include graffiti, rubbish, and discarded items.

It is important for a classification to be tailored to reflect the characteristics of the local landscape one is researching. In my endeavour to analyse the public signage in Veliko Turnovo, I constructed an empirical classification, which I adapted for the analysis of the city landscape. Thus, in the first place, we have informative signs and I use "informative" in a very broad sense. It includes road signs and street names. They stand in the streets primarily to direct people but most of them have developed a secondary informative function. For example, if a street bears the name of an important historical figure, the sign with the name of the street also contains information about whom that person was and why he or she is considered to be important for the city and for the country (see figure 4.1).

The name of the street is "Nikola Gabrovski" and on the plate below the street name, there is information about the life of the person and his contribution to the city and the country. Within the same group of signs fall boards providing information about the historical past of the city. They are situated in places of historical interest and present specific facts about the city's past. If we compare them with Spolski's division of signs into informative and symbolic, we can say that they could be classified as either type—they both provide information (not only to foreigners but also to local citizens) and function as cultural symbols (symbolising the great historical past). Next, we have another broad category: shop signs, including signs for

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Figure 4.1.

cafes, restaurants, and other places to eat, souvenir shops, and cinemas—in short, these are places selling goods or offering services and entertainment. In the next group, I include building names—names of institutions, banks, corporations, insurance companies, and so on. These are signs of identification. Then, we have advertisements for both local and global products. Finally, there is the category of "other" signs, covering disparate kinds of inscriptions like posters, notices, announcements, graffiti, and so on. The majority of signs from this group include what Blommaert calls "temporary signs" and "muted signs." We can also say that it includes "noise signs" and "transgressive signs" if we use Scollon and Scollon's terminology.

In terms of structure, signs can be complex. The street name sign in figure 4.1 is complex, because it consists of two inscriptions written on two plates. The first inscription is the name of the street, while the other plate provides information about the name. The two inscriptions belong to the same sign. Signs can also combine to make sign complexes. Frequently, they include a place name with a logo (decontextualised sign) superimposed on it, as shown in figure 4.2.

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Figure 4.2.

In such cases, the different signs combined will recruit different audiences. The two logos (Coca-Cola and Kimbo) perform both informative and persuasive functions—they index a place where one can have a drink. The logos invite both Bulgarian and non-Bulgarian clientele. They also have symbolic functions—as symbols of the global world. Placed above and below the Stratilat name, they “encompass” the value of the local symbol in global culture. The name of the café, Стратилат/Stratilat (the name of a Bulgarian martyr), functions as an ethnic and national symbol. It is recognised as such mainly by Bulgarian citizens.

2. Language-based classification

An alternative way of classifying signs reflects the number of languages used on the inscriptions. Although sign-makers employ different modalities to make signs, the language component is the most important in all of them. Thus, according to the language/languages used, signs can be classified as monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual. Although in the context of globalisation such classification may seem problematic as languages are no longer considered to have clear-cut boundaries, still, for convenience of analysis we can use this conventional division. Language classification cuts across the different groups of signs discussed above.

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2.1. Monolingual signs

In the landscape of my city, the inscriptions on monolingual signs are predominantly in Bulgarian. The majority of them are situated signs (to use the Scollons' terminology). Bulgarian naturally occurs on these signs and they index native-speaking audiences. Such signs can be seen on most administrative buildings (see figure 4.3). The building in the picture is the administrative court and this is what the inscription on it says.

Figure 4.3.

Other buildings that can have inscriptions only in Bulgarian are places to eat (recruiting local clientele, not tourists), small groceries, bookshops, flower shops, local cafes, and, perhaps, others. Regarding their function, they belong to the category of recruitment signs and their presence in the landscape is relatively permanent.

Monolingual signs in languages other than Bulgarian are also present in the local landscape (figure 4.4). Signs written only in English typically index English-speaking groups, since many English citizens (both from Great Britain and other countries) are interested in buying homes and living in Bulgaria. Such signs are usually event (temporary) signs.

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Figure 4.4.

Monolingual signs in English do not exclude Bulgarian people. Provided they can speak English and have friends in these groups, they can join the advertised event.

Monolingual inscriptions in languages other than English are also visible but their occurrence is mainly symbolic. Greek and Italian are used for eateries. For example, an inscription like "GELATO" (figure 4.5) does not require knowledge of Italian and does not index an Italian-speaking community, but is symbolic. It indicates that the kiosk on which it stands sells Italian ice cream:

Figure 4.5.

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2.2. Bilingual and multilingual signs

Bilingual and multilingual inscriptions are of interest because of the different ways information is arranged on them. B. Spolsky (2009, 29) writes about three distinct ways of arranging multilingual information. The first is to have all information in both languages, the second is partial or overlapping translation, and the last is to have different information in each language. In my attempt to analyse signs not only as products but also as products that contain traces of practices (Blommaert 2012), I try to reflect about the processes as a result of which the signs were created because they disclose the nature of these practices. For the purpose of the analysis of bilingual and multilingual signs, I suggest the use of the term "sign conversion." I would prefer to talk about the conversion or transformation of the signs with inscriptions on them from one code into another, rather than talking about their being translated from one language into another. The term "conversion" will reflect better the complexity of the signs in space and I will discuss it at length in chapter 5. Translation and transliteration are involved in the process of conversion, but they are only aspects of the whole process of sign transformation.

Bilingual signs are the most numerous and, as the analysis shows, the most productive type of signs in the city landscape. One kind of bilingual sign are signs with street names.[8] These are double-language signs where the English inscription is a mirror image of the Bulgarian original. Their two facets are symmetrical—they give the name in Bulgarian and a transliterated or translated version of it. As can be seen below (figure 4.6), the inscription says "Преображенски манастир/ Preobrajenie monastery."

A distance marked as "6 km" occurs only once because it needs neither translation nor transliteration. "Kilometres" is an international word and so is its abbreviation, "km." We can say that in this abbreviation we can observe the merging of inscription elements.

[8] Some of them can be regulative road signs. They are bilingual and contain no additional information ("Asenov Residential District"). Others name the place (street, square, bridge) and provide cultural and historical information (as in figure 4.1).

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Figure 4.6.

One other road sign looks different. On it we read "кв. Асенов" with the English translation "Asenov /residential/ district" (figure 4.7). In the brackets there is information clarifying that by "district" a "living quarter" is meant (not a larger administrative unit). I consider this sign to have been symmetrically transformed despite the fact that at first glance the English "image" of the original seems to contain more information. What appears as more words is not excessive information. It is a clarification for the foreigner, an attempt on the part of the sign-maker to make sure that the message will be interpreted in the expected way. The adjective "residential" could have appeared in Bulgarian, but it would have been redundant information. In addition, the sign-maker must have hesitated over what word to choose for the translation of the Bulgarian word "квартал" (kvartal). Perhaps the greatest difficulty could have been which of the words offered by a dictionary would "look best" on a road sign.[9] Translating public inscriptions may present a real challenge for those who are interested in translation studies. I think, however, that despite its linguistic and translation imperfections, the sign has been converted successfully and its English reflection is fully symmetrical with the Bulgarian one.

[9] Among the choices one can find in a dictionary are "neighbourhood," "quarter," "residential area," etc. (https://bg.pons.com).

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Figure 4.7.

The sign guides foreign visitors to a place called "квартал" in a Bulgarian city (culturally loaded enough to be different from the English "neighbourhood" or whatever options the dictionaries offer) and it does so successfully (cf. chapter 1, 6). The foreigner is expected to identify the place by its name, Asenov.

Menus can serve as another example of symmetrical mirror images. Typically mirror images occur in one material frame (e.g., a board), but the menu of a restaurant called Ego is inscribed on a two-winged construction, on both sides of which the menu is written. On one side of the menu board, one can read the dishes in Bulgarian, while, on the other side, the sign is converted into English (figure 4.8a and 4.8b).

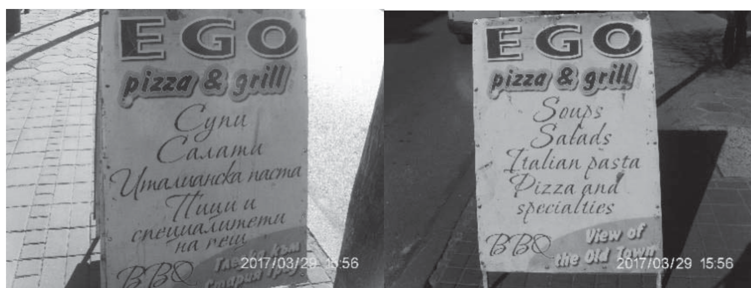

Figure 4.8a and 4.8b.

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All aspects of the sign are reflected in the conversion. On top of both sides of the inscription is the name of the restaurant in Roman script: “EGO pizza & grill.” Below comes the list of the dishes and they appear in absolutely the same order in both languages. On the two versions of the sign, we can read that the restaurant offers a view of the old town:

Супи / Салати / Италианска паста / Пици / и специалитети на пещ / BBQ /
Гледка към стария град
Soups / Salads // Italian pasta / Pizza / and specialties /BBQ /
View of the Old Town

From a linguistic point of view, in the translated list there is a gap because the expression *специалитети на пещ* has not been translated fully in the target language. Part of the expression—*на пещ*, meaning “oven-baked”—has been omitted (a detail the absence of which does not prevent matching the items from the two lists). Again, this does not make the converted sign an asymmetrical image of the original because one can still match every item and compare the dishes in both versions of the list. The symmetry is reinforced by the fact that the names of the dishes are international words (soup, salad, pizza, pasta, BBQ) and as such are easily recognisable even though they appear in different scripts (Roman and Cyrillic).

Some shop signs reveal a different picture. They are close to the types of signs in which different information is expressed in different languages (figure 4.9). The inscriptions on this complex sign are on different material frameworks.

One of the souvenir shops in the old part of the city, looked at frontally, has the name СУВЕНИРИ in Bulgarian and provides a translation “SOUVENIRS,” but the name of the shop, TSAREVETS, appears in its transliterated form only. On the shop window, there is a list of the items sold in the shop. The list is in English and it reads “embroidery, rose oil, ceramics, icons.” These items are in fact objects considered symbolic of Bulgarian culture. Looking from the right-hand side one can see an inscription in Bulgarian—“МАГАЗИН ЗА СУВЕНИРИ ‘ЦАРЕВЕЦ’” (souvenir shop “Tsarevets”)—with no list of the items sold there. The inscription is on a separate board. In this case, we cannot say that we have an original sign that was converted into an image of the original sign (“re-dressed” in a different code). We have different facets working together to make one complex bilingual sign.

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Figure 4.9.

There are signs that look bilingual but are actually not. In fact, we may ask whether such signs should be counted as one sign or two. This problem was raised by B. Spolski (2009, 32), who says that sometimes it is difficult to know what to count as a sign. I consider such signs to be “sign complexes” or “collages” (figure 4.2, 4.10). These signs consist of two separate signs (or sometimes three), usually written in different languages and belonging to two different groups of signs—a situated shop inscription and a decontextualised logo.

We can identify this sign pattern in figures 4.2 and 4.10, in which the Bulgarian name in the centre is “surrounded” by the two foreign logos. Regardless whether the foreign logo and the Bulgarian name are situated on two different boards or on one material body, we can always discern two different layers in such signs—the home (Bulgarian) name in the centre and the logo (or logos) in the margins. From a linguistic point of view, the logo and the name do not create a homogeneous inscription (a phrase, a clause, etc.). They present a disparate structure. Each part of the inscription “points” to a different direction. The product logos invite consumers to the place irrespective of their nationality. The Bulgarian name contextualises the decontextualised logo; it “ties” it to a particular place, giving local flavour to the global product.

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Figure 4.10.

In another group of signs, it is difficult to say what language or languages they are written in. Such signs are the products of processes like code-blending and translanguaging, which themselves reflect larger social and political processes like superdiversity and globalisation. I discuss these signs in chapter 6.

Multilingual signs are mostly trilingual. Within this group fall the informational boards in the old part of the town (figures 4.11 and 4.12).

Figure 4.11.

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Figure 4.12.

On the historical Tsarevets Hill, trilingual boards contain inscriptions in three languages: Bulgarian (for the locals), Russian (for tourists from the former Soviet Union), and German (for tourists from the former East Germany). These signs were emplaced during the communist era (1970s); however, because they contain useful information (facts about medieval Bulgarian history) they are still in place and have become part of the landscape (figure 4.11). On the signs that were emplaced after the year 2000, Russian has been replaced by English (figure 4.12). On these signs, each of the texts in a foreign language is a mirror image of the Bulgarian original. This is a special form of sign conversion, in which the informative component is foregrounded, with regard to the specific language needs of the sign consumers. Foreign visitors and tourists usually stay in the town for a short time. They need to get oriented quickly, which is why the factual information is presented in a concise way on the boards. I also think that tourists, though unconsciously, compare the text they can read to the original. As they most probably do not know the original language (Bulgarian), they are oriented by dates, numbers, sometimes, punctuation, and, perhaps, international words of Latin origin. The process of interpreting these signs therefore involves matching information.

Some multilingual inscriptions contain more than three languages. There are not many such signs, but figure 4.13 shows welcome greetings in seven languages, including Bulgarian.

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Figure 4.13

The inscription appears on the door of a real estate agency. The welcome greetings have a symbolic function, indicating that the clientele comes from all over Europe (though English and Spanish are spoken outside the continent too). The list of welcomes, together with the flags, address potential property buyers, rather than whole communities speaking these languages and living in the country.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SIGN CONVERSION: MIRROR IMAGES

1. Writing in more than one language

In an officially monolingual environment, public signs are usually expected to be in one language—in our case, this is Bulgarian. The linguistic landscape of my town, however, is not as homogeneous as it might be expected to be. There are many signs around the place that contain inscriptions written in languages other than Bulgarian. In some of these signs, the same information is rendered in two and sometimes three languages. The need to write in more than one language presupposes the ability to employ specific language and literacy skills. The latter include knowledge of different orthographic systems as well as skills in translation and transliteration. As public signs do not only contain language, sign-makers need to have additional design skills that enable them to produce signs that function successfully in a specific locus.

Writing in more than one language can be carried out in different modes. One of them is sign conversion. When a sign is converted, its original language (e.g., Bulgarian) is converted into another language (most frequently English). This mode of writing is different to translanguaging, discussed in the next chapter. Converting signs from one code into another is a complex process that has different aspects and results in a mirror image of the original sign. Linguistic inscriptions on signs are translated, transliterated and occasionally transcribed. The material aspects (fonts, colours, and the ordering of inscriptions) are likewise transferred in the mirror image of the converted original. Sometimes they retain their original form and design (colours, letter size, etc.) but sometimes alternations are made (e.g., the mirror image may be inscribed on different colour background).

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2. Translation and transliteration

Translation studies are an autonomous branch of linguistics and the quality of the translated inscriptions is not discussed from this point of view here. We only touch on grammatical correctness, identity of information, and lexical precision.

Transliteration, however, is of considerable importance for the study of public signage. In the first place, it is an aspect of literacy; as such, it is related to the rendering of names from one language into another. Public inscriptions abound in names (of streets, shops, cafes, buildings, museums, etc.). Some of them are Bulgarian, others are foreign, and still others are coined by the sign-owners. Studying the patterns of rendering of the Bulgarian names in a foreign language and of the rendering of foreign names in Bulgarian is revealing of the literacy practices of the language users.

Transliteration has two aspects—it is important to know whether we are transliterating from one language into another (e.g., Bulgarian into English) or from one script into another (Cyrillic into Latin). In the first case, we assume the existence of named languages, and stick to the spelling rules that different linguistic systems require. For example, in transliterating from Bulgarian into English (or another language), we take into consideration the phonics of the English language. In the second case, we start from a named language, in our case Bulgarian, and transliterate into an unnamed language, using the Roman symbols. The first type of transliteration can be referred to as "correct" transliteration because it follows the regulations of the authorities, who postulate guidelines about the ways into which Bulgarian names should be transliterated into English, German, and so on. The second form of transliteration is rooted in grassroots practices and can be considered a form of writing Bulgarian using a foreign alphabet.

3. Systems of transliteration: transliteration and transcription

The need to convert Cyrillic writing into Latin is related to the fact that a large number of visitors who come from abroad use Roman-based alphabets. The problem existed long before the emergence of processes like globalisation and superdiversity. The conversion from one alphabet into another is a complicated process because the Latin alphabet was adapted for writing in certain different languages and the same is true for the Cyrillic alphabet. This means that there cannot be a single way of transliterating Bulgarian writing into Latin script, and there cannot be a universal one-to-

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one correspondence between Latin and Cyrillic letters. The Bulgarian linguist A. Danchev (1989) writes that it is not an easy task “to subsume a number of phonetically different languages in a single system of transliteration” (Danchev et al. 1989, 16). Despite that, there have been attempts to establish such a universal system. The Czech-based system is considered to be a universal one. It was created for international use and was introduced in Bulgaria by Lyubomir Andreichin in 1956. This system was used for transliterating Bulgarian names on all kinds of public signs and for other bibliographic and linguistic purposes. The Czech-based universal system is no longer recommended for public use but it does not seem to be completely obsolete. As can be seen in figure 5.1, old and modern signs co-exist (though such symbiosis does not occur frequently), each exploiting a different system of transliteration.

Figure 5.1.

Danchev (1982, 1989) carried out a complete and exhaustive study of the rendering of Bulgarian names in English and of the rendering of English names in Bulgarian. His system of rendering names was English-oriented and scholarly. The author not only made a contrastive study of the English and Bulgarian phonological systems and phonetic inventories, but also studied usage and non-academic practice at the time that he wrote. Danchev made a sharp distinction between language usage and linguistic system, according to which usage was not considered part of the regulated

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linguistic system. This distinction is rooted in the theory that Bulgarian spelling is phonetic and partly morphological. That is why the author believed that the most appropriate way of rendering Bulgarian names in English is transliteration, meaning replacement of graphemes by graphemes. The principle for transliteration requires that for any Bulgarian grapheme, a single grapheme of the target language should be suggested. Established public usage is taken into consideration. Simplicity and economy are the guiding principles. Last but not least, easy retrieval or mapping back to the source language is also considered important (Danchev et al. 1989, 20–22).

One of the important contributions based on Danchev's study of usage is the rendering of the two Bulgarian letters *х* and *у* with the Roman symbols *h* and *ou*. Another significant suggestion is the treatment of the specific Bulgarian vocalic phoneme ъ, rendered in English by *u*. According to the study, Bulgarian usage showed consistent preference for the grapheme *u* as the best way of replacing the ъ phoneme (Danchev et al. 1989, 15–32). Danchev's system of transliteration is English-oriented but as such is broad enough to take into consideration the existence of different varieties of English. The author also provided a guide for the pronunciation of Bulgarian names after being transliterated into English. The universal system (based on the Czech alphabet) was adopted as the guide to the pronunciation of Bulgarian names in English. It was considered the most suitable because the transcribed forms coincide with their spellings on road signs (currently in use when the book was written).

A third system of transliteration is the streamlined system. It is English-oriented, too, and was designed by the Bulgarian mathematician Lyubomir Ivanov (Ivanov et al. 2010). The system shares a lot with Danchev's system, but it is based on the variety of English as a lingua franca. It is oriented towards large English-speaking audiences, for whom English is not necessarily their mother tongue. Despite the system being English-oriented and not claiming to be universal in the sense of the Czech-based one, it does not necessarily exclude audiences who use the Latin alphabet but speak a language other than English. Some of the most important differences between Ivanov's and Danchev's systems is the treatment of the Bulgarian vowels ъ and *у*. Whereas Danchev proposes *u* for ъ and *ou* for *у*, Ivanov has *a* for ъ and *u* for *у*. Ivanov's system is accepted as the standard transliteration of Bulgarian names according to a law concerning the way Bulgarian names should be rendered in English. The streamlined system was first chosen in 1999 to replace the previous one and to be used for the transliteration of personal and place names, then it was amended in 2006 and adopted for official use on identity cards, driver's licences, on road signs and other public inscriptions, in databases, on

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webpages, and wherever else it is needed. Finally, in 2009 the Parliament issued a law "which mandated that Bulgarian geographical names, names of historical persons, cultural realities (a very wide even if undefined notion), and scientific terms of Bulgarian origins should be transliterated by this system both in official use and in some private publications" (Ivanov et al. 2010, 4–5). Besides the three models discussed above, there have also been other systems of transliteration, but they did not gain popularity.

Danchev's system of transliteration, however, is not out of use. It can be seen in the public landscape, for example on the inscriptions of the retro photo studio and the multimedia visitor centre (figures 5.2 and 5.3). I would say that the two systems of rendering Bulgarian names in English are in parallel use. While Ivanov's system is used for documents and other instances of formal writing, Danchev's system is used in non-authority-regulated signs. As a feature, it definitely indexes use by someone with linguistic awareness of different systems of transliteration, or at least someone who has consulted an educated person before writing the inscription.[10]

Figure 5.2.

As to the rendering of English names (and other words) into Bulgarian, Danchev (1982) suggests the use of transcription because English spelling

[10] Andrei Danchev's books are familiar to university students.

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is historical. He also points out that more often than not transcription is not full but partial. Spelling should also be reflected in a transcribed name as it should be easily retrieved in the source language. Transcription does not occur on the inscriptions of mirror images. It does occur, however, in instances of code blending and translanguaging.

4. Sign conversion and mirror images

Sign conversion is a form of double writing, in which linguistic features, belonging to different languages are “kept in their place.” The meaning of the original message is reflected in a foreign language. In this semiotic process of “sign conversion,” processes like translation, transcription, and transliteration are employed to render different aspects of the message. Translation is for grammar and meaning, transcription is for pronouncing (mostly names, but other words, too), while transliteration is for writing and identification. In the resultant inscriptions, two or more languages are clearly “seen” and recognisable. The conversion of the sign is from one code (language) into another. The accompanying paralinguistic features (e.g., punctuation) remain unchanged in order to preserve the symmetry of the two inscriptions. The other semiotic characteristics (colour, fonts, order of inscriptions, and layout) are also symmetrically transferred in the mirror image. As a result, we have two images—an original and a replica of the “same” sign.

Perhaps, the prototypical example of creating mirror images are the information boards situated in places of historical interest and plates with street names. The inscriptions in figures 4.11 and 5.3 represent such “ideal” mirror images. The translations of the inscriptions on these signs are usually made by educated people, who have linguistic expertise. They contain no grave language errors (at least they have no errors that will prevent people from understanding the message) and the information on them is carefully rendered in the order in which it was originally arranged in Bulgarian. The other aspects of the design are also transferred. Some of them remain unaltered and those in which there are differences contribute to keeping the features of the two languages apart. In figure 4.12, for example, the name of the place stands out in red in all three languages (Bulgarian, English, and German):

ПАНОРАМЕН АСАНСЬОР ПАТРИАРШЕСКА ЦЪРКВА
/SCENIC ELEVATOR PATRIARCH’S CHURCH/

Below the name, the entrance fees are given for adults and for children. After that comes the warning that children must be accompanied by adults,

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and finally the clarification that the fee for the scenic elevator is an additional charge that is not included in the entrance ticket to the Tsarevets fortress.

Menus are also instances of "ideal" mirror images. One of them is discussed in chapter 4 (figures 4.8a and 4.8b). An interesting mirror image occurs on the name sign of the multimedia museum Tsarevgrad Turnov, bearing the medieval name of Veliko Turnovo[11] (figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3.

On the sign, the name Търнов is represented by the transliteration "Turnov," adhering to A. Danchev's system (1989). The Bulgarian grapheme *ъ* is rendered by the English grapheme *u*. The translator was obviously educated enough to know how to transliterate correctly; thus, presumably, translating in English, s/he chose the letter *u* for the Bulgarian *ъ*. This translation occurs in the public space, where the transliteration law[12] requires that all names of geographical places, historical figures, and cultural realia should be transliterated according to the specially constructed version of the Latin alphabet. There is a clash between what occurs in the transliteration on this museum inscription and what occurs on road signs bearing the name of the city. Maybe the translator chose not to adhere to the official law because

[11] The name means "The Royal City of Turnov." "Turnov" is an old form of "Turnovo."

[12] https://www.lex.bg/laws/ldoc/2135623667, last accessed 19 July 2020.

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s/he was aware of that s/he was not simply transliterating a name on a road sign, but translating a longer expression in English. Whatever the motive for this particular choice, the clash between the two systems of transliteration remains because the text is emplaced in public space.[13] There is a reason why I should justify the author's choice of transliteration in this museum inscription. The text definitely bears English syntactic features—the structure of the noun phrase with the modifiers "multimedia visitor," the name Tsarevgrad Turnov preceding the head, and the British English spelling (the word "centre"). All this presupposes an "English" interpretation and reading of the text; therefore, the English transliteration of the sign-maker's choice can be accepted as correct:

МУЛТИМЕДИЕН ПОСЕТИТЕЛСКИ ЦЕНТЪР "ЦАРЕВГРАД ТЪРНОВ"
"TSAREVGRAD TURNOV" MULTIMEDIA VISITING CENTRE

Considering the paralinguistic aspects of the inscription, we can observe a feature of the Bulgarian original that is preserved in the mirror image. This feature is punctuation. The names of streets, schools, and public institutions in Bulgarian are enclosed in inverted commas. This is reflected in the English image of the sign and it helps the foreign reader set the name apart from the rest of the inscription. What we see in the "mirror" is English words, English word order (grammar), British-English spelling, English-oriented transliteration, and Bulgarian punctuation. The features of the two languages are neatly separated from each other and kept distinct. Two different languages are clearly discernible. The information is precisely transferred from one code into another.

Although the preferred code (in this case, Bulgarian) is placed above, it cannot be said to be dominant, as G. Kress's (1996) theory would explain it. There is symmetry in all mirror images; therefore, the problem of power relations and dominance in such contexts is neutralised. We can say which inscription is the original, the starting point, but we cannot say that it is the most important. The symmetry is expressed in the careful rendering of information (the aim is to have the same pieces of information in the translated inscriptions), and in the exploitation of the identical non-

[13] I, personally, always hesitate before spelling out the name Veliko Turnovo in English. Consequently, when I have to fill in documents, I spell the name with the grapheme "a" (Veliko Tarnovo) because this is the way in which it is spelt on my identity card. However, when I write a different type of text, as is the case here, I prefer to stick to Danchev's system.

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linguistic semiotic resources—the use of the same colours, the ordering of inscriptions, sticking to the same design and layout.

5. Languages and linguistic features

When we translate texts, we talk about languages. It becomes clear, however, that when we convert signs we rely heavily on linguistic features. We recognise an inscription as having been converted from one code into another by the constellations of the linguistic features we discern in it. Language, viewed as one homogeneous whole, is an ideological artefact that is usually influential. From a sociolinguistic point of view, the analysis of public inscriptions is more productive when we focus on the ways in which individual linguistic features are clustered together whenever people communicate (Blommaert and Rampton 2011; Jorgensen et al. 2011). When we group features together we might think we use languages, but for writing in public space this can be misleading (at least for the context of the public space I am describing). When we convert signs, we select features that are socially and culturally loaded and that we associate with a target language. When we do mixed writing, we do not bother about keeping features in their place but mix them to produce a desired effect. When we make mirror images, we make sure that each set of features stays in "its place."

6. Layers of mirror images

In the communist past, the public landscape was predominantly monolingual, but in places of tourism and historical interest, one could see instances of multiple writing. A typical example of multiple writing is the trilingual signs on Tsarevets Hill. These signs are mirror images, in which each conversion into a different code reflects with minute precision the original inscription. They are symmetrical in the sense that all inscriptions either contain identical information or the information on them is presented in such a way as to look identical. On the signs that remained from the communist era, the following languages are visible: Bulgarian, Russian, and German. Bulgarian is placed at the top because it is the original inscription. Considering the factor of emplacement (Scollon and Scollon 2003), it indexes that the inscription is emplaced in a national territory. In this context, being placed at the top cannot be considered an expression of power and dominance because the nations that the other two languages both index and symbolise (Russian and German) were considered to be "brother" nations. Communist philosophy advocated brotherhood and equality among all the communist countries and the people living in them. Therefore, the Russian language

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being placed second means just second in order. Russian was also one of the international languages for the closed socialist world. It indexed audiences who were not necessarily native speakers but used it as a lingua franca. These people came from the former Soviet republics and the other communist countries. In the ordering of such trilingual signs another opposition is formed: the opposition between two scripts—Cyrillic and Latin. Both Bulgarian and Russian, as Slavonic languages using Cyrillic script, stand in contrast to German, which uses Roman script. English and French were completely absent in the landscape during this era, which indicated that they belonged to a different geopolitical world.

On modern trilingual information boards, one can still see three languages; however, the semiotics of the language choices are now different. This time the opposition is between native and foreign, between the local and the global. The visual distribution of the languages on the board mirrors the trilingual arrangement of the socialist past. Bulgarian, as the source language, is given first. Second place is reserved for the language that is international—this time, it is English. In third place, we still have German. This symbolic reordering and replacing of languages could have the following interpretation (which does not exclude other possible interpretations): Bulgarian stands for home, English for the world, and German for Europe.

Our analysis of trilingual signs can find support in the Scollons' study of public signs (2003, 120). They explain that when a text is in multiple codes (two or three languages) or in multiple orthographies, there is a system of preference. The producers of a sign put the preferred code in a pattern similar to the construction system discussed before. The significant divisions are top-bottom, right-left. The preferred code is on top, on the left, or in the centre. The marginalised code is at the bottom, on the right, or in the margins. The code preference system works like the construction system in any context, but is not the same system in all the culturally different environments in which it occurs. For example, in the trilingual signs discussed here, the preferred code, which is placed at the top, could be interpreted as native, primary, and belonging to this place, and therefore "rightly" emplaced there. The codes that come below are images and reflections, but are not marginalised. The preferred code is not necessarily more salient than the peripheral. In the case of the multilingual signs in Veliko Turnovo, the text vector is oriented from top to bottom—first is the language in which the message was created. This reflects a special aspect of this sign production—that the original was created first and then there emerged the translation (respectively the conversion and the reflection). The order on the board reflects the chronological order of sign creation—first created in one language, then converted into a different language or

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languages. The top-bottom design represents a logical relationship—reflection always follows creation.

In commercial domains, the choice of English at the top can signal global versus local. Scollon and Scollon (2003, 122) explain that the same binary choice in the same semiotic code system may be used in the service of quite different ideological positions. Although we know that there is a coherent code preference system, which privileges the top, the left, and the centre, "code preference should not be assumed to reflect any particular community or ideology in some *a priori* way" (ibid.). As is illustrated here, ethnographic research reveals significant differences. Although the code-preference semiotic system is clear and definite, the system of values that selects this system cannot be described in advance. It might be determined by geopolitical ideology, pragmatic convenience, and current fashion. Sometimes the relative position of the languages is determined by explicit government policies.

Thom Huebner presents a taxonomy of types of multilingual information arrangement. From this point of view, we can speak of duplicating, fragmentary, overlapping, and complementary signs (Huebner 2009, 78). In duplicating signs, all the information is presented in both languages. In fragmentary and overlapping signs some but not all the information contained in one language is also contained in the other. With complementary signs, two or more languages convey completely different content. In the landscape of Veliko Turnovo, mirror images fall within the category of duplicating signs.

Mirror images can be seen not only on informational boards and menus. Shop inscriptions can also be structured as reflections. The shop inscription below (figure 5.4) is emplaced in front of an antique shop.

The symmetry of the sign is reflected not only in the precision of the translation but in the other material aspects of the sign, too. The name of the shop, both in English and in Bulgarian, is placed in the top part of the inscription and is equally long, taking the same space in each language. Below are the types of items offered in the shop, presented as a list. The list is recognised as English because of the spelling, grammatical features (plural endings), and choice of lexical items. The two lists contain identical information but are printed in different colours to signal the difference between the two codes. The code preference of the Bulgarian writing at the top is interpreted as reflecting the history of the sign emergence, typical of other mirror images. First comes the source, followed by the reflection, which is secondary and converted. The target audiences that are recruited by the sign are treated as equal—both groups of clientele, Bulgarian speaking and English speaking, are seen to be welcome to the shop.

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Figure 5.4.

Not all symmetrical mirror images are completely identical. This is because inscriptions are not always purely informative. In figure 5.5, the Bulgarian part of the inscription contains connotative meaning that is not transferred in the translated mirror inscription.

Figure 5.5.

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The inscription reads:

ПАНОРАМЕН РЕСТОРАНТ / БАРБЕКЮ / ДОБРЕ ДОШЛИ / НА ВЪРХЪ
PANORAMIC RESTAURANT / BBQ / WELCOME / AT THE TOP

Like the signs discussed above, this symmetrical sign contains two inscriptions—a Bulgarian original and an English image. The image looks symmetrical but the connotations that the sign bears for the two audiences are not symmetrical. In the Bulgarian original there is, in the first place, a word play—the word *връх* means the "top" (*vruh*) (of a mountain, for example) and the idiomatic expression "something is the top" means that this thing is top quality, excellent, perfect. The restaurant is situated on the top of a hill, which provides a marvellous view of the city for visitors. At the same time, the inscription implies that visitors to the restaurant have made the perfect choice. At this point, the connotation of the Bulgarian inscription is similar to the connotation that the English word "top" has. The Bulgarian expression has the word *vruh* (top) with the definite article attached to it (*vurhu*) and the stress falling on the second syllable. In the region of Veliko Turnovo, the definite article at the end of a word is pronounced with a very clear /ъ/ sound. It is this pronunciation that is reflected in the otherwise wrong spelling of the word.[14] This hint will only be meaningful for Bulgarian speakers and will be missed by foreign tourists. The loss of symmetry is rendered by the letter size of the reflected inscription—the English expression is written in a slightly smaller letter size. We can still say that this "imperfect" mirror image is duplicating according to Huebner's classification, because despite the connotative differences, the information is identical. Translanguaged signs, which we discuss in the next chapter, fall within the group of overlapping and complementary signs.

[14] The correct spelling is "На върха."

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CHAPTER SIX

CODE BLENDING: LITERACY, TRANSLITERACY, ORTHOGRAPHY, AND HETEROGRAPHY

1. Models of studying literacy

In a model of studying literacy as a social practice, Michael Stubbs (1980) describes it as a relative concept. He explains this relativity not in terms of people's ability to do something in writing, but in terms of the functions that writing can perform. Written language developed to have intellectual, administrative, and bureaucratic functions. The administrative functions of language include keeping accurate financial records, developing complex legal systems, creating an external social memory, and many others. Later, in many countries a literate individual would be expected to be able to read both for pleasure and for intellectual stimulation. All academics are familiar with the intellectual functions of writing. Writing makes it possible for ideas and statements to exist independently. Thus, they become "objective knowledge," which is independent of the subjective experience of someone or "knowledge without a knower" (Stubbs 1980, 104). Writing also leads to the development of critical attitudes to what has been written down.

The choice of medium of communication is determined by the social function of communication. For speech to happen we need a particular social situation, in which speech is only one component of communication. It is always accompanied by facial expression, gesture, and reference to the particular physical surroundings. In Stubbs's model, a piece of writing typically stands on its own and has to supply all the necessary contextual information explicitly (ibid., 109). When people are writing they are always acting from the position of a certain role—that of a journalist, an academic, a lawyer, or other job.

Brian Street (2013, 160–62) takes an ethnographic approach to the analysis of literacy. He distinguishes between two models of literacy—the autonomous model and the ideological model. The autonomous model covers the technical aspects of literacy, independent of social context. The

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ideological model sees literacy as linked to cultural and power structures. The author takes a balanced view to the two approaches and seeks to establish a link between ethnographic research and research in the field of discourse analysis. An analytical framework for literacy is introduced, which includes concepts like literacy events, literacy practice, and communicative practice. A literacy event is a piece of writing that is essential for the process of interaction. Literacy practice embraces the concept of the literacy event. It refers to a person's belief and behaviour related to the use of writing. Communicative practice links literacy to D. Hymes's ethnography of communication. Seen from this angle, literacy is one type of communicative practice.

Orality and literacy are ideological constructs. Street (1995, 171–74) believes that both oral and literacy practices are deeply rooted in culture. Literacy cannot be separated from oral genres (on the grounds of its being cohesive, connected, or on grounds of the use of paralinguistic, prosodic, and lexical features). We should study not only the differences but also the similarities between them. Written language can be employed as a form of exchange in face-to-face communication. It is not independent and autonomous from the social context.

Jan Blommaert (2007) discusses a model of literacy called "grassroots literacy." In this model societies are considered literate as soon as people can write (Blommaert 2007, 226). It is not important how many people know how to write. The existence of literate people leads to the sharp transformation of a society. Being literate implies that even people possessing basic and elementary writing skills can exploit them successfully to communicate in writing or to read texts. Therefore, literacy should be discussed in relation to the wider social conditions for communication, and as a factor that has the power to change these conditions.

There are societies in which literacy is a privilege of special classes of people—teachers, priests, administrators, and other groups of educated people (ibid.). In this case, the region as a whole is not considered illiterate. In such a society, there is a selective distribution of literacy resources, which are concentrated among a limited group of educated people, and this means that we need to specify the particular literacies that operate there. When the people from such a limited group perform their writing practices, these are special events, which occur within a particular sociocultural group. Namely, it is the presence of such literate people that makes members with restricted writing skills "illiterate" (ibid.). The grassroots type of literacy, which the other non-privileged groups share, is peripheral but is still literacy. It is a cultural product that shapes people's cultural identities.

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As with the other ethnographic approaches, the fundamental theoretical assumption in "grassroots literacy" is that writing can be seen as a situated, contextualised practice (ibid., 18–21). In addition, pieces of writing can be studied historically (with respect to their histories of production). Texts no longer exist in isolation but are embedded into a wide complex of human contextualised activities. Texts always show traces of the practices of their production, circulation, interpretation, and reproduction. Such a theoretical position leads to the development of the ethnography of literacy practices. The study of these practices includes historical analyses of literacy and a focus on the transmission of texts across contexts. Text transmissions are believed to be complex re-orderings of textualised meaning. This theoretical point does not limit the study of texts to fit the descriptive ethnographic grid but leads to their development in ethnography as a study of literacy practices.

Writing is only one aspect of what is called "literacy." Other aspects of literacy include reading, design, and processing (ibid., 8–9, 32–33). In addition, we can speak of different types of literacies. In our contemporary globalised world, where people communicate with the help of technologies, we can speak of keyboard literacy, and—I would say—translation literacy and translanguage literacy (the ability to creatively manipulate linguistic features associated with different languages). Writing itself is a complex literacy practice. Different forms of writing reveal facts about wider literacy issues. It becomes clear why there are constraints on what can be written and why there should be norms about how it should be written. The conditions that determine the existence of norms and constraints are material, socio-economic, and cultural.

In Blommaert's model of grassroots literacy, writing is seen as a technology for the production of selves; as such, it functions within local conditions (Blommaert 2007, 225). The particular forms of writing, the way writing is organised culturally and socially as a technology for the production of selves, and the way in which writing enters people's repertoires and acquires particular functions within the scope of their individual uses open an area for promising ethnographic research. Writing indexes local and cultural values. In judging them, we can see how writing functions locally and relatively autonomously and literacy practices can be described as local rather than as part of a globalised and universally valid set of practices. This argument favours ethnographic approaches to the study of literacy, in which the focus falls on its local organisation and functions and in which the ethnographer abstains from quick generalisations and reductions of complexity. Just as D. Hymes (1977) proposed the ethnography of speaking, J. Blommaert believes that we can speak of the ethnography of writing

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(ibid., 17–18). An ethnography of writing is an approach to writing that aims to understand the role and function of writing in social life. In this context, grassroots literacy is a cultural product, even though it is peripheral and, as such, shapes people's cultural identities.

2. Choice of language

Even though in a semiotic study of signs we include non-verbal signs—for example, travel and warning symbols—the choice of language for public signage in multi-literate areas is of primary importance. B. Spolski (2009) discusses two main functions of the choice of language. Language can be used either for communication, including for information, instruction, or persuasion, or symbolically. For example, through the symbolic function of a language, people can mark linguistic dominance or express power (Spolski 2009, 29–30). In such cases, the actual state of literacy is important because if a language is unwritten, there will be no signs in it. If one doesn't know a language well, there will be spelling mistakes in the inscriptions. The density of public and private literacy will be indicated by the amount of written language. It will be reflected by the density of signage in general and the comparative density of verbal and non-verbal signs.

Similarly, Scollon and Scollon (2003, 119) remark that we need to make a distinction between symbolisation and indexicality. A code may be chosen because it indexes the point of the world where it is placed (e.g., an English-speaking community). It may be chosen because it symbolises a social group because of some association with this group. Therefore, the code preference may be based on geopolitical indexing or on symbolisation based on socio-cultural associations. To make this determination, we need some evidence from outside the signs themselves.

The main object of interest in the Scollon's model (2003, 120) is the problem of bilingual signs or the problem of multiple codes within a single sign or picture. The main semiotic resource by which code-preference is produced when more than a single code is used is placement within the picture in physical space. In vertical alignment, the preferred code is located above the secondary or the peripheral codes. In horizontal alignment, the preferred code is located in the left position and the peripheral one, in the right position. There is a third possibility for code arrangement—the preferred code is in the centre and the peripheral code is placed around the periphery.

Discussing the context of European advertising, B. Spolski (2009, 35) explains that the use of the local language (and script in our case) is usually unmarked, while the symbolic use of a language (or script) different

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from the local one is usually marked. The use of foreign languages (scripts) does not imply a communicative function but has symbolic value. Understanding the meaning of the foreign words is not necessary. Advertisements (in our case, any kind of public inscription) usually evoke cultural stereotypes with which the language is associated.

I shall resort to G. Kress and T. van Leeuwen's (1996) diagram as discussed by R. Scollon and S. W. Scollon once again to explain the composition of a public sign. It is based on the following oppositions (already touched upon above)—margin versus centre, ideal (taking the upper portions of the image) versus real (taking the lower portion), and given (on the left) versus new (on the right). In every message, we use the given to present the new and we use ideal concepts to convey the real. In this framework, we recognise two basic information structures—centred and polarised. The centred is circular, a triptych, and centre-margin oriented. The polarised is further divided into two systems—the left-right and the upper-lower (top/bottom) system. "This information system of a visual image works together with salience and framing to form the full composition system" (Scollon and Scollon 2003, 92). Shop signs around the world make use of these informational systems but they are not universal; there is always some cross-cultural variation.

3. Forms of writing

Mobility as a factor in our modern world offers a paradigmatic challenge in the analysis of language and literacy. Issues of literacy are tremendously important in the social-scientific interpretation of globalisation. The widespread use of the same communication tools—the internet and English—does not guarantee that people are able to communicate easily and fluently. Such a belief is inaccurate. To communicate, people in the contemporary world have to rely on multilingual repertoires, which are tremendously complex, dynamic, and shifting. These repertoires do not presuppose knowledge of languages. They are hybrid, multimodal, and highly unstable forms of language use.

Writing on public inscriptions reflects the characteristics of literacy practices in the context of mobility and superdiversity. It occurs in different forms. We can have writing in one language only. This can be called "monolingual writing." Along with them, we have a form of writing that can be called "double writing." In this form of writing, the features of two languages (or scripts) are clearly discernible but can bear different information or may realise different functions. Mirror images are instances of double writing (though their primary aim is to reflect the same information

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in a different code). Inscriptions that contain the word for a particular place (in Bulgarian) and the place name (in English) are also a form of double writing (figures 6.1 and 6.2). A third form of writing is mixed writing, where features of different languages are blurred. Practices of language mixing are referred to as "translanguaging," "heteroglossia," "crossing," "polylingualism," and "metrolingualism" (Blommaert and Rampton 2011, 7). Translanguaging is an object of interest in this study because what is blurred is not only features of grammar and vocabulary, but also letters that belong to different alphabets (script mixing). While in double writing, people are clearly aware of the features that make the two languages or scripts different and try to keep them distinct, in language mixing, people resort to whatever resources are available to them and often mix them deliberately to produce a desired effect. Mixing languages can lead to different forms of creativity, which extends beyond the level of purely linguistic features to include the material aspects of the signs. Individuals take on different forms of responsibility for what they say and this is expressed by their styles of speaking. This also applies to written uses of language. The switch (or the mixing) of a language, style, code, or register carries important associations. It becomes important not only what is said but how it is said.

4. Elite and non-elite forms of writing, orthography, and heterography

Some forms of writing are considered to be privileged or elite forms, such as alphabetical writing and correct spelling (which we are taught at school). Writing that sticks to the norms of correct spelling and grammar is considered to be good writing or an elite form of writing. I will borrow the term "grassroots literacy" (Blommaert 2007, 10–12) to refer to non-elite forms of writing, discussed and analysed in the particular context and concerning the ability to write in a foreign language or in a foreign script. One of the characteristics of non-elite forms of writing is heterography. Heterography can be defined as the use of graphic symbols that defy orthographic norms. It is opposed to orthography and is manifest in spelling difficulties and erratic punctuation. In the writing of people who use heterography rather than orthography, there are corrections and additions that reveal uncertainty about linguistic rules. Sometimes, such writing will contain sketches, drawings, or other visual means of representing information, referred to as visual aesthetisation. People whose writing is heterographic resort to locally available knowledge assets when they construct their texts. They usually ask about things they do not know, or get someone else to tell them, rather than consult dictionaries, grammar books,

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or other learning resources. This is called "partial insertion of knowledge economies" (Blommaert 2007, 11) and is another characteristic of grassroots literacy, which reflects inequality and asymmetry of knowledge. In her study of the use of English in the Bulgarian context, M. Georgieva (2011) refers to this form of knowledge of English as "globe talk." Apart from being a non-elite form of writing, Blommaert (2007, 31–33) explains that "grassroots" can be interpreted to mean "local." In some contexts certain communicative resources may be locally effective and adequate but this does not imply that they are not able to produce a "globalised" voice.

Another way of explaining the difference between elite and non-elite forms of writing is to use M. Bakhtin's (2006) concept of centripetal and centrifugal forces. Centripetal forces embrace rules and regulations. They view language as monoglossic—that is, homogeneous. Any live language, however, is a blend of different language uses. Therefore, another range of forces—centrifugal (heteroglossic or socially distinguishing)—also operate in language. These two opposing forces find two different realisations in public writing. Symmetrical writing in the form of mirror images aim at orthographic and correct writing. Each version of the sign (original or reflected) sticks to the rules of grammar and spelling. Mixed writing (translanguaging) is a form of heterographic writing. Heterography cannot be regarded simply as a form of writing that defies the rules of orthography. It is a way of looking for new forms of self-expression, for adaptation in a world of mobility where norms and values are in constant flux, for finding ways of writing things for which orthography does not offer adequate rules. In relation to this, M. Stubbs writes:

> The ideal orthography would be designed by linguists, in collaboration with educators, publishers and politicians, and have the support of the mass of the people who are to use it. Thus, it would embody systematic phonemic and morphological analyses, be easy to teach and to print, convey appropriate sociocultural implications, and be acceptable to its users. . . . And since it is impossible to imagine a situation occurring in practice where all these criteria could be met, it follows that there is no ideal orthography. (Stubbs 1980, 96)

5. Translanguaging and feature analysis

In the study of languages in a world of superdiversity, Blommaert and Rampton (2011) assume that named languages like, for example, English, Bulgarian, and so on, are ideological constructions tied to the emergence of the nation state. Languages that are labelled are conceptualised as bounded

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systems linked with bounded communities. The underlying philosophy in this conception is nation-state monolingualism. From such a point of view, the whole array of subnational and/or transnational styles and registers are considered to be ideologically marked and as such are erased in a nationally named language.

In a study of observed language use, Jorgensen et al. (2011, 23) analyse language use among youths in a superdiverse environment. Their linguistic behaviour is analysed in terms of language features because different (named) languages are considered sociocultural constructs. So are dialects, sociolects, registers, and varieties. People, however, are not likely to use "pure" language. Human linguistic behaviour is based on the use of linguistic features. This leads to a shift in the analysis of use—from language as an ideological and institutional abstraction to resources, which include actual and observable ways of using language. It is not the level of language but the level of linguistic features that makes it better suited for the analysis of language use in superdiverse societies (ibid., 28). Features are socio-culturally associated with languages. Then, both features individually and languages as wholes are associated with values, meanings, speakers, and so on. In addition, features may be associated with specific uses of a language. The analysis of features should not discard the analysis of languages as irrelevant. Feature analysis must show how the features are associated with one or more languages. However, features are not always categorisable in a given language. Sometimes they can index a language, but do not actually belong to such a language. Such is the case with the "Italianness" of the shop named Artissimo (figure 6.12) and the pizzeria named La Scalla (figure 6.13).

Linguistic features take the material form of units and regularities. By "units," we mean words, expressions, sounds, and phonetic characteristics (e.g., round versus unround). Regularities are not rules in the normative sense of the word. We refer to the way in which units are combined into larger units and become associated with meaning. The concept of "inherently correct language" is an idealisation, while correctness is another social convention that has nothing to do with linguistic features and characteristics. It is ascribed to them by users. Correctness may index specific features in two different ways. First, a feature may be correct if it is used in the way in which native speakers use it. If it is not used in this way, it suggests "incorrectness" and non-belonging. Secondly, a feature may violate the rules of language. Usually the use of features associated with people with low education or non-native people is considered incorrect (Jorgensen et al. 2011, 30–31).

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Authors like R. Otheguy et al. (2015) describe translanguaging as a way of deconstructing named languages from the point of view of mental grammars and the linguistic practices of bilinguals. The mental grammars of bilinguals are structured but unitary collections of features. The linguistic practices of bilinguals are selections of features, not of grammar switches. Named languages are social not linguistic objects. The idiolects of particular individuals are linguistic objects that have lexical and structural features. Translanguaging allows a speaker to deploy his/her full linguistic repertoire regardless of adhering to the social and political boundaries of named (national or state) languages. The notion of classic code-switching involves manipulation of two separate linguistic systems. A named language is a social construct, not a mental and psychological one. From the outsider's point of view named languages do exist, but from the insider's perspective there is only one's full idiolect or repertoire, which belongs to the speaker and not to any named language. This includes the speech not only of bilinguals but also of monolinguals. The two categories of people are not linguistically different. The idiolects of monolinguals and bilinguals are not qualitatively but quantitatively different. The idiolects of bilinguals contain more linguistic features. In addition, these features are more complexly marked from a sociolinguistic point of view.

6. The use of English in a Bulgarian context

Language plays a crucial role in the transnational flux of people, cultures, and values. In a global context, all communities depend on a shared language code for their normal existence. Maria Georgieva (2011, 100–153) discusses the manifestations of global discourse in the Bulgarian communicative context. Georgieva refers to this phenomenon as "globe talk" and defines it as "a specific mode of communication involving mixing of languages and appropriation of linguistic and cultural entities from outside sources as a legitimate practice of language using" (Georgieva 2011, 102). She points out that in the Bulgarian context, globe talk is widespread especially among young people because it serves to signal difference from local traditions and, more importantly, adherence to world values of democracy and freedom. Although the mixing of languages, which Georgieva analyses, is that of mixing Bulgarian with English, "globe talk" in this framework is not tied to any specific language. It emerges as a specific language practice and is used to generate new sociolinguistic structures and social relations. Globe talk is a transcultural social practice, which is constructed of complex strategies of borrowing, mixing, blending, and merging. It changes and appropriates foreign concepts and linguistic

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forms. The aim is to erase differences that are caused by different lifestyles and social inequalities. As this mode of language usage is not tied to any particular language or culture, it transcends geographical, cultural, and linguistic boundaries. It becomes a hybrid mode of communication. Globe talk is a supracultural discursive practice, which along with its use in the fields of the media and entertainment industries, finance, business, and political organisations can also be observed in public space. Mixing, blending, and reshaping linguistic resources are not meant to negotiate meanings but to express plural identities and links to multiple social networks (Georgieva 2011, 108). In her study of globe talk, Georgieva points out that it is constructed by and for Bulgarain readers. Her research concerns *High Club Magazine*, which has a youth readership. She describes its reading public as predominantly monolingual. Although a large part of the reading public possesses some knowledge of English from learning it as a school subject, this knowledge is low-level, fragmentary, and unorganised. Apart from the classroom, the source of this knowledge may be the internet, computer games, Cartoon Network, and so on. Discussing the language from the linguistic perspective, she focuses on script crossing, lexico-semantic mixes, and lexico-grammatical mixes. From the socio-linguistic perspective, globe talk is discussed as used in the framing of events and activities, as a conduit of global ideology and as enhancing rapport between people. The author notes the difference between a lingua franca and globe talk. A lingua franca is enacted in intercultural communicative situations. Globe talk is a variety of local use. It signals prestige, worldliness, solidarity.

M. Georgieva is interested in studying the language in its ramifications in local spaces (Georgieva 2011, 125). She seeks an answer to the question of why local people use English, how they use it, and how English co-exists with other languages spoken in the locality. The use of English in Bulgarian local space leads to building identities that link people to the broad world. At the same time, they mix, adapt, and reshape the imported entities and make them fit into their local discourses. The contact between English and Bulgarian takes place on local grounds. The use of the foreign language by Bulgarians indexes social group affiliation and involvement with global processes.

Global English as discussed by M. Georgieva is denationalised and deterritorialised. It is spoken by people of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The general belief is that a world language like English is spoken for communication, while a mother tongue is used for identification. Global English is not confined to a particular socio-economic elite. It is spreading across different social classes and territorial boundaries. As such,

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this variety of English is unstable, hybrid, and fragmented. Patterns of use are fluctuating. Concepts like uniformity and homogeneity are no longer adequate to explain processes like globalisation. In addition, such concepts cannot show how people use language to show affiliation to world affairs in situations where they neither belong to multicultural communities nor are involved in intercultural communication.

> At the same time there are some transcultural communication practices based on local languages that can rightfully claim recognition as discourse of globalization. As any communication practice emerging in "third space" they involve mixing and merging of "outside" and "inside" entities though operationalized differently by diverse communities of practice depending on their ability to utilize creatively the possibilities of language crossing and accommodation of new elements. Furthermore, such locally oriented hybrid varieties throw light on the role of agency, in particular, on how speakers' attitudes to global designs and capacity to influence public opinion can affect the outcome of appropriation of foreign elements. . . . I want to emphasize that today's sociolinguistic situation is more complex than it is generally represented in the discussion of Global English and deserves a more profound and comprehensive analysis. (Georgieva 2011, 104)

Georgieva analyses globalisation features as indexed in Bulgarian texts. Her aim is to show how local communities creatively select, adopt, and utilise concepts and ideas transmitted to them by a dominant culture. They shape and reshape, alter and mix the "native" and the "foreign" elements of their language until they finally manage to "cook their own globalization stew" (ibid., 105).

The concept of "space/time compression" is of interest for the present study. It is the result of a multitude of relationships and interaction practices across large geographical areas. There is a flow of cultural commodities and values through complex virtual networks. Orientation in such complex situation requires skilful discursive coordination and accommodation, referred to by Fairclough (2006, 55–57) as "re-scaling" or "recontextualisation." Through the process of rescaling, a particular spatial entity (a small local community, a village, an urban centre) can be positioned in new relations with other scales. The process includes local adjustments and imitations of external or globalised practices. External elements are not just transposed, they are transformed and given new meanings. Globalisation is characterised by reordering of space and time, blurring the boundaries between internal and external, distant and close, past and present, foreign

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and domestic. There is internationalisation of social practices. Distant events and experiences are brought into local people's lives.

In relation to this, we can discuss the "scale" metaphor, as explained by J. Blommaert. Scales can be explained as levels of organisation of forms of normativity and patterns of language use. We can observe shifts between such scales, which involve reorganisation and "complex re-semiotization of TimeSpace: new images of time and space, new patterns of acting upon them. In this more complex understanding, the notion of 'scale' may allow us to understand the dynamics between local and translocal forces" (Blommaert 2010, 36–37).

Processes like recontextualisation and rescaling can be observed in the local Bulgarian context, too. As the flow of global commodities brings an influx of global discourse, people imminently realise that in order to get access to the world of knowledge, culture, and electronic communication, they need a language for world communication. Learning English becomes a demand and a necessity. The term "unadministered language" (Georgieva 2011, 107) is used to refer to the degree of foreign language knowledge that is picked up from various sources—pop songs, films, advertisements, and so on. Such partial knowledge can also be picked up from schools that do not specialise in foreign-language teaching or adult courses. It is marked by deviant pronunciation of words, local interpretation of meanings, mergers, and so on. Such users are referred to as "quasi-bilinguals" (ibid.). Folk bilingualism (ibid., 132) is a phenomenon that can be observed in many spheres of social life, including the inscriptions in public spaces.

M. Georgieva concludes that "the effects of Global English on local languages are not different from contact induced language changes" (ibid., 125). She maintains that we must discuss international English from a local perspective. One strand is interested in exploring the intensity and scope of English diffusion in particular localities. We can study the specificities of the local varieties of English: the social and symbolic roles assigned to this language by the local people. Another strand of locally oriented research focuses on the transformation of local social practices. They explore the mechanisms of construction and reconstruction of new discourses of globalisation. English becomes a functional resource for refashioning local discursive models. It brings them in tune with cultural communicative contexts:

> local uses and functions of English may vary not only in terms of social domains but also in terms of the speakers who utilize the language as a valuable communicative resource. (Georgieva 2011, 127)

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Imported words and structures can index different social meanings and effects depending on who uses them and for what purpose. The mixing, merging, and crossing of global and local entities leads to the rescaling of local space. It leads to the formation of a new, polycentric, and incoherent semiotic space, in which different social groups have access to different resources and to different forms of intertextuality. External or global entities are not truly integrated into local semiotic systems. This provides ground for hybridisation, a process referred to as “glocalisation.” “Glocalisation” is a specific way of speaking “globe talk.” There is no clear pattern of blending of local and foreign codes. It is a product of “folk bilingualism.” Globe-talk users need not be actually bilingual (Georgieva 132–33). They know a small number of English words and phrases, usually picked up from songs, films, computer games, or the internet. Such competence is limited but has a high symbolic value. It can provide any globe talk user with a “ticket” to “the globally oriented community of practice s/he wants to affiliate with” (ibid.).

One possible mixing strategy is the matrix-language model. In it, Bulgarian is the matrix language, while English is the imported language (Georgieva 2001, 136). Random mixing makes it difficult to identify a matrix language. There is no regularity in the code-mixing. Social meanings are not easily identifiable. Because of this haphazard nature, youth discourse, which is characterised by random mixing, stands much closer to the hybridity characterising globe talk than to the code-switching strategies observed in adult speech. On the basis of my observations of the linguistic landscape in Veliko Turnovo, I can say that in translanguaged signs in public inscriptions, we observe random mixing rather than applying the matrix-language model.

7. Translanguaged writing in the public landscape of Veliko Turnovo

Before I discuss the most important manifestations of translanguaged writings in my city, I will recapitulate the differences between the two main types of signs—mirror images and translanguaging. It is clear from the discussion so far that while mirror imaging aims to be an elite form of writing, translanguaging falls within the category of non-elite and grassroots writing. Symmetrical writing sticks to observing the rules of grammar, spelling, and orthography of two (sometimes three) languages and it strives to be “correct” and monoglossic (in the sense of observing the rules of each language). Mixed writing is recalcitrant and unpredictable; it defies monoglossic rules and by following its own rules of grammar and spelling, it becomes a form of heterographic writing. In addition, the two forms of

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public inscriptions show completely different histories of becoming. Mirror images have one original antecedent inscription, which is then converted into a reflected image. The process of becoming consists of two steps—creation and reflection. The resources they employ (linguistic and non-linguistic) are symmetrically arranged. There is a tendency to treat the elements belonging to the two (sometimes three) different codes as equal. Translanguaged signs are created at one time, drawing on and collaging the different resources available. These signs are asymmetrical—some of their elements are in the foreground (the dominant code), while others are in the background (the subordinate code).

Double writing involves the use of more than one language. Mirror images, discussed in the previous chapter, are a form of double writing. If we were to imagine the terms "monoglossic" and "heteroglossic" as the two end-points of a cline, mirror-images will be closer to the monoglossic point because their inscriptions contain features that we can associate with named languages. Another form of double writing is when the writer of a public sign employs in parallel two different languages or scripts and no translation of the inscription is provided. From the point of view of feature analysis, the linguistic features of these signs are grouped in such a way as to be recognised as belonging to named languages but such inscriptions are closer to the mixed form of writing. For the landscape I am describing, one of the languages is the local one (Bulgarian), while the other is global (English) (e.g., figure 6.3). There are cases, however, especially in shorter inscriptions, when part of the writing (usually a name) occurs in Latin script but it is difficult to identify the language to which the inscription as a whole belongs (e.g., figure 6.2). Forms of double writing in the Veliko Turnovo landscape typically include a combination of a Bulgarian word, which denotes the specific place where the sign is emplaced (e.g., a café, shop, etc.) and its name in English (though sometimes the language of the name is difficult or impossible to identify). The two words occur not only in different languages/scripts but also in different fonts and colours. Typically, the local language/script will be unmarked (situated on the left, in Bulgarian/Cyrillic and in smaller letter size), while the name, written in a foreign language, will be marked. The marked name occurs in Latin script/a foreign language and brighter colours and it is situated on the right or in the centre (figure 6.1 and 6.2).

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Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.2.

The two pictures illustrate double-written shop inscriptions. One of them is an optics shop called Leonardo, and the other is a clothes shop called Inkognito.

On longer inscriptions, involving whole sentences, the name is made to stand out by using Roman letters and typically a different colour or letter font. In the sign I have chosen for analysis, the name "SAMMY'S BAR" (figure 6.3) stands out because it is in red and in English (I recognise

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the language as English because of the linguistic feature of the possessive case):

ТЕРАСАТА НА SAMMY'S BAR РАБОТИ ЗА ВАС
/THE TERRACE OF SAMMY'S BAR IS OPEN FOR YOU/

Writing double signs is a way of avoiding problems with transcribing or transliterating names, which in most cases results from a knowledge gap in the language users.

Figure 6.3.

Sometimes the name of a shop can be foreign and it can be transcribed in Bulgarian. In the picture in figure 6.4 we see the name of a shop that sells Bulgarian shoes.

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Figure 6.4.

The name of the shop is English (I recognise it by the word "shoes"), but it occurs in its transcribed form in Cyrillic. The foreign code is the marked code and its markedness is reinforced by the use of larger letters and brighter colour. The unmarked part of the inscription stands in the background in smaller letters and in white. It says "БЪЛГАРСКИ ОБУВКИ," meaning "Bulgarian shoes." I will abstain from saying that the white colour is the colour of the unmarked code, but in the "SAMMY'S BAR" sign we have the same colour choices—red (bright for the marked code) and white for the unmarked. The shoe shop recruits Bulgarian clientele (not tourists) and the foreign name (though in its transcribed form) was chosen to denote the high quality of the products sold there. A picture of the product on both sides of the name is a signal for anyone who does not speak Bulgarian that this is a shoe shop.

This shoe shop inscription can be said to belong to the group of signs in which the mixing of languages and translanguaging is manifested in a grassroots transcription:

КОМФОРТ ШУУС
/COMFORT SHOES/

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The word *комфорт* (meaning "comfort") as spelt on the inscription does not reflect English pronunciation.[15] Most Bulgarian readers will pronounce it in the Bulgarian way and it will be understood because the word is "international" and exists as a borrowing in many European languages. "Shoes" is transcribed in a folk way, as "*шуус*."[16] The transcriber chose two characters (two letters *у*) to represent the English long vowel. Therefore, s/he had knowledge of the existence of long and short vowels in English; however, s/he did not know how to transcribe them into Bulgarian. In my opinion, the retrieval of the word "shoes" back into English will not be easy. The letters in the Bulgarian interpretation of the word do not match the original spelling in English (unlike in the word "comfort," where there is one-to-one letter correspondence). Perhaps this is why a picture is provided as a prompt for those who do not know that *шуус* and *обувки* stand for "shoes."

Another instance of grassroots transcription in mixed writing is the tourist agency Руал Травел. The agency has Bulgarian as the preferred code and thus the Bulgarian writing is situated in the top part of the sign against a red background colour. It says "ТУРИСТИЧЕСКА АГЕНЦИЯ" (tourist agency). At the same time, this part of the inscription stands slightly to the left (the place of unmarked, familiar code) in comparison with the name of the agency. The name occurs in the lower part and slightly to the right (the place of the marked code). The name is given as "РУАЛ ТРАВЕЛ," which could be interpreted as meaning "royal travel." The word *руал* (pronounced /rual/) evokes French pronunciation.[17] The word "travel," which is English, is transliterated rather than transcribed.[18]

The inscriptions on the sign entirely use the Cyrillic alphabet or the Bulgarian language because they are targeted at a Bulgarian clientele. The name of the agency sounds foreign and exotic (to match the destinations to which it offers tours). It is difficult to say whether it is French or English, but evoking foreign pronunciation is employed as a symbolic way of affiliating with the global world. The arrangement of the two parts of the writing follows the pattern observed so far—the local is on the left, while the "global" is slightly on the right.

[15] Following Danchev's rules for transcription, it should have been *къмфърт*.
[16] Danchev (1982, 75–76) recommends that the sound long /u:/ should be rendered in Bulgarian with one "у."
[17] This is my interpretation; I discussed this matter at a conference where there were French-speaking people and they interpreted it in the same way. However, it could well mean something else; for example, it could be an abbreviation of the first letters of the name of the owner.
[18] The correct transcription should have been "травъл."

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Figure 6.5.

Another type of translanguaged writing is mixing different systems of transliteration. There are specific sounds in the Bulgarian language that need special symbols to be rendered in Roman script in general and in the English language in particular. The most obvious examples among them are the fricative /ʒ/, denoted by the grapheme ж; the affricates /tʃ/, ts/, /dʒ/, and /ʃt/, denoted respectively by the graphemes ч, ц, дж, and щ; and the vocalic phoneme /ъ/. A. Danchev's system and the streamline system of transliteration offer for the consonants the following letters and digraphs: "zh" for "ж" and "ch" for "ч," "ts" for "ц" and "dzh" for "дж" and "sht" for "щ." The IPA symbol for the vowel "ъ" is /ɐ/ or /ɤ/ and the grapheme for transliteration from the streamline system is "a." Danchev's system differs from the streamline in that it transcribes the sound with the symbol /ă/ and transliterates it with the grapheme "u." In the present book, I touch upon only the transliteration of two graphemes — "ж" and "дж."

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Figure 6.6.

In the mirror image in figure 6.6, one can see the correct transliteration of the Bulgarian "дж" sound in the name of the street "Велчо Джамджията/Velcho Dzhamdzhiyata."[19] Along with this, another mirror image has an alternative transliteration.

[19] Velcho the Glazier, a respected Bulgarian revolutionary from the time of the Ottoman ruling period.

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Figure 6.7.

The "problematic" sound, occurring twice in the same name, manifests in two different transliterations—"dj" and "dzh." "Dj" does not belong to any of the official transliteration systems. It is a folk way of rendering the grapheme "дж." The affricate consists of two sounds /d/ and /ʒ/. The /ʒ/ part of the sound is represented by the single grapheme "j," instead of by the digraph "zh." Perhaps, this is due to French influence, since the grapheme "j" in English can represent the sound /ʒ/ only in names that are French borrowings.[20] This way of spelling "дж" is persistent in the landscape:

[20] For example, in a name like "Jacques." The letter "j" in English by itself represents the affricate /dʒ/ as in Jack, therefore a combination like "dj" is unacceptable for a transliteration into English.

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Figure 6.8.

There is another mirror image in "ХАН ХАДЖИ НИКОЛИ/HADJI NIKOLI INN."[21] Here, the grapheme "дж" is rendered as "dj." An alternative way of accounting for this way of transliterating is the influence of electronic communication—when people send text messages or viber messages or perform any other form of chat, they have to use a keyboard. This makes the use of long letter combinations or diacritic signs too complicated; therefore, using one letter instead of two, or two letters instead of three, makes writing easier. The habit of rendering ж/дж has been transferred from electronic writing to public writing. For comparison, to write "dzh" one needs three characters to substitute the Bulgarian grapheme, while for "dj" the letters are only two (similar to the Bulgarian spelling).

A similar problem presents the rendering of the letter "ж," for which both the streamline system and Danchev's system recommend the grapheme "zh." The mirror image in figure 4.6 shows a different substitution—with the grapheme "j" in the otherwise English interpretation of the inscription (we recognise the inscription as English because of the

[21] Hadzhi Nikoli, transliterated on the sign as Hadji Nikoli is the name of a respected merchant from the time of Ottoman rule.

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lexical item "monastery" and because the structure of the phrase is modifier-head). Road signs are regulated signs and this transliteration goes against the official requirements for transliteration in English. Despite similar "folk" transliterations and deviations from traditional orthographic rules, I still classify the above signs (4.6 and 6.8) as mirror images. They may defy the rules of transliteration and mix features from different languages, but the original and the image part of the sign are still present and are clearly discernible. Such imperfections can be treated more like language inconsistencies than like deliberate manipulations of linguistic resources.

Language mixing can be exploited deliberately not only to fill gaps of partial knowledge but also to manifest creativity. In figure 6.10, one can see the inscription on a souvenir shop window saying "HAPPY POTTER." The shop sells mainly (though not only) pot souvenirs. It is not difficult to make an allusion to the name Harry Potter, but those who know Cyrillic script will identify a deeper wordplay. The letter symbol "p" in Bulgarian denotes the sound /r/ and transliterates in Roman to "r." Therefore, the shop name functions as both "Happy Potter" (making and selling pottery) and as an allusion to Harry Potter (making magic and beauty).

Figure 6.9.

Mixing languages can be performed in an even more subtle way, which opens up the way to multiple interpretations. The inscription in figure 6.10 reads:

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FREEдом 21
Co-working space
Където идеите нямат ограничения
/Where ideas have no limits/

Figure 6.10.

The sign inscriptions are placed on two boards—the upper one has an English inscription, the lower one, a Bulgarian one. The name of the co-working space, however, is not entirely English. Playing on the word "Freedom," only the first part of the word is English, while the other half is Bulgarian. The English suffix "dom" occurs in Bulgarian letters (*дом* means "home"), which instantly brings about an additional interpretation, meaning "free home." Therefore, this co-working space can be pronounced either in the English way, as freedom, or as a mixed expression, which if pronounced in the "Bulgarian" way will sound /dɔm/,[22] meaning "home." The Cyrillic letters imply Bulgarian pronunciation and interpretation. The English word "free" suggests "Englishness" and English pronunciation. This deliberate code mixture was probably designed by someone who, if not a professional, had sufficient knowledge to manipulate the two languages at four levels simultaneously—morphological, semantic, phonetic, and spelling. The effect

[22] not /dəm/ as the rules of English pronunciation would require.

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of the language mixture is to produce an inscription open to any "digital nomad" who happens to be spending time in Veliko Turnovo.

Code blending may occur in other equally complicated "folk" (grassroots) ways. The shop inscription in figure 6.11 reads:

SOUVENIRS "MOLL4eto"

The intended interpretation is "A souvenir shop called Mollcheto." The plural ending in the word "souvenirs" might imply that the language of the inscription is English, but the name is not. The meaning of the name MOLL4eto is "the little mall," though, perhaps, it will be difficult for foreign visitors to interpret it in this way. The word is written in what I would call "folk writing Bulgarian in Roman script."

Figure 6. 11.

The original English word "mall" is borrowed in Bulgarian and is then respelt in Latin characters as "MOLL." As part of the lexical inventory of the Bulgarian language, the respelling reflects Bulgarian rather than English orthography. In addition, the word appears in the grammatical

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shape[23] of the Bulgarian diminutive form. It has the diminutive suffix "-che" (pronounced /tʃe/. The correct spelling of the word in Cyrillic is "МОЛЧЕТО," but in place of the letter "ч"[24] we see the number 4. This is because the Bulgarian word for "four" (*chetiri*) begins with the same sound and is spelt with the same letter. Therefore, the number 4 stands symbolically for the letter ч (ch). This is how young people (and not only young people) write Bulgarian when they use a keyboard (on a phone or computer). The spelling "MOLL4eto" is another instance of the keyboard form of writing transferred to public landscape writing.

English is not the only foreign language whose features are employed in the public inscriptions of Veliko Turnovo. An art shop (selling jewellery and leather) is called "Artissimo." The name is a coinage, combining the word "art" (perhaps, apart from English, used in other European languages, too) and the Italian superlative suffix "-issimo," suggesting perfect quality and taste. The imitation of "Italianness" through this linguistic feature symbolises artistry, creativity, and style.

Figure 6.12.

[23] Other features of Bulgarian grammar are definiteness and neuter gender expressed through the definite article "to," attached at the end of the word: *MOLL* (root)-*che* (diminutive suffix)-*to* (definite article, neuter gender).
[24] Transliterated as "ch," pronounced /tʃ/.

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Bulgarian is not totally absent from the shop inscription but the dominant code is the foreign. The shop is situated in one of the streets that leads from the historical old part to the centre:

art jewellery **Artissimo** leather fashion
бижутерия кожени изделия

It would be unfair to say that the shop seeks to attract only a foreign clientele. Rather, it includes it by advertising a different aspect of Bulgarian life—modern, creative, and open to accepting the global world.

The names of the sandwiches that are advertised at the little sandwich shop at a bus stop called "La Scalla САНДВИЧИ"[25] represent a different mixture of letters and languages. The name of the shop imitates Italian spelling: it is called ЛА СКАЛЛА.[26] The doubling of the letter *Л* makes the name *look* Italian. On the inscription (a menu of the sandwiches offered at the shop), Bulgarian features are dominant—including the script and most of the words.

Figure 6.13.

[25] The kiosk selling the sandwiches belongs to the pizzeria La Scalla.
[26] Consonants in Bulgarian are not normally doubled, unless there is a special grammatical rule that requires the addition of a suffix. Borrowed words are spelt according to the orthographic rules of Bulgarian.

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Here is the list of the sandwiches:

ИТАЛИАН / ЛА СКАЛЛА / ПИКАНТЕН / РИБА ТОН / ПИАЧЕНЦА /
САЛАМИ / ЛУКАНКА / ЧИКЪН / ВЕГАН / БЕКОН
"ITALIAN" / "LA SCALLA" / "PIKANTEN" / "TUNA FISH" /
"PIACENZA" / "SALAMI" /
"LOUKANKA" / "CHICKEN" / "VEGAN" / "BACON"

Италиан is ungrammatical in Bulgarian. The word used in this place should be an adjective with an appropriate morphological ending.[27] *Италиан* lacks the adjectival marker -*ski*.[28] It is not Italian either because it does not show Italian morphology.[29] We could interpret it as English, because it seems to be a transliterated form of "Italian." *Пиаченца* is a successful transliteration from Italian. The words *пикантен* and *риба тон*[30] are definitely Bulgarian. The word *салами* was probably not meant to be Bulgarian, because Bulgarian morphology does not recognise the "i" ending for a singular form of the word. "Salami" is a transliteration from English.[31] The word *луканка*[32] denotes Bulgarian food and has a Bulgarian name. *Веган* and *бекон* are used in Bulgarian as borrowings. The word *чикън* is the transcribed form of "chicken."

We can see that in this menu, the communicative component is rooted in the features of the Bulgarian language (script, lexical items). The features of the Italian language (imitation of spelling, transliteration of lexical items) are used symbolically.[33] English features (in borrowed, transliterated, and transcribed words) also have a symbolic function—both kind of foreign features provide the "link" between the small sandwich shop at the bus stop and the global world.

The "grammar" of this list deserves comment, too. When I was looking at it, I was asking myself what grammatical structures these names of food items represent. My conception of the grammatical structure of a menu list in Bulgarian is one in which the food item and the name of the item occur in an appositive construction, for example "Пица 'Маргарита'" (= a pizza called "Margarita"). Another way to refer to the food item is to

[27] *Италиански сандвич* /italianski sandvitʃ/, meaning "Italian-style sandwich."
[28] *Италиански* (Italianski), meaning "Italian."
[29] If it was Italian, its transliterated form would have been *италиано*.
[30] Meaning "piquant" and "tuna fish."
[31] The Italian word is *salame*.
[32] A kind of sausage.
[33] The shop offers sandwiches, but it is a branch of a pizzeria that is also called "La Scalla." The pizzeria still exists in the town, but the sandwich shop is no longer at the bus stop as it closed.

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use a noun with a pre-modifying adjective or a postmodifying prepositional construction. Examples are expressions like *луканков сандвич* or *сандвич с луканка*.[34] The menu here is just a list, comprising three truly Bulgarian words—*пикантен, риба тон*, and *луканка.* The first is an adjective, while the other two are nouns. The borrowings *веган* and *бекон* are nouns and we do not normally derive adjectives from them[35]. All the other items are non-Bulgarian words that do not circulate in everyday usage. If we were to construct the whole phrases describing the items of the menu, they would be of the appositional type, for example, *Сандвич "Пикантен," Сандвич "Веган*,*"*[36] and so on, that is, the items on the list will function as names. This underlying grammar will probably be restored by most Bulgarians, but for foreign speakers the menu will evoke different grammatical structures depending on the language/s they speak.

[34]The English glosses are "a loukanka sandwich" and "a sandwich with loukanka."
[35] We can derive an adjective from "веган–вегански" but the more frequent use is with the noun in a pre-modifying position, e.g "веган храни" (vegan foods).
[36] Sandwich "Piquant," Sandwich "Vegan."

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CHAPTER SEVEN

THE PICTURE BEHIND PUBLIC INSCRIPTIONS

1. The symbolic use of Bulgarian

The dominant language in a given environment typically has an informative function. Such is the case with the use of Bulgarian in the public landscape of Veliko Turnovo. Another language that is used informatively is English (in the translations of mirror images). The presence of any other foreign scripts, languages, and linguistic features is predominantly symbolic. This pattern, however, cannot be interpreted as the norm of language use in the particular locus.

Along with its informative function, Bulgarian can be used symbolically. This can happen through the exploitation of letter forms and shapes, whose role in the urban landscape is studied by a different branch of LLS, called typographic landscaping. Järlehed and Jaworski (2015) define typography as "the process of design, production and visual organization of letter-forms (shape, size, spacing, etc.)," whose role is "to construct and contest places, identities and relations of power" (Järlehed and Jaworski 2015, 117). Typography as a semiotic mode in its own right focuses on the material aspects of writing and the modes of its production—handwriting, printing, inscribing, scratching, and so on. It seeks to find the ways in which the written objects interact with the different discourses that circulate in the landscape into which they are emplaced.

What we see in figure 7.1 is a monolingual Bulgarian sign inscribed on the door of an art studio. It is a complex sign spread over two boards. The inscription on the first board reads:

ЛЕЧЕБНА ВОДА И ПАРАКЛИС НА СВЕТИ ВЕЛИКОМЪЧЕНИК
ГЕОРГИ ПОБЕДОНОСЕЦ
/HEALING WATER AND CHAPEL DEDICATED TO SAINT GREAT
MARTYR GEORGE THE VICTORIOUS/

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The inscription on the lower board is a list of the diseases that the water is supposed to heal.[37]

Figure 7.1.

The water in the studio, springing from the ground below, was discovered accidentally. It is believed to be healing. The artist who owns the studio decided that this healing spring should be made available for public use and announced this on the door of the studio. He had a fountain built inside, where visitors can worship the Holy Martyr St George and use the healing water while the artist is busy doing his artistic work. Choosing Bulgarian as the language for the inscription is not because its purpose is to recruit only Bulgarian pilgrims. The shape of the letters resembles the shape of the letters of Old Bulgarian spelling, though the Bulgarian used is the language of the average modern Bulgarian. The imitation of the Old

[37] ПОМАГА ПРИ ОЧНИ, СТАВНИ, КОЖНИ БОЛЕСТИ, АНЕМИИ, АЛЕРГИИ, БЕЗПЛОДИЕ, ГАСТРИТИ, КОЛИТИ, ЯЗВИ, СТРЕС, ЗАБОЛЯВАНИЯ НА ОТДЕЛИТЕЛНАТА СИСТЕМА /
THE WATER IS GOOD FOR EYE DISEASES, JOINT DISORDERS, SKIN DISEASES, ANAEMIAS, ALLERGIES, INFERTILITY, GASTRITIS, COLITIS, ULCER, STRESS, DISEASES OF THE EXCRETORY SYSTEM.

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Bulgarian spelling has a symbolic function. It refers back to times past when people believed in miracles. Since the spring water is considered to be miraculous, this imitation symbolises belief and mysticism (values that were cherished in the past). Despite the fact that the language is modern, there are letters on the board that are no longer used in contemporary writing. These are "ы," "Ї," and "ѣ." Also, the name ГЕОРГИ (George) is spelt with the symbol "ω," which is not used in modern Bulgarian, either. In addition, there are abbreviations of two words. These are the words for *Святий* (Saint) and *великомъченик* (great martyr). The abbreviated words are in Church Slavonic, which is the mode in which they are inscribed on icons in churches. At the end of the inscription we see the internet address of the studio, zografnica.com. Internet addresses are usually spelt in Latin, as is this one; however, it does not stand out but rather merges with the rest of the inscription because the shape of the Latin letters resembles the shape of the Old Bulgarian letters. Thus, with the help of script imitation, the foreign letters are visually absorbed into the rest of the inscription on the sign. The diseases on the list are written in different colours, and the rhythm of the colour alternation parallels the groups into which they appear on the board.

The intended audience for this sign is predominantly Bulgarian and presumably people with health problems and deep beliefs in miraculous healing. However, foreign visitors are not excluded and a translation for them is provided on a separate signboard (figure 7.3):

A HEALING SPRING AND A CHAPEL TO ST GEORGE THE VANQUISHER[38]

The stylised shape of the letters is applied to both the English translation[39] and the ordinary "no parking" sign (figure 7.2).

[38] "The Vanquisher" is the translation on the board; my translation is "The Victorious."

[39] The form of the English letters is not identical with the Bulgarian letters, but they are slightly elongated thus resembling the original inscription.

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Figure 7.2.

Figure 7.3.

The imitation of Old Bulgarian script is symbolical in another way, too. It shows pride in Bulgarian cultural heritage, starting from the miracles and ending with the Bulgarian alphabet.[40] The letter shape imitating the Old

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[40] Bulgarian people cherish their alphabet, created after a long struggle with the authorities of the Byzantine Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches, who advocated that worshipping could be performed only in the three "divine" languages—Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. The two brothers St Cyril and St Methodius created the first Bulgarian alphabet (in 855) and all Bulgarians celebrate this event on 24 May, known as Alphabet Day.

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Bulgarian script is also found on other inscriptions, especially in the Samovodska Charshiya[41] (figure 7.4). The inscription “КОЖАРСКО АТЕЛИЕ//LEATHER CRAFT” likewise symbolises pride in the historical past and cultural heritage through the form of the letters. In such inscriptions the imitation of the Old Bulgarian script has an aesthetic function. To produce it, one needs to possess specific calligraphic skills, which is why it is found mostly on inscriptions for artists’ studios or craft shops. In this sense, the use of script imitation is indexical of someone possessing the skills to produce it.

Figure 7.4.

Another instance of the symbolic use of Bulgarian is the use of the obsolete spelling that was in use up to the 1940s. It required that all masculine nouns ending in a consonant sound should be spelt with the letter

[41] An old market street now turned into a tourist attraction with small craft shops selling handmade souvenirs.

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"ъ" at the end, which was not pronounced.[42] I would not say that its occurrence in the public landscape could be interpreted as an attempt to revive this way of writing[43]; however, its presence in the public landscape is relatively persistent.

Figure 7.5.

In figure 7.5 the inscription reads *ДЮКЯНЪ*,[44] which is naturally emplaced in a very old house in the old part of the town. The inscription in figure 7.6 is on one of the most popular restaurants in Veliko Turnovo, Shastlivetsa[45]—"РЕСТОРАНТЪ 'ЩАСТЛИВЕЦА.'"

[42] The spelling rule became obsolete after a reform that was carried out in 1945. This happened at the dawn of the communist regime and had not only linguistic but also political significance.
[43] It is interesting to note that the name of a respected Bulgarian newspaper spells its name as *Банкеръ*, meaning, "bank manager," "banker."
[44] *Dyukyan* /djukjan/—an obsolete word for "shop."
[45] Named after the famous Bulgarian writer Aleko Konstantinov, known as "Shtastlivetsa," meaning "the happy man," "the happy guy."

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Figure 7.6.

2. The symbolic use of foreign languages

The form of a foreign script can likewise be imitated in the symbolic use of languages. For example, the shop inscription in figure 7.7 indicates that they sell Greek-style gyros. The shop inscription is written in English, but the script is patterned after modern Greek script. I recognise the language of the name of the shop, “ALEK’S GYROS,” as English because of the possessive case form, but the letter form makes it *look* Greek. The effect of looking Greek (especially when looked at from a distance) is reinforced by the combination of colours—white and blue—which associate the signs with the colours of the Greek flag. The “Greekness” of the inscription does not index a Greek minority, living in the city, but symbolises the style of food sold there.

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Figure 7.7.

Figure 7.8.

On the door of the shop we can see temporary inscriptions (placed there during the period of the Covid-19 pandemic), written on paper (figure 7.8). All these signs are written in Bulgarian, informing potential clients that they deliver food, that the shop is closed, and that they only take orders for food at the door. One of the notices written on paper contains information about the temporary opening hours.

Another symbolic use of a foreign language is the imitation of spelling. Such is the case with the imitation of Italian spelling to symbolise Italian food in places to eat. The presence of the language in the landscape does not index the presence of a strong national community (although there are Italians living in neighbouring villages). Knowledge of Italian is not as firmly established in Bulgarian education as English is. Nevertheless, although the language is offered and taught in some schools and at the university as a second foreign language, it is not as widely opted for as English and Spanish. I would say that the uses of Italian in the local landscape are based on "folk knowledge," personal interest, and ambition to create a particular foreign (Italian) atmosphere.

The inscription on the La Scalla pizzeria (figure 7.9) has the name spelt with a double "l." The language in the rest of the inscription is recognisable as Italian.[46] From this point of view, the name must be considered to be wrongly spelt because the expected spelling in Italian would have the word spelt only with one "l."[47] Apparently, the word was deliberately written like this. It was adopted as the name and the logo of the firm, which also sold other types of food at kiosks in other places around the town. The doubling of the letter makes the inscription *look* Italian because the doubling of consonants is considered a characteristic feature of Italian spelling (the conclusion is the result of folk interpretation because

[46] "PIZZA AL TAGLIO" meaning "pizza by the slice."
[47] *La scala* meaning "staircase."

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not all words in Italian are spelt like this). Spelling imitation can be observed in other inscriptions around the city, all of them bearing "Italian" connotations: for example, the Artissimo shop (figure 6.12).

Figure 7.9.

There is a tendency for the symbolic use of languages to be employed by places to eat to designate the particular foods served there. While Italian is reserved for pizzerias and cafés, Bulgarian is used for "БАНИЧАРНИЦА"[48] (figure 7.10) and "English" for "Dönner & Gyros" (figure 7.11), serving Turkish and Greek-style food (with Bulgarian translation provided, if necessary). These different inscriptions co-exist in the landscape, the language on each serving as a symbol of the kind of food offered there, while at the same time indexing the country of its origin.

[48] *Banicharnitsa* sells Bulgarian snacks (pastry and pies). One such item is called *banitsa*, after which the food shop takes its name.

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Figure 7.10.

Figure 7.11.

3. Foreign language learning

Foreign language instruction, one of the main sources of foreign language use, is documented in public space. On Tsarevets Square, a glass plate is emplaced to remind graduate students from Arcus College of their reunion each year (figure 7.12). The inscription says:

> THIS IS THE MEETING POINT OF THE GRADUATES OF THE AMERICAN COLLEGE ARCUS. EACH YEAR ON THE 24TH MAY 7.30. FIRST GRADUATE CLASS 2003–2008.

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On top is the motto of the college:

KNOWLEDGE FREEDOM PERFECTION

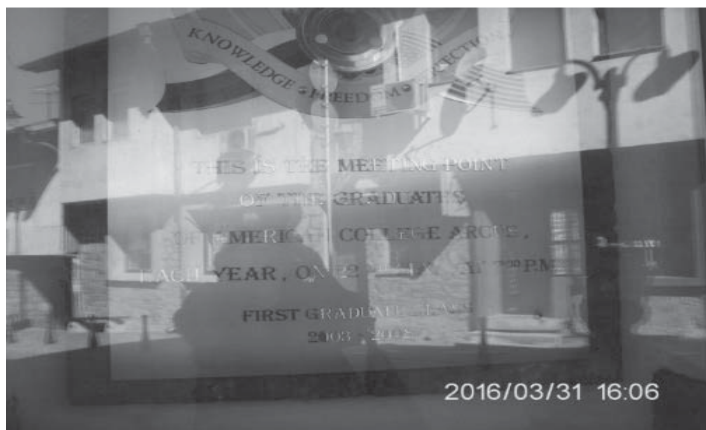

Figure 7.12.

The glass plate is attached to the wall of one of the buildings in Tsarevets Square. It is written only in English with no Bulgarian translation. The exclusion of Bulgarian from this inscription symbolises a high level of education and successful professional realisation. The message on the inscription targets a very restricted audience. Symbolically, it stands at the heart of Veliko Turnovo—on the square in front of Tsarevets Hill to represent the ambition, aspiration, and achievements of the younger generation.

Language learning need not be professional. It can have grassroots realisations, many of which were discussed in chapter 6. The inscriptions in figure 7.13a and 7.13b are instances of a grassroots use of English, where language users tackle linguistic problems by exploiting the resources of the folk knowledge they possess.

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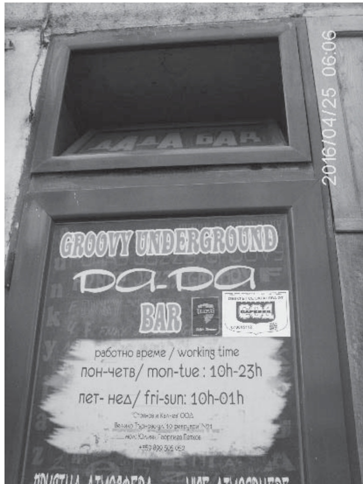

Figure 7.13a.

Figure 7.13b.

The preferred code for the name of the bar is English with no Bulgarian translation. The name is:

GROOVY UNDERGROUND DA-DA BAR

Below the name is a list of the services offered in the bar. It is a double list, where the Bulgarian occupies the place of the local (unmarked) code, while the English list takes the right part (the marked code, in this case the global language). The symmetrical layout follows the format of mirror-image signs, but the original writing (on the left) is not symmetrically reflected on the right. “РОЖДЕНИ ДНИ” is not reflected as “BIRTHDAY PARTIES” (perhaps for the lack of space), while “HAPPY HOUR OFFERS” does not have an equivalent in the Bulgarian list (perhaps for the lack of an equivalent expression). This indicates the relative “independence” of the two inscriptions. The English name on the top recruits “universal audience”—anyone who likes this kind of music is welcome to the bar. The word for the service “happy hour” does not have a counterpart expression in Bulgarian (though such offers are made in shops, bars, and cafes). I have seen inscriptions in other places written as “lucky hour,” but I have not seen it so far occur as a Bulgarian expression (“щастлив час”) on public inscriptions. The practice of offering a happy hour is already circulating in public space, but the words denoting the practice have not yet become part of the repertoire of the Bulgarian language. To avoid problems like correct

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translation (transcription or transliteration), the authors included it as an item only in the "foreign" list of services. At the same time, the owners of the bar were aware of something different—organising birthday parties for Bulgarians is different from organising birthday parties for the foreigners living here (perhaps they will not be interested in having a birthday party at this bar or perhaps they will not stay long enough to celebrate their birthdays here). That is why they only offered the service in the Bulgarian list for local visitors. To restore the "symmetry" (actually the two lists are asymmetrical) of the mirror-image format, they relied on the use of the word "happy." The expression "happy hour" in "HAPPY HOUR OFFERS" visually and rhythmically resembles the expression "happy birthday." The precise translation of the Bulgarain expression is "birthday [celebrations] and parties." Its English counterpart is "PARTIES" and "HAPPY HOUR OFFERS." Thus, the sign-writer, knowing that foreign visitors to the bar will probably not be interested in having birthday parties, offered them "a substitute" of the service—a happy hour offer. Local visitors are not excluded from the happy hour offer, but it does not occur on the Bulgarian list. The substitute expression is not yet officially recognised as belonging to the lexical inventory of the local language. In such cases, ordinary language users manifest uncertainty about whether they should use the translated expression or how to transcribe the foreign expression, if they are to use the term as a borrowing. This explains why in the sign under discussion, the happy hour service occurs only on the English list—those who can read it can make use of the offer.[49]

РОЖДЕНИ ДНИ И ПАРТИТА / PARTIES, HAPPY HOUR OFFERS
(BIRTHDAY [CELEBRATIONS] AND PARTIES)

4. Layering of signs

The semiotisation of a place is a process that develops in time. In a particular place we can observe different layers of signs, each emplaced in a different period of time. Signs co-exist in their layered arrangement, each of them contributing to the gestalt of the landscape. In figure 7.14 there is a sign complex in front of the castle of the Bulgarian Tsars. The complex contains two signs belonging to different historical layers. The first information

[49] Here is a gloss of the list:
ПРИЯТНА АТМОСФЕРА, ОТЛИЧНА МУЗИКА И ЗВУК, РОЖДЕННИ ДНИ И ПАРТИТА, СТУДЕНИ НАПИТКИ, ЛЯТНА ГРАДИНА
NICE ATMOSPHERE, EXCELLENT MUSIC AND SOUND SYSTEM, PARTIES, HAPPY HOUR OFFERS, COLD DRINKS, SUMMER GARDEN

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board is the typical trilingual sign (Bulgarian-Russian-German) from the communist era. It relies heavily on informative inscriptions. The second one was emplaced after the year 2000 and employs linguistic and other semiotic modalities. It contains a graphic representation of the ancient building and an imaginative visual reconstruction thereof. The only use of language to be seen on the second plate is the name of the building—the Patriarchal ensemble.

Figure 7.14.

The two signs co-exist in complex symbiosis. The first provides historical facts and is open to broad but, in a way, limited audiences—only to the speakers of the three languages used there, one of them being the local one. The other sign has a short bilingual mirror inscription and is open to broader audiences through the use of English (as an international language), reflected in the mirror image. The visual representation is open to everybody, disregarding the languages they speak. Through the imaginary reconstruction of the ruined historical building depicted on the sign, tourists can interpret history in an unbiased way. While the "communist" sign symbolises the communist era (itself part of the history of Bulgaria), it is still functional in the sense that it presents objective facts about medieval Bulgarian history. People who are professionally engaged with the study of history or are personally keen on learning more about the history of Bulgaria

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are likely to read the signs. To communicate these facts, the sign relies heavily on verbal representation. Tourists in the communist era were construed as people who needed to be informed (about the country's history). They are represented as human beings whose cognitive capacities are foregrounded. The visual representation on the contemporary sign appeals to the visitors' imaginations. Modern tourists are no longer supposed only to know. They are free to enjoy, imagine, reflect, and experience. Thus, the two layers of the sign complex work together embodying different ideologies and indexing groups of citizens and visitors belonging to diferent times, but at the same time complementing each other by exploiting different semiotic modalities.

5. The "dominant" language

The dominant language in the landscape of Veliko Turnovo is Bulgarian, although very often (especially in tourist areas) it is accompanied by translations in English and other languages. There are areas in the public space, however, in which English is the dominating code. On the door of the real estate agency (figure 7.15) "CENTURY HOMES" (the name of the agency) occurs in English and is placed at the top and in large letters. The Bulgarian inscription is at the bottom, in much smaller letters. Next to it, and contributing to the "foreignness" of the landscape, is a Japanese cultural centre, together with the Piccolo restaurant (the name and advertisement for which are written entirely in English).

Figure 7.15.

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In the advertisements for homes for sale in the window (written on paper), English is not the only language one can see. Russian is the other foreign language used for advertising real estate properties. The presence of the two foreign languages indexes a foreign clientele, but not compact communities formed by newcomers. It reflects the process of people selling and buying but not necessarily settling. All the inscriptions on these signs are both informative and persuasive (advertisements). They inform in a way different from the information boards in tourist areas. They inform in order to persuade clients to buy.

6. Sign development

The design and inscriptions of signs undergo development. For exapmle, the signs of the City Pub, a popular snack bar, used to have a double language inscription combining features of both English and Bulgarian (figure 7.16). The inscription says:

A Place For Friends City Pub СНЕК БАР
[A place for friends, which is a snack bar and is called City Pub]

After some repair work, the inscription was changed to contain very little language and be written entirely in English (figure 7.17).

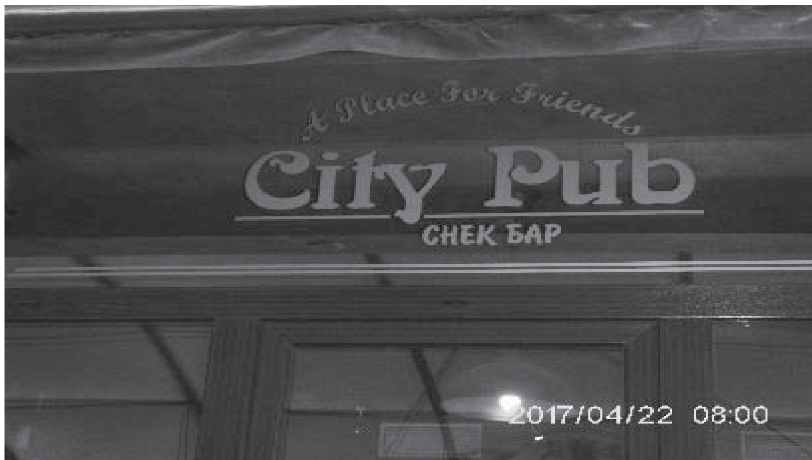

Figure 7.16.

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Figure 7.17.

The sign in figure 7.17 could be emplaced in any urban environment. There is nothing in it to index its Bulgarian location. The inscription symbolises global practices and "merges" with the broad world.

The sign complex of the Shastlivetsa restaurant did not undergo any metamorphosis after repair work (figure 7.18). There are two inscriptions on this restaurant—one English and one Bulgarian—but the two do not constitute a mirror image. Although the Bulgarian inscription occupies a place in the periphery, it is not marginalised. It stands in a richly decorative framework and adopts the obsolete spelling with "ъ" at the end of the word. This alludes to the urban atmosphere from the beginning of last century, after the liberation from Ottoman rule when Aleko Konstantinov (Shastlivetsa) lived. The translation of the name in English does not follow the normative rules of transliteration. While the "щ" grapheme is rendered correctly as "sht" (according to the streamline system), the "ц" grapheme, which should be rendered as "ts," is rendered as "c" (following the Czech-based system of transliteration). To a certain extent, this is in accordance with the strategy of the "retro" style of the restaurant, but the mixing of the two transliteration

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systems may cause confusion in foreigners. They would mispronouce the name by interpreting the letter "c" as /k/ instead of as /ts/[50]:

РЕСТОРАНТЪ ЩАСТЛИВЕЦА [on the left, with the clock in the yellow framework]
RESTAURANT SHASTLIVECA / PIZZA AND PASTA

As the preferred code, English is placed centrally and occurs in larger letters. Along with the translation of the Bulgarian inscription, there is an English (because of the conjunction "and" in the *pizza and pasta* expression) part, inviting foreign visitors.

The histories of the signs of the two places (the café and the restaurant) index alignment with different values and manifest different strategies for recruiting their clientele. The snack bar is a place where people go for a drink and entertainment. The expected type of visitor is a student, an intellectual, or someone who is "globally minded." The restaurant, on the other hand, adheres to local values by reminiscing via retro images. It advertises and serves home-cooked food (though pizza and pasta are present as symbols of international food), bears the name of a well-known Bulgarian writer, and aims at presenting authentic regional atmosphere (modern and open to the world but not global). As the establishment is situated on the way from the modern town to the old part of the town, its target clientele are family visitors and tourists (both Bulgarian and from abroad).

Figure 7.18.

[50] I discussed this inscription at a conference where there were participants from different countries, speaking different languages. They all admitted that they would read the name out as /ʃtastliveka/ and advised that the "error" should be corrected.

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7. The “backstage” life of public signs

Fully aware of the crucial role of public signs in social life, people can treat them in most unexpected ways. They can cherish them as souvenirs and old signs and plaques (mostly from the time of the communist era) are sold at an antique shop in Samovodska Charshiya street. The name sign of the shop itself is in English (figure 7.19)—“ANTIQUE SHOP”—and is difficult to spot among the other objects offered for sale, such as plaques with public inscriptions. The plaque just beneath the “ANTIQUE SHOP” sign reads “ОБРАЗЦОВ ХИГИЕНИЧЕН ДОМ.”[51]

Figure 7.19.

[51] “A model, well-cleaned home.”

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Figure 7.20.

During the communist era, public authorities were empowered to control everything, including the private lives of ordinary citizens. After the necessary inspection, some homes were given the privilege of having such signs attached to the doors of their houses. To have one's house marked like this was a matter of honour and pride. In the present context, the plate is off-stage, deprived of its agency. It is sold for its symbolic value—the communist past. The potential owner would most probably buy it out of nostalgia (whatever this word may imply[52]). These public signs are sold to collectors. I have no idea what a person could do with a sign like this, but the emplacement of a "ОБРАЗЦОВ ХИГИЕНИЧЕН ДОМ" ("a model, well-cleaned home") sign on one's door in our time would most probably function like flouting the maxim of relevance as described by P. Grice (1991). It will retain its symbolic value, but with newly acquired indexical

[52] Generally, most people hated the communist regime, but I think that they did not hate themselves and their lives at that time. Most people of my generation, including myself, would think with nostalgia about our childhood and young years spent during the communist era. Political regimes come and go and they do influence people's lives, but each person's life is unique and saying that one is nostalgic about their past (be it communist or not) does not necessarily imply that one is nostalgic about the regime.

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meanings and interpretations related to its new environment. In figure 7.20 more plates are exposed for sale:

НЕ ВКЛЮЧВАЙ БЕЗ РАЗРЕШЕНИЕ [do not switch on without permission]
МЯСТО ЗА ПУШЕНЕ [smoking area]
УЛИЦА ДУНАВ [Dounav Street]
ВНИМАНИЕ ВИСОКО НАПРЕЖЕНИЕ ОПАСНО ЗА ЖИВОТА [watch out high voltage line life threatening]

Most of the signs reflecting mundane life from that time are regulative (bans or permissions) or street names. They have a simple layout and contain no translation into other languages.

8. The gestalt picture

When a language is used informatively as the dominant language in a given environment, people can employ other semiotic modalities to load their inscriptions with symbolic meanings. The manipulation of the typographic aspects of a script and obsolete forms of spelling can prove to be particularly fruitful. Thus the local language and script can stand out in the landscape. It is not considered simply as the local unmarked code against which the global code is infused. It is considered a language in its own right, standing on a par with the alternative code.

The immitation of foreign letter shape and spelling (Greek and Italian) can result in creative interpretations symbolising other countries and cultures. The recontextualisations of these scripts open up a place for the "other" in the local landscape. This "other" stops being an anonymous global "other" and becomes someone who belongs somewhere, someone who comes from a concrete place, from a country and culture that has a name. Such a kind of "otherness" symbolises diversity, perhaps world-scale superdiversity mirrored in the small local space.

The global language (English), along with Bulgarian, in its informative function stands in the landscape as a tool for helping people orient themselves in the order incribed in the landscape. Its symbolic functions are dual—it can be interpreted as the symbol of prestige (in the form of high-quality education) and as a symbol of affiliation with the global world. As a symbol of prestige, English can be used independently, indexing a limited Bulgarain audience (figure 7.12). As a grassroots realisation, the use of English symbolises affiliation with global practices. It can be manifested in the creative use of language substitutes based on spelling and rhythmic resemblances—such as "happy hour offer" instead of

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"(happy) birthday party" (figure 7.13b). Such a use of substitutes betrays a knowledge gap that needs to be filled. The happy hour offer is a practice that emerged comparatively recently in local discourse. The Bulgarian language offers a linguistic expression for translation, but people do not seem to accept it as a linguistic practice of saying *щастлив час* (happy hour). Thus language opens up a space for a new word to be borrowed. How this newly-borrowed word should be spelt in Bulgarian and the stylistic nuances it will acquire in language use are the subject of linguistic and philological studies. The owner of the café compensated for this lack of knowledge by including the English expression in the English list of services, while putting a different service on the Bulgarian list. Despite the gap of linguistic knowledge, the sign-producer was aware of another thing—s/he had pragmatic intuitition and cultural knowledge that birthday parties are organised in different ways by local people and by foreign people living in the country. Therefore, s/he decided to invite everyone to a happy hour offer, while only inviting Bulgarians to organise birthday parties in the café.

We can discern two major layers of public signs accumulated over time in the local landscape—the ones that were emplaced during the communist era and still remain in the landscape and the signs that were emplaced in our time. Some of the communist signs were incorporated in contemporary space and are still functioning. These include the trilingual signs discussed above, street name signs in less central streets, and certain commemorative plaques. Other signs from that time have been deprived of their agency but are waiting to be re-emplaced, recontextualised, and reinterperted in their new "TimeSpace" environments (cf. chapter 6, 6).

The signs in the contemorary landscape undergo development. One trend of development is towards "globalisation." This implies adopting English as the dominant and sometimes the only code of inscription, as is the case with the City Pub. Through such a strategy local spaces are "transcontextualised" and made parts of the global world. The recent inscription of the City Pub is emplaced in a Bulgarian place, but there is nothing in it to index its geophysical location. A sign like this could function successfully in any urban environment. The strategy of the Shastlivetsa restaurant produces voice in the local context (cf. chapter 1, 5.5 and chapter 6, 1 and 6, 3). Despite the dominance of English on its inscription, it stays Bulgarian and in Bulgaria. Through the use of the foreign language, the visitor will be invited to the restaurant where he will be given a flavour not only of the local cuisine but of the local culture as well. The "wrong" transliteration of the Bulgarian name will make the foreign visitor hesitate about its pronunciation and this will certainly trigger questions concerning Bulgarian language, spelling, writers, literature, history, and culture, in short—life.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE SIGNS

1. The participation framework

While the participants actively involved in the production of public signs are crucially important, so are the participants who are supposed to read the inscriptions, interpret their meanings, and act on them once the signs are brought into existence. We can broadly classify participants into two groups—sign-makers and sign-consumers. For the lack of a better term, I use the word "consumers," although I realise that this may not be the most appropriate label. "Readers," however, is even less precise because those who read the inscriptions are not supposed simply to read them. David Malinowski (2009, 115–16) makes an analogy between the production of public signs and the performance of speech acts, which was discussed in chapter 1. Taking this into consideration we cannot imagine that signs are put in public space just to be read. They require an adequate uptake, which may vary from reacting in an expected way to becoming informed about something or to being persuaded to buy something.

Identifying sign-makers and sign-consumers is not an easy task. At first, we can liken the dyad to the prototypical pair in the process of communication—speaker/writer and hearer/reader. The sociologist E. Goffman (1990) dissected these concepts into a range of speaker and hearer roles. Similarly, to describe participation in public space we need to identify the different types of agents and agency. B. Spolski (2009, 31–32) offers a deconstruction of the role of the sign-maker in public space. In the first place, we need someone who considers the emplacement of a sign necessary. Typically, we will associate this with any authority in the position of setting rules for signs. The initiator need not be the owner of the sign. Furthermore, neither the initiator nor the owner need be the actual producers of a public inscription. The actual production of a sign will presuppose the recruitment of various types of participants—designers, artists, technicians, perhaps translators, if the inscription of the sign is supposed to occur in a foreign language. The authorities are not the only initiators of the production of public signage. Sometimes the intended sign

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consumers will make the occurrence of a sign necessary. For example, if a place is of interest to tourists, translations of inscriptions or inscriptions in foreign languages will be expected to occur in the public space to help people orient themselves. Not all signs need to be initiated by an authority. A paper note attached to a window or to a door does not need official permission to be put there. In addition, there are signs that are not only made without permission but also go against public regulations.

Discussing the participants in the process of sign-making, Spolski (ibid.) pays particular attention to the language-management authority. The government is a significant participant, who attempts to control the contents, form, and language of public signs. The authorities set a specific policy on language choice, based on national, local, religious, or ethnic grounds. A sign has informative content but the choice of the language in which it is written reflects a symbolic value of some or all the participants.

Not all the actors that participate in the formation of the linguistic landscape are equally noticeable. Ben-Rafael (2009, 41) points out that some participants are more visible than others. In addition, some act individually, while others perform as corporate actors. Thus, they turn the public space into a highly contested habitat. This comes from the fact that, on the one hand, they have to fit into the common framework (follow the rules set by the authorities), while, on the other, they have to set themselves apart within the common space. Everyone who enters into this social arena struggles against everyone else for the public's attention. Participants need to do so because they aim to attract potential clients who might be interested in certain services or goods or, perhaps, stir up public interest. Thus, social actors aim at desired goals by presenting to others the most favourable images of themselves. As a result, the presentation of self in a beneficial light ("frontstage") is a major driving force in public space (Goffman 1990; Scollon and Scollon 2003; Ben-Rafael 2009). It encourages actors to struggle for "their difference" and this struggle is chronicled in the linguistic items that make up the landscape (Ben Rafael 2009, 45).

Competing over the attention of the multitude, social actors need to take into consideration the different values, cultural codes, predispositions, and preferences that the sign consumers manifest. The necessity to do so arises from the commercial character of the public space—the services and needs that are offered there must respond to the clients' cost-and-benefit considerations. This factor balances the differences that are engendered by the self-presentation principle. Balancing the differences leads to convergence in the designing of LL items. Linguistic items in the landscape are bound to present their services or needs as responding rationally to public needs. They must anticipate clients' expectations and such anticipations

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play an important part in LL structuration. Instead of becoming a collection of disparate signs asserting unique identities, the landscape becomes a structured whole, in which the linguistic items display a convergent design (ibid.).

Telling others which social group you belong to is as important as telling them who you are. Participants in communication must exhibit their allegiance to a given public group. While, on the one hand, actors struggle to reveal their uniqueness, on the other hand they need to claim their affiliation to a certain group. Ben-Rafael refers to this affiliation as *collective identity* (ibid., 46). The principle of collective identity attracts potential clients on the basis of common fellowship, shared interests, and likeness. Sign-makers say who their clients are. This principle is of particular importance in multicultural societies, where regional, ethnic, or religious particularisms are widely spread. If a certain social milieu claims to be multicultural (and this necessarily implies being tolerant of sociocultural differences and their institutionalisations), then one would expect more room allowed in public space for the expression of different identities.

2. The portrayal of participants on public signs

Social actors in public space are portrayed on signs from two different perspectives. From the first perspective, the participants act from "their side" and their aim is to distinguish themselves from others. This perspective focuses on the relation of the linguistic items to actors. It combines what Ben-Rafael (2009, 48) discusses as "the presentation of self," where the aspiration of the participants is to contrast themselves with others, and the "collective identity perspective," where linguistic items convey meaning in terms of identity markers. From the second perspective, the linguistic items are used to emphasise the relation to clients (sign consumers) and the perceptions of their motives. The spotlight is on the differential uses of linguistic resources, which are related to specific segments of the public. This perspective combines the good-reasons principle and the power-relation structuration principle. We can say that in this case the actions of the participants are directed to "the other side."

R. Scollon and S. Scollon (2003, 95–98) offer an alternative model of participant interaction in public space. The interaction takes place between two general groups of participants—productive and receptive participants. Productive participants include authors, writers, designers, and artists. Receptive participants are considered the most important type and their group embraces readers, consumers, and viewers. The authors also talk about represented participants who play an important part in the relationship

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between the signs and their producers. Scollon and Scollon (ibid.) discuss three types of relationships between the participants. In the first place, there is the relationship between the sign-producer and the participants who are represented in the sign. Secondly, there are the relationships between the participants represented in the picture. Finally, there are the relationships between the represented participants and the sign's consumers (viewers, readers, users). Text (and/or image) participants are represented on the signs through linguistic relations (main and subordinate clauses), the relations between picture and text, and the relations between picture and picture. It is the relationships between the viewers of the image and the represented participants that is of particular interest. They can be of three types—relationships of contact, relationships of social distance, and relationships of attitude (ibid., 96).

3. The tourist in the local landscape

As C. Thurlow and A. Jaworski (2011, 187–218) remark, there is a dialectical relationship between tourism and globalisation. As the largest international trade, tourism is regarded not only as an important economic activity but also as a field for fruitful research and detailed analysis of social and cultural practices in which tourism is reflected and by which it is experienced. In addition, tourism is viewed as "a manifestation of globalization" (ibid., 188). The two discursive formations can be analysed as both economic and semiotic projects, working as a pair. Tourism, like advertising is a service industry and, as such, it is highly semioticised.

One of the characteristics of elite tourism, which Thurlow and Jaworski (2011, 191–93) discuss, is the exploitation of meaningful silence as a semiotic resource for both advertising luxurious tourism and making it a global semioscape. In their view, silence is a key marker of both luxury and social status. Local adaptations, transformations, and recontextualisations of this principle can be observed in hotels, restaurants, and coffee bars in the tourist area of Veliko Turnovo. The restaurant sign discussed in relation to mirror images (figure 5.5) is offering excellent food and a beautiful view of wonderful scenery. To advertise the restaurant (situated on the top floor of the building), the sign-maker relied on visual elements—the view from the top is presented in the picture and the menu is there too, to be read in silence by visitors. The words in the inscription, meaning "Welcome", "at the top" and "BBQ," do not index a particular type of speaker. They represent the anonymous and unobtrusive voice of someone whose presence is not supposed to interfere with the atmosphere of silence and peaceful relaxation. The service personnel (for example, waiters) are not present in

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the picture, nor are they shown talking to the guests of the restaurant, who are there “to be pampered and indulged” (Thurlow and Jaworski 2011, 197). The fact that the guests are special and that nobody and nothing should impinge on their freedom is signalled by the emptiness of the restaurant in the picture and by the absence not only of personnel but also of other visitors as well.

We can compare the “non-interactive represented participation” that Thurlow and Jaworski discuss (ibid., 196) with E. Goffman’s (1966) principle of “civil inattention,” which is based on the act of not focusing attention on the other and on being seen not to be focusing attention on her/him. Thus, non-interactive participation can be considered to be a form of civil inattention. The personnel are there to do things for guests, not to disturb them.

The principle of non-interactive participation is manifested in the inscription in figure 6.3, whose meaning is “The terrace of Sammy’s Bar is open for you.” Once again, the locution expresses the voice of an anonymous somebody. This is expressed in the non-human subject of the sentence—“the terrace.” The generalised pronoun in “for you” implies that anyone who chooses to go there is special. Instead of reading a menu (linguistic expressions), potential guests can see the drinks offered there (visual representation). Like the “top restaurant” discussed above, the terrace of the coffee bar offers a view of beautiful scenery. The interplay between the verbal representation of non-interactive participation (the inscription) and non-verbal representation (the pictures of the drinks offered instead of a menu to read) is meant to have a particular effect on the guests—anyone who prefers this place will enjoy a peaceful time with a drink in hand and beautiful scenery in front of their eyes. No crowds of people (the terrace is open only for you), not even the service people, will disturb their bliss.

4. Local participants in local discourses

In my study of the local landscape, I was able to observe particular types of interaction and social roles inscribed in public space. The list of roles I discuss is not exhaustive, but I have tried to pin down the most salient types of participants and to describe the interaction between them. In the old part of town, the dominant social roles represented in the linguistic landscape are the role of the host and visitor, guide and tourist, property buyer and house agent, language learner and/or translator, and general public. As becomes obvious, host, guide, translator, and house agent belong to the group of the productive participants whose voices are clearly “heard.” The

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receptive participants, visitor, tourist, property buyer, and general public[53] are projected as silent participants. Their needs are represented by the way they are seen from the point of view of the productive signs-makers. Thus, tourists are informed about the past by the presentation of historical facts on information boards. In the more modern version of these signs, the use of modalities other than linguistic (pictures) gives more freedom of perception, but still tourists are represented as people who need to know about the country's past. The voice of the anonymous "guide," materialised on the information board is objective and if we have to use Scollon and Scollon's terminology, the relationship between these two kinds of participants is one of social distance (2003, 96). Likewise, property buyers are exposed to detailed facts about the homes they may buy. Presenting extensive information in this context is not an end in itself, it is supposed to have persuasive power. The sign consumers in this target group are portrayed as potential buyers.

The voice of the translator in the public landscape is envisaged as the voice of the professional. It is "heard" in the type of signs discussed as "mirror images." Professionalism is manifested in the attempt at correct language use, adequate translation, and observing the rules of correct transliteration. The role of the language learner is not officially authorised to be performed "front-stage," but it shows through in the signs involving foreign-language writing. It is manifested in hesitations about which word to choose (discussed in chapter 4), in errors, and in self-corrections, discussed in a different paper (Atanassova 2017). The public is considered to be non-participant and their voice is muted in informative public inscriptions. They are not deemed to be involved in the process of communication but they can do so in unauthorised ways, for example by correcting mistakes on public signs. In one of the emblematic places in Veliko Turnovo, Samovodska Charshiya, one finds authentic craft shops where craftsmen make and sell handmade souvenirs. At the top of the street, there is an information board that presents a list of the craftsmen whose shops are located in Samovodska Charshiya street. As may be expected, a translation in English for foreign visitors is provided. On the information board, we see the following translation:

[53] In the category of the general public, I include various groups of people like local citizens, people at work in a given area, people visiting places to eat, and so on. They fall within the category that Ben-Rafael (2009, 42) calls "passers-by."

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Сувенирен магазин /
Souvenir magazine

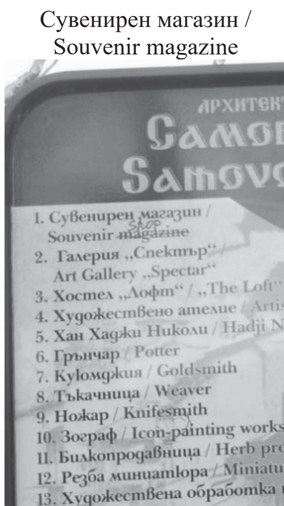

Figure 8.1.

The translation should be "souvenir shop," but the translator confused the two false-friend words derived from "magazine," meaning "periodical" in English and "магазин" meaning "shop" in Bulgarian. Someone from the general public noticed the error and corrected it by hand (figure 8.1). As a result, the correct translation emerged on the sign, but added by someone who was not authorised to provide it.

The symbolic "old part" of town is a tourist area. The "new part" of town is a place "free" of tourists; it is the place where everyday life takes place. In this locus, local citizens do not need to consider visitors' needs, nor do they need to guide them around, or be "global." This is the area where they can just be themselves. In figure 8.2 below the road sign, there is a regulative sign. It requires that drivers should slow down.

The sign is emplaced in a street near a school and the represented participants are the local authorities and drivers. The speaking participant is the local authorities (a collective identity), which takes on the voice of the "mentor." The target participants are drivers, more precisely careless drivers (collective identity, again). The inscription (only in Bulgarian) says:

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YOUR FUTURE CROSSES THE STREET HERE: SLOW DOWN

Figure 8.2.

Speeding is a transgression, which leads to sanctions. Placing a speed limit on the road sign and verbalising the ban imposes the necessary restrictions. Transgressors are not warned about the sanctions that follow from reckless driving; instead, they are "advised" to be careful. "Your future" metaphorically represents children, who may be "your own" children. Thus, the voice of the mentor appeals to the sense of moral responsibility of the transgressor. The response of sign consumers is expressed in a non-verbal way—one can see red hearts scribbled over in red paint. Despite being positive (meaning, perhaps, agreement), the response is expressed in an individual act of transgression. A disciplined citizen is expected to obey the rules, while doodling on public signs is an undesirable activity.

Quick loan creditors can act as their clients' friends. They do not need to advertise their products and the only promise they make is that they will be generous without interfering with how their clients spend the money. The inscription in figure 8.3 says:

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I'LL GIVE YOU MONEY WITHOUT ASKING HOW YOU SPEND IT

Figure 8.3.

Apart from being written in Bulgarian, the inscription "speaks" in everyday colloquial language. The creditor adopts the voice of a close friend, expressed in the second-person singular form (unlike the Sammy's Bar sign, where the addressee is referred to by the generalised form of the second-person plural pronominal). The use of the idiomatic expression *държа сметка* means "to keep tabs on someone" or "to hold someone responsible." The loaner shows respect to the borrower by promising not to interfere with his/her desire to act freely and independently. S/he is close enough to be a friend, but at the same time keeps a social distance by not intervening into personal space. That part of the inscription showing respect for the client's freedom appears in enlarged letters. Thus, showing respect for personal freedom is seen as a key part of making someone dependent (by imposing a debt on them). At the same time, the friendly attitude is balanced by placing the expression at the bottom, below the informative part of the sentence. On the top of the sign stands the informative part of the message, "I will give you money," meaning actually that by taking it, one becomes a borrower. Below stands the promise to give one the freedom to act independently.

This deeply "Bulgarian" (in the sense of "targeted at local citizens") service has an English name—the quick loan company is called Easy Credit. It could have been called "Лесен Кредит" (the translation of "easy credit"),

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but the owners of the business opted for the English name. Quick loan services have been gaining popularity in the last fifteen years and most of the firms bear “foreign” names (though not necessarily English ones).[54]

The local landscape creates room for ordinary citizens, too. There are a number of ways in which they can perform actions in public space, and they need not necessarily be transgressive. The picture in figure 8.4 is a menu board, emplaced in front of a small restaurant in the city. Physically, the restaurant is located in the “old part,” but the social space it takes belongs to the “modern space.” The restaurant is known as Малкият Интер (the Small Interhotel), though it is not a hotel (it is a guest house). The menu board was left blank during the lockdown period in the spring of 2020. Someone, perhaps one of the workers at the restaurant, wrote on it the following:

Малкия Интер
“Животът е твърде кратък, за да има място за страхове.
Нека му се насладим!”

The writer has provided a translation:

“Life is too short to be scared.
Let’s rather enjoy it!”

This inscription is a sign of the mirror-image type (the typical mode of writing menus on such boards). We could say it is transgressive but this would not be altogether fair because at that time all places like this were closed (the sign was probably erased by the time I started to write about it). The message of this personal self-expression was optimism and it was directed at any soul that happened to pass by and see it. This piece of writing was produced by someone who is Bulgarian, which is signalled by placing the Bulgarian inscription at the top. The translation is in English. Its aim is to broaden the reading audience to include anyone from any part of the world who happened to pass by during the period the writing was displayed (the Covid pandemic).

[54] Among them are names like Profi Credit, Cash Credit, etc.

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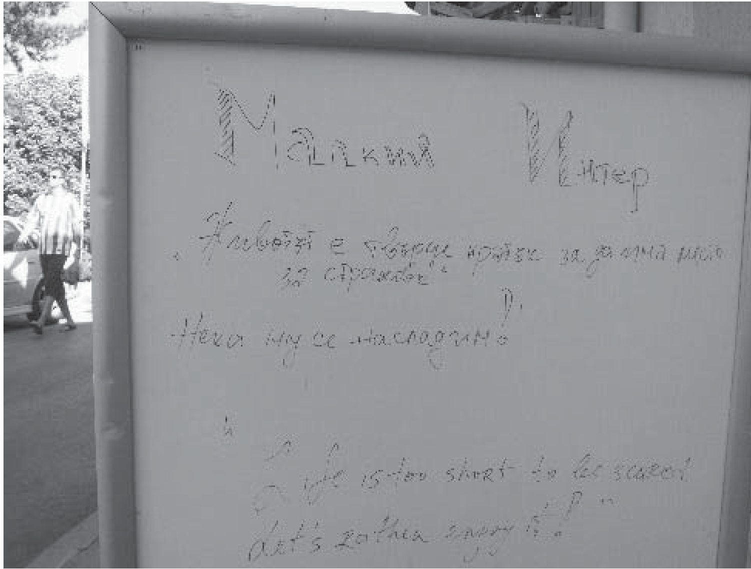

Figure 8.4.

Unlike the translations on the other mirror images, this translation is asymmetrical. This is so because the sign is not informative. It does not contain factual information, which needs to be rendered precisely from one language into another. The inscription is self-expressive. As the author and the translator are obviously the same person, s/he, in a way, had the right to write the expression anew in English (to re-create it in the foreign language) rather than reflect the same content from Bulgarian into another language. The freedom of expression results in the ambiguity of the message in the mirror image. The ambiguity is actually grammatically inherent in the infinitive. It is not entirely clear who is scared—a person or life itself. Whichever interpretation we take, the message makes sense either way.[55] I am not sure whether the author achieved this effect deliberately or not, but the vagueness gives the sign-consumer something to think about.

My feeling is that during this period there were not very many passers-by walking around, nor tourists, nor any other visitors, as all the

[55] The first interpretation is that one should not be afraid (of anything) because life is too short. The second interpretation is that one cannot scare life away; it is short but it will always come back. The optimism of the expression is preserved even in the second interpretation, which is metaphorical.

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hotels, restaurants, and museums were closed and the area as a whole was deserted. That is why the writer felt free to produce this piece of writing without feeling that s/he was making a transgression. The inscription on the board is a form of self-expression, which reveals the ability (and perhaps the necessity) to make oneself heard on two different planes—the local and the global. The message on the two planes is the "same," but the two voices that produced it are kept distinctly apart.

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Conclusion

The linguistic landscape of Veliko Turnovo can only provisionally be called monolingual. Behind the monolingual layer, one comes across the use of a variety of foreign languages. There are two major trends of foreign-language use. The first aims at delineating the boundaries of the Bulgarian language. It uses the foreign language or languages in translation. The translation aims to be grammatical and correct and to render the information of the original inscription as precisely as possible. In this layer of writing, called "mirror imaging," we identify the persistent use of three languages. The leading language is English as an international language, followed by Russian and German. The second method of foreign-language use is translanguaged writing. This includes the creative mixing of linguistic features and scripts. In this way, the grassroots method of writing reveals an important literacy practice—the necessity to produce voice through "global" writing as a response to the realities of the globalising world. This implies the marked and symbolic use of foreign languages against the background of the unmarked local code.

In conditions of superdiversity, modern Bulgarian citizens are bound to learn foreign languages in order to be able to communicate successfully. Foreign-language learning becomes a powerful tool that helps people socialise with the "broad world." For mirror image writing there are rules that postulate how to translate correctly and how to transliterate names and other realia into English and other languages. All this is targeted at facilitating visitors and tourists from abroad. At the same time, local citizens need to produce their own "global" voice in order to be able to communicate with and become part of the broad world. The tool to do this is the use of English as a foreign language. Despite its becoming part of the compulsory learning curriculum at school, not all members of society have an equal access to the same learning resources. People from the older generation did not study English as a compulsory subject at school[56] (they studied Russian). Young people study English (and other languages) at school, but their learning and knowledge is not homogeneous. Language-oriented schools presuppose higher level of language knowledge. University education guarantees professional expertise. In contrast to the learned command of

[56] English was gradually introduced as a compulsory subject after the 1990s.

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foreign languages, grassroots use based on partial learning defies the hegemonic monoglossic rules and is recalcitrant and unpredictable. In it, we can trace persistent usages that in some cases can show relative stability.

Within the sphere of language learning, the foreign language is a named language. Its use is separated from that of the mother tongue, which is used for everyday communication. Along with this, there is the need for local people to use the foreign language out of a learning context and to make themselves heard in spaces that do not belong to the local landscape but are "projected" in it. Ordinary citizens have to find their own way of expressing themselves at a global level and they resort to the use of "globe talk" that has "folk bilingualism" as a knowledge source. One expression of folk bilingualism is the form of writing Bulgarian in Roman letters (not transliterated into English or another language.). It is observable in public inscriptions and produces a global voice in the local space. The heterographic instances of writing Bulgarian in a foreign alphabet discussed in chapter 6 are, on the one hand, a product of partial knowledge and unequal distribution of learning resources, while, on the other hand, they are influenced by the technologisation of discourse and communication. Such forms of usage may not be firmly grounded in linguistic, phonological, and orthographic principles but they are recurrently employed. The guiding reason for their being preferred to the prescribed rules is that they are a more convenient form of writing, especially in an electronic environment (keyboard writing). This is a point where we can observe a special form of hybridisation: a combination of features of conventional orthography, spelling, and handwriting with keyboard writing and typing. Writing in public space has specific forms of material realisations, the boards on which the inscriptions are placed are made of wood, metal, plastic, or, perhaps another material. This limits the writing space, which may be another reason why using fewer letter symbols (usually against the rule) is preferable to using more symbols (for example the "ж" and "дж" graphemes discussed in chapter 6).

The creative mixing of various codes can be observed most clearly on the level of script and orthography. Thus, we can have subtle mixtures manifested in typographic and spelling imitation. These mixtures are not limited to the use of foreign codes only. Associations with older forms of Bulgarian spelling are also exploited, sometimes finely alluding to the material shape of the letter forms.

The two competing forms of writing—mirror imaging and translanguaging—both perform links with global forms of communication, while at the same time preserving national and cultural forms of identity through the exploitation of different strategies. Mirror images provide examples of monoglossic, rule-regulated forms of writing, where the

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guiding principle is the precise transfer of information from one code into another. There is a conscious aim at correct usage in both the source and the target language. By producing heterographic and heteroglossic writing, language users simply write what is most convenient to them, completely unaware that they are actually producing an alternative form of writing. These deviant forms of writing are, in fact, a grassroots version of writing Bulgarian in Roman script. Expressions like "Moll4eto" (figure 6.11) will make sense mainly for Bulgarians, especially young people, or foreigners who have spent some time here and have gained some knowledge of the local language and linguistic practices. Sometimes features of writing Bulgarian with Roman letters can be observed even in mirror images (figure 4.6, discussed in chapter 6). This could imply that an intermediate strategy of writing (blurring the differences between mirror images and translanguaged writing) might be expected to arise.

Trying to produce a global voice does not necessarily marginalise Bulgarian. The symbolic allusions to Old Bulgarian script (figure 7.1) and the creative mixing of linguistic features at morphological and spelling level can fundamentally change the indexical load of a given inscription by raising the unmarked local code to the level of the marked foreign one (figure 6.10). Similarly, the refusal to use "a" to render the Bulgarian grapheme "ъ" (which would mean adhering to Danchev's system of transliteration and not to the streamlined one) can be interpreted as a way of writing Bulgarian in a foreign code[57] (for example, in the spelling of the name of Veliko Turnovo, discussed in chapter 5, figure 5.2 and 5.3). The two vocalic phonemes are different and the Bulgarian user feels the need to emphasise the difference when writing in different characters.

My final words are that studying the linguistic landscape in any urban environment can be fruitful and indicative of the way it is affected by processes like mobility and superdiversity. Of particular interest are the ways in which people aspire to produce a "global voice," that is, to make themselves part of the global landscape and to make themselves understood by anyone who does not belong to "their" place while at the same time preserving one's own cultural identity. In the landscape discussed here, the two different strategies of writing could be said to be complementary. The first could metaphorically be described as the strategy of "staying apart" and "reflecting" local cultural values and practices in the "mirror" of the globalised world. The other strategy is the strategy of "merging" with the broad world in spaces "projected" in the local landscape through processes

[57] In the streamline system the difference between the two Bulgarian graphemes "a" and "ъ" is blurred because they are both rendered by "a." Using "u" entails showing the difference.

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like rescaling and recontextualisation. Both ways open up a way to invite the world to become part of the local landscape and to make the local landscape part of the world.

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