



Ghent University

Faculty of Arts and Philosophy

MA Literature and Linguistics: Dutch and English

Academic year 2010 – 2011

Linguistic Landscapes in the City of Ghent: An Empirical Study

Master Dissertation

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
“Master in de Taal- en Letterkunde:
Nederlands - Engels”
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Acknowledgements

First of all I would like to thank my supervisor prof. dr. Stef Slembrouck for introducing me to the field of linguistic landscaping, for suggesting the topic of this dissertation and for his advice during my research. Secondly, I would like to thank Mieke Vandembroucke for advising me during my writing process and for providing me with secondary literature. Special thanks go to Evelyn De Jonghe for her Photoshopskills, to John Vandeleur and David Goetheyn for their assistance with Excel, and to my parents for their support.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1. Introduction

The location of interest central to this study is the most important city of the province East-Flanders in Belgium and is also the capital of this province: Ghent. With a population of 246 200 people (January 2009) it is Flanders' second biggest city. Due to its multicultural appeal Ghent is also characterized by a very diverse linguistic nature, despite the fact that the majority of its inhabitants is Dutch-speaking. I have visited this city regularly since I was a child and I have spent there several years as a student in high school and at the university of Ghent. As a consequence, I have built up a close connection with this city; hence conducting a study linked to the rich city of Ghent has triggered my attention and therefore I have chosen this city as a key component of the subject for my master thesis.

In this thesis I focus on the degree of multilingualism in Ghent by investigating its linguistic landscape¹. The concept to map out the linguistic landscape is a recently developed field within sociolinguistics that aims to provide an analysis of the languages that are present on signage in a defined (multilingual) environment. Since cities often are examples of such multilingual regions, linguistic landscaping is frequently conducted in such an urban environment; from this perspective it seems logic that Ghent could serve as a well-suited basis for this kind of research.

The subject matter for this research is based on the signage on public displays of stores, small and medium enterprises, pubs etc. in the streets covered by two virtual axes drawn on the city map. Both axes have their start point in the centre of the city and point either to the North-West and the South of the city centre respectively. Each axis starts at the commercial centre and is oriented towards another key localization in the city: the first towards the Brugse Poort, known as a neighbourhood with many migrants and the other one towards the environment of the Sint-Pieters railway station. The presence and the progress of the ethnolinguistic strength of languages, in particular Dutch (in this case Flanders' and also Belgium's standardized official language), English, French and other languages has been measured by means of a quantitative analysis of the linguistic configurations that were encountered on each axis. The method used for this research is to a large extent based on the

¹ Backhaus generally characterizes the linguistic landscape of a specific area as "the linguistic outward appearance of a place" (Backhaus 2005: 105). This concept will be more thoroughly explained in the next section of this chapter.

methodology used for the study about the linguistic landscape of Brussels conducted by Mieke Vandenbroucke.²

In this introduction, I will first elaborate some concepts relevant for this study: a linguistic landscape and ethnolinguistic vitality. Secondly, I will zoom into the objective of this study, the methodology followed and the unit of analysis used. The last part of this chapter provides some background information related to the (linguistic) history of Ghent and the consequences of its historical context for the current situation in the city.

The second chapter describes the results of my analysis of the photographic material that has been collected along the two axes. The ethnolinguistic vitalities of each language are calculated by means of an ethnolinguistic vitality-score system, that is explained in the methodological section of the first chapter. Subsequently, the results of the analysis will be discussed for each axis and for each language.

The third chapter describes some major qualitative observations made in the photographic material. The motivation for addressing both the quantitative and the qualitative aspects of the signage in the linguistic landscape will be explained in the methodological section of the first chapter.

Finally, the last chapter summarizes the results of both the quantitative and qualitative analyses conducted. Subsequently, some topics that were not addressed in this study, but may serve as topics for future research will be outlined.

2. Introduction to the framework for this study

In this section some relevant concepts upon which my study is based are introduced. First the concept of linguistic landscaping is extensively defined. Secondly the term ‘ethnolinguistic vitality’ is explained, since my research mainly consists of measuring the ethnolinguistic vitalities of languages, and is therefore closely connected with linguistic landscaping.

² Vandenbroucke’s study *Multilingual Landscapes and Ethnolinguistic Vitality in the Case of Brussels-Capital: An Empirical Study* covers three different research areas within Brussels: Antoine Dansaertstraat, Grote Markt and Elsensesteenweg. My study differs by conducting the research on two different axes instead of areas, and by investigating the evolution of each language’s strength along both axes.

2.1. Linguistic landscape

2.1.1. Definition

The term linguistic landscape refers to the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory (Landry & Bourhis 1997: 23). Landry and Bourhis define this term more precisely in their paper ‘Linguistic landscape and ethnolinguistic vitality’:

The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration. (Landry & Bourhis 1997: 25)

As pointed out by Durk Gorter (2006) linguistic landscaping is not only “the literal study of the languages as they are used in the signs”, but also “the representation of the languages”, of which the latter aspect can be related to “identity and cultural globalisation, to the growing presence of English and to revitalization of minority languages” (Gorter 2006: 1).

It is a fairly recent concept which was introduced at the end of the 1970s within the field of language policy and planning. Especially regions where linguistic conflict has traditionally been relatively pronounced, such as the Flemish-French opposition in Belgium or the English-French situation in Québec, have been the subject of empirical studies (Backhaus 2005). It is only since the end of the 1990s, though, that linguistic landscaping has been receiving growing attention as a topic for research within sociolinguistics (Backhaus 2005). Some recent studies about the LL are for instance the study of language on billboards in a South-African township (Stroud & Mpendukana 2009), a survey about the signage in Washington DC’s Chinatown (Leeman & Modan 2009), the study of language on signs in Israel (Ben-Rafael *et al* 2004), an article about the multilingual signs in Tokyo (Backhaus 2005) and a study about the ways of perceiving and construing multilingual shop signs in immigrant neighbourhoods in Ghent (Collins & Slembrouck 2004).

The signs that the linguistic landscape consists of can be categorized according to what Ben-Rafael *et al.* term the ‘linguistic landscape actors’ (Ben-Rafael *et al.* 2006: 9). By ‘linguistic landscape actors’, they mean:

the actors who concretely participate in the shaping of the linguistic landscape by ordering from others or building by themselves linguistic landscape elements according to preferential tendencies, deliberate choices or policies. (Ben-Rafael *et al.* 2006: 27)

There is a large variety of actors, such as “public institutions, associations, firms, individuals, that stem from most diverse strata and milieus” (Ben-Rafael et al. 2006: 8).

The linguistic elements provided by these actors can be divided into two categories: the linguistic landscape elements “used and exhibited by institutional agencies which in one way or another act under the control of local or central policies”, and “those utilized by individual, associative or corporative actors who enjoy autonomy of action within legal limits” (Ben-Rafael et al. 2006: 10). The main distinction between these categories is the fact that the former is expected “to reflect a general commitment to the dominant culture”, whereas the latter “are designed much more according to individual strategies” (ibid.). Signage of the first category are called ‘top-down’ elements, while a sign of the second category is termed a ‘bottom-up’ element (Ben-Rafael et al. 2006: 14). In this study I will adopt the ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ terms, though it should be pointed out that in previous studies there have been made other distinctions as well. Calvet (1993) for instance refers to official signs as ‘in vitro’ and to those issued by citizens as ‘in vivo’ (Backhaus 2007: 32). Another example is Huebner’s (2006) study; he terms official signage ‘overt’ and private signage ‘covert’ (Backhaus 2007: 46).

2.1.2. Benefit

As Ben-Rafael, Shohamy, Amara & Trumper-Hecht point out, linguistic landscaping as a field of research can prove useful since linguistic landscape analysis allows us to point out patterns representing different ways in which people, groups, associations, institutions and government agencies cope with the game of symbols within a complex reality (Ben-Rafael *et al* 2006: 27).

Secondly, also Backhaus (2007) underscores the importance of analysis of the languages present on signage in public space, especially in multilingual environments, since it

can provide valuable insights into the linguistic situation of a given place, including common patterns of language and script use, official language policies, prevalent language attitudes, power relations between different linguistic groups, and the long-term consequences of language and script contact, among others. (11)

Finally, according to Backhaus (2005) another benefit of linguistic landscaping is that it can enable us to detect “ongoing changes in the linguistic outward appearance of a place” (Backhaus 2005: 105). A first way to investigate these changes is by conducting fieldwork at

several points in time; such surveys are called “real time” studies. Secondly, one can also focus on coexisting older and newer types of a particular sign in the linguistic landscape; this is termed an “apparent time” study (Backhaus 2005). The latter type is not really diachronic research, as it does not involve “explicitly comparing different periods in the history”, but instead is conducted by “looking at synchrony and attempting to perceive the seeds of diachrony in it” (McMahon (1994) in Backhaus 2005: 106). Examples of surveys conducted in “apparent time” are the study by Spolsky & Cooper (1991) who observed older and newer signs in East Jerusalem and Backhaus’ (2005) study of multilingual signs in Tokyo.

2.1.3. Cityscape

Regarding the location where the study of linguistic landscape is conducted, a multilingual urban environment is presupposed (cf. supra). Therefore, the linguistic landscape could also be called the linguistic cityscape (Gorter 2006: 2). As Backhaus points out, the city is “a place of language contact” and “city walls throughout history have attracted people of various origins with differing linguistic backgrounds” (Backhaus 2007: 1). Therefore, “the spatial coexistence of different languages and linguistic varieties has made the city a favourable environment for variationist studies and, more recently, multilingualism research” (ibid.). Especially when written language on signage is studied, the urban environment is preferred since

[e]very urban environment is a myriad of written messages on public display: office and shop signs, billboards and neon advertisements, traffic signs, topographic information and area maps, emergency guidance and political poster campaigns, stone inscriptions, and enigmatic graffiti discourse. (Backhaus 2007: 1)

This statement is illustrated by previous studies of linguistic landscapes, most of which are about a specific city. Moreover, in most previous studies a particular area within the city was selected. Cenoz & Gorter (2006) for instance chose two central commercial streets in two cities, one in the Basque Country and one in Friesland; Leeman & Modan (2009) focused on Chinatown in Washington DC; Backhaus (2006) selected 28 railway stations to study the LL of Tokyo; Vandenbroucke (2010) looked at three commercial shopping areas (two streets and one marketplace) in Brussels-Capital, etc.

2.1.4. Link with ethnolinguistic vitality

According to Landry and Bourhis (1997) the linguistic landscape functions both as a informational and as a symbolic marker. The ‘informational marker’ function refers to the fact that the linguistic landscape provides information about the language communities that live in a specific area and therefore also indicates the language boundaries between several language communities that coexist in one area (Landry & Bourhis 1997). The symbolic function implies that the linguistic landscape can communicate the relative power and status of linguistic communities in a given territory (Landry & Bourhis 1997). It is within this function that the concept of ethnolinguistic vitality comes in, because in this light the linguistic landscape serves as a way to determine the EV of each language spoken within a specific area. Ethnolinguistic vitality is concerned with the specific characteristics of a particular ethnolinguistic community in a multilingual environment and is influenced by political, economic and cultural factors. The connection with the concept ‘linguistic landscape’ lies in the fact that the in-group language as it is (or is not) displayed on public signage symbolizes “the strength or vitality of one’s own language group on the demographic and institutional control front relative to other language communities within the intergroup setting” (Landry & Bourhis 1997: 28). Therefore the public signage displayed in the in-group language will imply that “the demographic weight of the in-group is substantial enough to warrant such signs in the linguistic landscape” (ibid.). In other words, public signs in the in-group language can provide the members of the language group with control in several institutional support domains regarding the dominance of their language. Therefore:

The prevalence of one’s own language on public signs can fulfill an informational and symbolic function that can encourage group members to value and use their own language in a broad range of interpersonal and institutional settings. (Landry & Bourhis 1997: 29)

Conversely, when the in-group language is absent in the linguistic landscape, this may show that this language has a low value and little status within society (Landry & Bourhis 1997: 28). Consequently, group members may “devalue the strength of their own language community, weaken their resolve to transmit the in-group language to the next generations, and sap their collective will to survive as a positively distinctive ethnolinguistic group” (ibid.). In conclusion it can be stated that “the presence or absence of rival languages in specific domains of the linguistic landscape can come to symbolize the strength or weakness

of competing ethnolinguistic groups in the intergroup setting” (ibid.). The concept of ethnolinguistic vitality will be more extensively defined in the next section.

2.2. Ethnolinguistic vitality

2.2.1. Definition

The concept of ethnolinguistic vitality (EV) was defined in 1977 by Giles *et al.* as “the sociostructural factors that affect a group’s ability to behave and survive as a distinct and active collective entity within multilingual settings” (Landry & Bourhis 1997: 30). If a particular ethnic group’s position is weaker in comparison with that of more dominant language groups, the former group will tend to adapt linguistically to the dominant groups and consequently the group in the subordinate position will eventually no longer exist as a distinct ethnolinguistic collective entity (Landry & Bourhis 1997).

The term ethnolinguistic vitality can be interpreted in a subjective or objective way. The ‘subjective ethnolinguistic vitality’ of a community refers to the “group members’ cognitive representation or perception of the relative vitality of different groups” in a particular multilingual environment (Landry & Bourhis 1997: 30). The ‘objective ethnolinguistic vitality, on the other hand, is assessed by means of the sociostructural factors mentioned in the definition above. These factors are divided into four types of categories or “linguistic capitals”: demographic, political, economic and cultural.

The demographic capital of a particular ethnolinguistic community can be determined by means of the following measures:

the number and the proportion of group members relative to the overall population, the degree of concentration of group members within a territory, the relative birth rate, the degree of endogamy and exogamy, and rates of emigration and immigration. (ibid.)

In other words, the demographic capital deals with the characteristics of the members belonging to a particular ethnolinguistic group.

Secondly, the political capital of a community can be determined by examining “the institutional support” its language enjoys “at various levels of government and public affairs” (ibid.). This institutional support covers

the degree of use of the language in government functions and services including government signs, [...] the quantity and quality of language rights and the incorporation of these rights in administrative policies and language laws. (ibid.)

The more support a specific community's language enjoys in both private and public domains, the stronger its ethnolinguistic vitality will be. Apart from the institutional support, the political capital can also be assessed by "analyzing the position of group members in the hierarchical decision-making structure of the society in question and by estimating the relative power of lobbyists, pressure groups, and other organized social movements representing the language group" (ibid.).

An ethnolinguistic community's economic capital is represented by "the use of a group's language in the various aspects of commerce and industry", which includes the "commercial signs contributing to the linguistic landscape" (ibid.). The economic capital is also reflected in the degree to which "important sectors of financial and commercial activity" are controlled (ibid.). The more a language group controls these sectors, the easier they can "establish the use of their own language in the work setting, in financial communications, and in advertising, including private and commercial signs" (ibid.).

Finally, the cultural capital of a community is assessed "by monitoring the extent to which the group controls its own linguistic, educational, and cultural institutions and the degree to which the media reflect and portray the language and the culture of the group" (ibid.).

2.2.2. Link with linguistic landscape

The relevance of the concept of ethnolinguistic vitality for this study is pointed out in Landry & Bourhis' observation that the most salient marker of the ethnolinguistic vitality of several language groups who inhabit the same territory, is that territory's linguistic landscape, since public signs "directly reflect the economic, political, and cultural capital of the language group" (Landry & Bourhis 1997: 34). In other words, by determining the ethnolinguistic vitality of a language we can also reveal its symbolic strength at various levels in the society. In the case of the city of Ghent for instance, Dutch is the language that is not only predominantly spoken by the inhabitants, but is also the official language of the region. Consequently, we can expect that the dominance of this language will be reflected in the linguistic landscapes, which will translate itself into a high ethnolinguistic vitality score for Dutch in the analysis of the signage.

3. Methodology and approaches used

The material for the analysis in this study has been collected during tours in the defined areas of Ghent along the virtual axes described. The basis for the study is the collection of visual graphics created to display information to a particular audience along two axes in the city. The material has been collected by taking digital photographs of the encountered signs in the streets along the axes. These pictures have afterwards been classified in folders according to the axis, stretch and name of the establishment. Then, the signs collected for each stretch on both axes were analyzed by means of a specific EV score system. The division into stretches on the axes will be explained in part 3.3. of this section. See the CD that accompanies this study for both the database of photographs and the Excel files with the quantitative analyses of the photographic material.

3.1. Objective of the study

This master dissertation represents a study of the languages that occur in the city of Ghent, and more particular along the two axes extensively described in section 5 of this chapter. The languages studied in this case are Dutch and French, Belgium's two official languages, and English, which is an omnipresent language in a European urban environment such as Ghent. Apart from these three languages, a fourth 'Other' language category is distinguished, consisting of all the languages that are not Dutch, French, or English. This fourth group includes all languages spoken by migrants and/or tourists, such as German, Spanish, Italian, Arabic, Turkish, etc. The ethnolinguistic vitalities of these four language categories (Dutch, English, French and 'Other') on each axis will be calculated, studied and compared; in other words, the way in which these languages relate to each other in terms of symbolic strength will be the objective of this paper.

3.2. Basic module to measure occurrence of languages

A key aspect of the methodology of research to be introduced is the basic module that is used to study the occurrences of the languages. For this purpose, I have relied on the unit of

analysis adopted in Vandebroucke's master dissertation. Vandebroucke relied on Cenoz & Gorter and adopted their decision to consider each establishment and not each sign as the unit of analysis (Vandebroucke 2010: 17). The reason for this choice is based "on the fact that all the signs in one establishment, even if they are in different languages, have been the result of the languages used by the same company" and because "each text belongs to a larger whole instead of being clearly separated" (Cenoz & Gorter 2006: 71). In other words, all the signage displayed within one storefront will be taken as the basic module and used as one unit in this study. Note that a specific sign is here considered to be "any material object that indicates or refers to something other than itself" (Scollon & Scollon 2003: 3). The majority of the encountered signs during the fieldwork for this study are those placed on the façade of a shop and therefore shop signs make up a considerable part of the LL. As pointed out by Edelman (2009) the function of such signs is "to persuade customers to buy the products or services available at the stores displaying these signs" (Edelman 2009: 142). Even though signs of this kind might at first sight seem to have an informative function, their purpose is still "persuasion through communicating information as it tries to influence the customer's behavior" (ibid.). Note that also the proper names of the shops are included in the façade and classified according to language in this study, which is in accordance with the method of Maria Schlick (2003) who chose to assign the names of shops to their original language.³ For reasons of completeness, also some official signage such as memorials and street signs are included in the photographic material.

3.3. Survey areas for the linguistic landscape research

A third topic in this section covers the location where the research for the study was conducted. In general, linguistic landscape research is conducted in the urban environment. Previous studies each focused on a particular area within a city. In this study I focus on the linguistic landscapes of two virtual axes running through the city of Ghent, of which each one is expected to have a different clientele and audience. Both axes have their initiation point at Ghent's commercial centre (situated around the central commercial shopping street Veldstraat

³It should be pointed out, however, that the classification of proper names is sometimes problematic, because, as Edelman (2009) also states, it is often not clear to which language the name belongs since "due to genetic relatedness and language contact, many names "belong" to more than one language" (Edelman 2009: 145). In this study I have tried to consistently classify such signs, despite the fact that sometimes choices based on my intuition are involved.

and the historical market place Korenmarkt) and each of the axes runs towards another defined peripheral area in the city. The first axis is oriented to the North-West ends in a peripheral area called Brugse Poort, which is the city's most important immigrant neighbourhood.⁴ The second axis runs in the opposite -Southern- direction and heads towards the centre of the Sint-Pieters railway station.⁵ Each axis is about 2 kilometers long and was divided into stretches of about 300 meters, which implies that each axis consists of six (axis 2) or seven stretches (axis 1). The division into stretches was chosen to measure the progress of the changing ethnolinguistic vitality from centre to periphery on each axis. The fact that each stretch is +/- 300 meters can be motivated by the outlook of the city's map: each stretch coincides more or less with streets interrupted by crossroads.

3.4. Ethnolinguistic vitality analysis

The final topic within the methodology of research is the procedure followed to analyze the occurrences of the four language categories. I have decided to adopt Vandenbroucke's system of analysis, which is based "on the dominance of specific languages in linguistic configurations in façades' signage" (Vandenbroucke 2010: 18). According to this system four values can be attributed to the linguistic categories, i.e. Dutch, English, French and 'Other'.

The highest value that can be attributed to one of the linguistic categories is **4**; this happens when there is an occurrence of **monolingualism** in one language within the façade. Figure 1 below shows the façade of "Pascale's strijkwijzer", which is an example of a storefront that is entirely monolingual in Dutch. In the ethnolinguistic vitality analysis of this storefront the linguistic category of Dutch would receive the value of 4, whereas the three other categories of English, French and 'Other' are not given any value, since none of these language categories occurs within the façade.

⁴ This axis is called the 'Sint-Michielsdelling – Bevrijdingslaan axis'; throughout this study also the term 'axis 1' will be used to refer to this axis.

⁵ This axis is termed the 'Koophandelsplein – Sint-Pietersstation axis'; throughout this study also the term 'axis 2' will be used to refer to this axis.



Figure 1: Pascale's Strijkwijzer (Kortrijksesteenweg, axis 2)

The second possibility of language configuration is that of **bi- or multilingualism**. In this case the signage on display within the storefront is in more than one language and, more specifically, the languages are equally present: each of these languages thus receives the value of 2. Figure 2 shows the façade of “Spaans Huis”, which is an example of an equal bilingual sign since the name of this establishment is also shown both in Spanish and Dutch. In the ethnolinguistic analysis of this façade the categories of Dutch and ‘Other’ both receive the value of 2.



Figure 2: Hogar Español - Spaans Huis (Hoogstraat, axis 1)

The third possible linguistic configuration is **non-equivalent bi- or multilingualism**. In this option there is one dominant language that displays the information within the façade, whereas the other language(s) present provide only partial translations of this content, add minor comments or represent an example of language fetishization⁶. In this case the dominant language is attributed the value of **3**, while the ‘additional’ languages receive the value of 1. Consider for instance the example represented in figure 4, which shows a sign of the restaurant “Fin de Faim”. In this example only the name of the restaurant is in French, whereas all other information on the sign is written in Dutch. Therefore, Dutch receives the value 3 in the ethnolinguistic analysis, while French is given value 1.

⁶ Language fetishization, as explained by Helen Kelly-Holmes in ‘Bier, parfum, kaas: language fetish in European advertising’, occurs in signage when the symbolic value of a displayed language is greater than its communicative function.



Figure 3: Fin de Faim (Hoogstraat, axis 1)

In almost any case the sum of the values of a storefront's linguistic configuration will be 4. When the façade is monolingual and Dutch for instance receives the value of 4, the total of the configuration is 4. In the case of equal bilingualism for example in Dutch and English, each of these languages gets the value of 2, which gives us again a total of 4. Finally, if we have an example of a façade that displays non-equivalent bilingualism, the dominant language, in which the most informational content is shown, is given the value of 3, while the additional language, that is only used for minor comments, gets the score of 1: this gives us again the total sum of 4. However it should be pointed out that it is also possible that the sum is more than 4. This can be the case when the linguistic configuration of the storefront displays equivalent multilingualism in more than two languages; for instance in Dutch, French and English. In this example each language would be given the value of 2, which adds up to a total of 6 (2+2+2). Another possibility is the encountering of non-equivalent multilingualism with for instance Dutch as dominant language and English and German as additional languages: the sum of the values would then be 5 (3+1+1). For this reason it is preferable to distinguish between equivalent and non-equivalent multilingualism instead of bilingualism (Vandenbroucke 2010: 21).

By means of this score system both the **absolute and relative EV** of each language category was calculated for each stretch, and this for both areas. The absolute EV scores of

each language within each stretch were obtained by adding all the scores the language was given for each establishment within one stretch. The relative EV scores, on the other hand, were calculated by dividing the absolute EV of each language category by the total number of basic module units within each stretch.

Previous studies on linguistic landscaping used a similar system of analysis that distinguishes between monolingual and multilingual signs. Barni & Bagna (2009) for instance, present a technique “to map linguistic diversity in multicultural contexts” (Barni & Bagna 2009: 126). This mapping technique also specifies “whether the text observed is monolingual, i.e., written in a single language, or if it contains several different languages” (Barni & Bagna 2009: 132). They state that this distinction points to the social function of the text: “from closure to openness towards other linguistic communities” (ibid.). Barni and Bagna explain the difference between a monolingual and a multilingual text regarding their social function in the following excerpt:

A text written in a single language makes it immediately clear that it is intended solely for those belonging to that specific linguistic community (the only ones for whom the text is comprehensible) or that the language has the prestige and power to stand alone, without the support of other languages [...]. The fact that a text is written in two, or even more languages, indicates an intention to make it comprehensible to people belonging to different linguistic communities. (ibid.)

Barni & Bagna analyse the signs by means of an indication of dominance “which refers to the semantically dominant language in a text, the one intended to most fully convey meaning, even within a plurilingual text” (Barni & Bagna 2009: 135). Also, “the role of the accessory languages relative to the dominant language” (ibid.) are given an indication; these languages may have either an “explanatory function”, an “informative function” or a “grammatical function” in the text (ibid.).

Secondly, also Mechthild Reh (2004) used a similar system to code the multilingual signs encountered in Lira Town in Uganda. She classifies the languages on the signs as representing a translation of each other or not; and distinguishes between “duplicating”, “fragmentary”, “overlapping” and “complementary” signs (Backhaus 2006).

3.3. Categories and subcategories

Due to the fact that a linguistic landscape is a complex network of interacting factors, I have decided to divide the general landscape into categories and subcategories in order to obtain more detailed information about each axis. The division is partly based on Vandebroucke's categorization that relies both on Cenoz & Gorter (2006) who distinguish "different types of shops" according to the kind of product that they sell (clothing, books, furniture, food, etc.) or according to the shop owner ("national or international chain" and "independent small shops") (Cenoz & Gorter 2006: 71); and on Ben-Rafael *et al* who code their material according to "their belonging to national or local" and subsequently "according to branches like food, clothing, furniture, etc." (Ben-Rafael *et al* 2006: 11). Following Vandebroucke's system of coding, I described each basic module according to 1) their domain (private or public), subsequently according to 2) their branch (clothing shop, bookshop, restaurant, café, etc.) and finally according to 3) the shop owner (international chain, national chain or privately owned shop).

Regarding the categories, I will only include the national chains and the privately owned shops. This choice was made because most international chains are located in the Veldstraat, which is the city's main shopping street. Since this area is not part of the axes for this study, the number of international chains that were encountered on both axes is very small; therefore in this case an apart section dedicated only to international chains would be irrelevant. Next to these categories I decided to consider the following subcategories: bookshops and eating venues. The bookshop-subcategory includes all commercial spaces that sell "readable material" (Vandebroucke 2010: 23), such as books, newspapers and magazines. The second subcategory, i.e. that of the eating venues, consists of all commercial spaces where meals are served such as restaurants, snackbars and pizzerias.

For each axis and for each (sub)category I first outlined some expectations from a holistic perspective regarding the results of the quantification of the EV scores. In accordance with the fact that Ghent is located in the officially Dutch-speaking region of Flanders, for instance, I can expect that the overall EV score of the language category of Dutch will be very high in both survey areas and in each (sub)category. After the presentation and description of the actual results, the EV scores will be compared with the upfront assessment.

3.6. Qualitative analysis

In addition to the quantitative analysis, the photographic material that has been collected in the two survey areas is also analyzed from a qualitative perspective. The inclusion of a qualitative analysis has specific reasons. First of all, the quantitative analysis of the data consisted merely of calculating scores and can be considered to be a macro-analysis of the photographic material. This implies, however, that a quantitative analysis does not address issues such as the material of which the signs are made, the way in which the language on the sign is organized, etc. In order to shed a light on these characteristics, a qualitative analysis of the material is appropriate. Moreover, as pointed out by Scollon & Scollon (2003) the qualitative aspects of a sign also contribute to the meaning of that sign regarding for instance the implied readers of a sign or the implied clientele of a particular shop. As confirmed by Collins & Slembrouck (2007) signs are also “complex indexes of source, addressee, and community” (Collins & Slembrouck 2007: 335). Consequently, this qualitative analysis dedicates attention to the details of the signs themselves and can therefore be considered to be a micro-analysis of the data. Secondly, this micro-analysis can illustrate the complexity of the linguistic landscape and the problematics of the classification of signs for the quantitative analysis. In the third chapter some qualitative observations made are thoroughly discussed.

4. Ghent and its history

4.1. History

The city of Ghent is nowadays one of Belgium’s biggest cities. For its origin we have to go back to the seventh century, when two abbeys were built on the site of the confluence of the rivers Lys and Scheldt (www.visitgent.be). It is also from its location that the name of the city is derived, since Ghent’s older name “Ganda” is believed to be derived from the Latin term “gandavum”, which means “confluence”. Despite two attacks by the Vikings in the ninth century, the city quickly recovered and became one of the most important cities in Europe from the eleventh century onwards; this was especially attributed to Ghent’s flourishing trade in wool, cotton and flax. Until the end of the fourteenth century Flanders was ruled by several Counts, who demanded the payment of high taxes, which sometimes led to rebellious reactions. In 1338 for instance, the cloth merchant Jacob van Artevelde led the uprising against Count Louis de Nevers, a vassal of the French king who had demanded higher taxes.

This event explains why Ghent is nowadays still called “the city of Artevelde” (www.visitgent.be). In the fifteenth century Flanders together with its neighbouring provinces came under the rule of the Burgundian Dukes, who referred to all of these princedoms as ‘the Netherlands’. Again the high taxes which were a consequence of the Burgundian rule led to a revolt of Ghent’s inhabitants against duke Filips the Good; in 1452 this revolt ultimately ended in the Battle of Gavere in which Ghent was defeated (De Bleecker 1999: 17): Ghent would, however, never lose its image of a city inhabited by “proud and rebellious people”. Maria of Burgundy was the last one in line of the Burgundian Dukes, and afterwards the Netherlands became a part of the Habsburg Empire. The most important ruler during this period was Charles V, better known as Emperor Charles, since he ruled over the Holy Roman Empire from 1519 onwards. Although Charles V was born in Ghent, he did not hesitate to punish the inhabitants when they refused to pay money the emperor needed to conquer Italy and France (De Bleecker 1999: 17). Charles V made Ghent’s nobles walk in front of him, barefoot and with a noose around their neck; and it is since then that Ghent’s inhabitants are called “stroppendragers” (noose bearers) (ibid.). After the rule of Charles V, the Netherlands were ruled by the Spanish empire, and it is during this period that the Northern part of the Netherlands became independent, whereas the Southern part remained under Spanish rule . Due to several religious wars in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, during which Ghent had to give its status as Calvinistic Republic, Catholicism was reinstated and caused the end of Ghent’s central role on the international level. Because the city also lost its passage to the sea, “the economic situation worsened and the population decreased by half” (www.visitgent.be). Nevertheless, the city was recovered by the beginning of the nineteenth century thanks to its flourishing textile industry, the construction of the Ghent-Terneuzen Canal and the establishment of its own university. After the rule of Napoleon Bonaparte, the Netherlands were reunited by William of Orange and Ghent became part of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands. In 1830, the Dutch army was forced back during the Belgian Revolution and Belgium gained its independence. This revolution, however, had caused Ghent’s economy to collapse and as a result it was in this city that “the socialist movement and the first trade union associations appeared” (ibid.).

Regarding the linguistic situation in Ghent, its history will here be connected to that of Flanders as a part of Belgium. During the Burgundian reign, French was the language of the civil service and the elite, who were members of the nobility and the upper middle classes, whereas the average people spoke Flemish dialect. In the second half of the seventeenth century the Frenchification increased in the fields of administration and education and French

became the language of prestige since it was spoken by the elite in the cities. Nevertheless, Dutch remained the language of education in primary education, in Church and in the local council. The French Revolution of 1789, however, meant a repression of Dutch and other minority languages: Dutch was banned from all sectors of public life and from education, whereas French was one of the most prestigious languages in all of Europe (van der Sijs & Willemys 2009). This changed when William of Orange reunited the Netherlands; and by referring to the former unity of the Netherlands he wanted the northern and the southern parts of his kingdom to have one language in common: their mother tongue Dutch. In 1819 it was decided that from 1823 onwards Dutch would be the obligatory language for the public life in all Flemish provinces, despite the fact that French was still used for colloquial speech (van der Sijs & Willemys 2009). During this period, however, the inhabitants of Flanders did not feel closely connected to this Dutch, since they spoke Flemish dialects which differed from the obligatory Dutch that was spoken and standardized in the Northern part of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands. The reason for the lack of standardization in the Southern part was the split of the Netherlands into a Northern and a Southern part in the sixteenth century. The independent Northern part attracted many intellectuals from the Southern part and thus Flanders was cut off from the standardization process in the Northern process. Consequently, after Belgium's independence in 1830, French became again the dominant language, since the most powerful people in Belgium still spoke French and Flanders did not have a standard language of its own. Nevertheless, a small group of intellectuals resisted the Frenchification and came up for the right of Flemish people to speak Flemish dialect: this was the start of a struggle that would later be called the Flemish Movement ('Vlaamse Beweging'). Thanks to this movement Dutch was officially acknowledged as a Belgian language, next to French, in 1898. Another important issue within the Flemish Movement was to change the language of education at the University of Ghent from French to Dutch. When this mission was accomplished in 1930, this meant not only that people from Ghent and Flanders could from now on be educated in their own language, but it also contributed to the awareness of the Flemish identity (ibid.). In 1963 the initiated actions of the Flemish Movement resulted in the subdivision of Belgium into a Flemish part, a French part and a German part, which in the case of Flanders meant a greater consolidation of the official status of Dutch (van der Sijs & Willemys 2009).

4.2. Current linguistic situation in Ghent

Nowadays the majority of Ghent's inhabitants speaks Dutch, and a relevant part uses the city's dialect for colloquial speech. Of all cities in Flanders, Ghent's dialect is the one with the most distinctive characteristics. Speaking terms of the dialect landscape of Flanders, Ghent would be considered an island among all other dialects in Flanders; the difference between the dialect of Ghent and that of its surrounding rural areas is remarkable (Taeldeman). The Ghent dialect only gained place outside its cityborders in the municipalities that were already part of the city before World War II: Ledeborg, Gentbrugge and Sint-Amandsberg. One of the most remarkable characteristics of the dialect of the city is the use of French words; examples are *abat-jour* (shaded lamp) or *abuseren* (to abuse). The presence of these words in the dialect is linked to Ghent's history. In 1830, the year when Belgium became independent, French was chosen as the official language. French was the language of culture, politics, administration, education, etc. while the Dutch-speaking community barely had any political or economical power. For instance, around 1900 10% of Ghent's inhabitants spoke French, mostly members of the nobility and the upper classes. Nowadays only a small percentage of Ghent's oldest inhabitants speaks French as a *lingua franca*.

Apart from autochthonous people, a considerable part of Ghent's inhabitants are immigrants. The largest part of them has the Turkish nationality (5009 people), followed by the Dutch (1908 people), Bulgarian (1236 people) and Slovakian nationality (1176 people) (<https://dofi.ibz.be>). In total, Ghent is inhabited by 152 different nationalities; thus, apart from Flemish dialect, an amalgam of different languages are spoken in this city. Consequently, this city has due to its multilingualism also a multicultural outlook; which is reflected in its linguistic landscape. Therefore, it can be stated that the city of Ghent can serve as an interesting subject for a study about its linguistic landscape.

5. Choice of survey areas within Ghent

Before turning to the quantitative analysis in the next chapter, the two axes central to this study will first be outlined. First, I will provide some context regarding the location of each axis on the map together with their historical importance for the city. Subsequently, each axis

with its own characteristics will be linked to the central focus of this study in terms of their linguistic diversity.

5.1. Axis Sint-Michielselling – Bevrijdingslaan (axis 1)

This axis starts from the city centre in and runs in north-west direction towards the outskirts of Ghent, more specifically the Brugse Poort neighbourhood. As represented by figure 4 below, this Centre-North axis encompasses the following streets, beginning from the centre: Sint-Michielselling, Sint-Michielsstraat, Hoogstraat, Brugsepoortstraat, Noordstraat, Phoenixstraat, Emilius Seghersplein and Bevrijdingslaan.

The starting point Sint-Michielselling can be situated near the Korenmarkt, which is a big square located in the centre of Ghent. In the 10th and 11th century the Korenmarkt served as the central place for the trade in grain and seeds. Moreover, the Korenmarkt was also the point of departure for journeys to nearby cities and municipalities. Nowadays this square still functions as a commercial centre in having several pubs and restaurants and being connected to the main shopping street Veldstraat. Moreover, it is also a meeting point for tourists because several historical buildings, for instance the old Postoffice and the Sint-Nicolas church have their place at the Korenmarkt.

From Sint-Michielselling we go through the Sint-Michielsstraat, Hoogstraat and Brugsepoortstraat. This is where the Brugse Poort area starts. It is located in the northwest corner of the city, and more specifically, part of the ring of 19th century housing. The name of this area is derived from its function as a town-gate in the middle ages. Outside this gate, there was a road that went from Bruges to Mariakerke, of which the latter is one of Ghent's municipalities. Today, part of this road still exists under the names of the streets Noordstraat, Phoenixstraat and Bevrijdingslaan; note that these streets are also part of this axis in this study.

Previous research in this neighbourhood has been conducted by Blommaert *et al* in 2005; and is concerned with the polycentricity and the interactional regimes in this neighbourhood.⁷ The first section of their article provides more background information about the Brugse Poort and states that this neighbourhood has its origins in the 19th century,

⁷ Blommaert, J., J. Collins & S. Slembrouck (2005). 'Polycentricity and interactional regimes in 'global neighbourhoods'' *Ethnography*, 6:2, 205-235.

when Ghent's textile industry attracted many people from rural areas to the city and turned this area into a working-class neighbourhood. From the 1960s onwards the immigration into this neighbourhood started "as part of a state-organized labor-immigration wave from the Mediterranean into western Europe, and attracted by the prospect of salaried labor in the textile factories" (Blommaert *et al* 2005: 208). The Mediterranean immigrant working-class mostly resided in the side streets, whereas the autochthonous middle-class occupied the houses along the "main traffic arteries" (209). After the decline of the textile industry in the 1970s, the unemployment caused the Brugse Poort to become one of the poorest areas in Ghent, offering cheap housing to the new laborers. Blommaert *et al* point out that the unemployment influenced the stratification of this area and gave it the perception of 'deterioration':

The middle-class shops gradually closed down or moved out due to lack of business in the neighbourhoods; empty shop windows became a feature of the appearance of the neighbourhood, and some of the premises were in time taken by 'ethnic' shops: Turkish bakeries and groceries, telephone shops, laundrettes, 'ethnic' bars and cafés. (Blommaert *et al* 2005: 210)

Since the 1990s also immigrants from the Balkans, Eastern Europe and the Far East were drawn to this area; which meant a re-organization of this area's stratification (*ibid.*). Nowadays, this area is inhabited by a blend of autochthonous Belgian people and a large immigrant group, mostly of Turkish or Maghrebian descent. The ethno-national mix of the population is reflected in the general outlook of the neighbourhood as it is known today: along the main traffic artery, which is part of this axis, commercial enterprises of both Belgian and foreign origin exist next to one another. This is of interest for this study, since the multilingualism of this neighbourhood as it is reflected on the shop signs, will be contrasted with the (presumed) monolingualism of the shop signs encountered along the beginning part of this axis.



Figure 4: axis Centre – North-West

5.2. Axis Koophandelsplein – Sint-Pietersstation (axis 2)

The second axis investigated in this study also starts at the commercial centre but runs in the opposite direction and is oriented to the South; in particular to the Sint-Pieters railway station. As shown on figure 5 below, this Centre-South axis consists of the following streets and squares, starting from the centre: Koophandelsplein, Nederkouter, Kortrijksepoortstraat, Kortrijksesteenweg and Koningin Elisabethlaan.

Since this stretch is also part of the route of tramline 1, which is within Ghent the most important connection between the north and the south of the city, the history of this tramline is of importance for motivating the choice of this route for this study. It started when during the 1830s the view of Ghent changed from a typical city from the middle ages with several green spaces to an industrialized city. Apart from the industrialization there was also the mechanization of the transport and the use of the tram in the city may serve as a symbol of this. At first people were transported along this tramline by means of a horse car, but from 1899 onwards the horse car was replaced by the electrical tram. Nowadays tramline 1 transports people from the centre to the Sint-Pieters railway station (or vice versa), which was built on the occasion of the World Exposition of 1913 and is now one of the busiest railway stations in Belgium.

Nowadays this axis is predominantly for the transport between the city's commercial centre and Ghent's most important junction for arriving or leaving people. The commuters that use this road mainly are either tourists who are on their way to the historical centre, since the centre is the area of interest of tourists, or people who are on their way to or from work and therefore go along this axis on an almost daily basis. This implies that the linguistic landscape of this second axis has a different outlook in comparison to the linguistic landscape of the first axis. In the case of this Centre-South axis, it can be expected that the signage in the beginning of the axis will be commercially oriented as the axis is at this point still part of the touristic area, whereas as we are moving further along the axis towards the railway station, the signage may be adapted to the fact that this road is rarely used for leisure-purposes, neither by tourists nor by people working or living in Ghent.

Chapter 2: Quantitative analysis

The foundation for the research of this thesis consists of a survey of the signage in the street landscape along two virtual axes on the city map of Ghent. Photographs have been taken in each survey area and have been classified in folders according to axis, stretch and name of the commercial establishment. Afterwards the photographic material was analyzed in Excel using the ethnolinguistic vitality score system as it was explained in Chapter 1, section 3.4. This allowed me to calculate for each stretch the ethnolinguistic vitalities in an absolute and relative manner and this for each language category.

This chapter presents the results of the quantitative analysis. First a general description is given of the overall linguistic landscape for both areas, followed by an overview of the different categories - locations with a commercial intent belonging to a national chain or being a privately owned business - and subcategories - bookshops and eating venues - of places for which the signage has been recorded. In each section the results obtained for each area will also be compared with each other.

1. Overall linguistic landscape

1.1. Axis 1: Sint-Michielselling – Bevrijdingslaan

1.1.1. General overview

Before entering into a more detailed description of the data, a holistic perspective of the linguistic landscape is depicted based on what one could expect along the axis given its location on the city map of Ghent.

Given the distribution of inhabitants and the proportion of the spoken languages in Ghent, Dutch should be the most present and dominant language on both axes. Consequently, it is expected that on this axis Dutch will have the overall highest score, both from a relative ethnolinguistic vitality and a dominance indication point of view.

Regarding the other languages, one could expect English to score relatively high especially at the beginning of the axis close to the centre; this part is close to the Korenmarkt, which is one of Ghent's most prominent places for tourists being the city's biggest historical market place. On a daily basis a considerable number of tourists visits the Korenmarkt and its surrounding area; therefore it can be expected that the signage may be adapted to speakers of English. Moreover, as has been observed in previous studies, the occurrence and use of English in cities has been growing since the last decades. As Cenoz & Gorter point out, "the omnipresence of English in linguistic landscapes is one of the most obvious markers of the process of globalization", which is "a process usually defined in economic terms of markets, production and consumption" (Cenoz & Gorter 2009: 57). When commercial spaces use English in their signage, they "aim at increasing their sales" and thus the presence of English "is motivated by economic reasons" (ibid.). Another reason why we can expect the importance of English especially in the centre is the use of the language on signage as a result of the process of 'language festishization'. The phenomenon of language

fetishization occurs in advertising when languages do not function as a means to communicate, but instead are used for their symbolic value. The English language could be considered as a symbol of “youth, [...] progress and modernity” (Kelly-Holmes 2000: 76). Hence, we can expect English to be popular for the use on signage, as it is considered a fashionable language. Further along the axis, on the other hand, I expect that the score of English will gradually decrease as we are approaching the periphery of the city. Regarding the dominant versus subordinate position of English, I expect this language to be most frequently used either on par with other languages in multilingual signage or it is used for additional comments or minor translations in the signage.

When looking to French, this language is expected to be especially present on the first stretches of this axis, and this basically for the same reasons as for the English language. First, the beginning of this axis is located in Ghent’s touristic area, hence the signage in this part may be adapted to a French-speaking public. Secondly, French may also be present in the central area of the city due to language fetishization. The French language is not only associated with culinary appraisal but it also has become “a social hieroglyphic for femininity, fashion and beauty in intercultural advertising communication” (Kelly-Holmes 2000: 74). Since I expect this kind of language fetishization to be most noticed in the centre of a city, French may also be most prominent in this area, nevertheless predominantly in an ‘additional’ position on signage. When walking further along the axis, I assume that the occurrence of French will decrease until we arrive at the beginning of the Brugse Poort area. Towards the end of the axis, which is located in the Brugse Poort area, I expect the score of French to increase again, which is due to the fact that a considerable part of the immigrants living in the Brugse Poort is Moroccan. Since French is one of the official languages in Morocco and thus also spoken by most people originating from this country, we may expect that French is used as a *lingua franca* in this area and that therefore French will score relatively high in the signage found in this neighbourhood. Consequently, I also expect French to be found on signs with ‘equal’ multilingualism.

Finally, regarding the ‘Other’ languages, I expect that this category will have a rather low score at the beginning of the axis and if other languages are present, then they will be predominantly used to provide additional elements on signage. As we walk further along this road, the presence of other languages should gradually increase as we approach the Brugse Poort, since this area is also inhabited by speakers of Turkish or Arabic.

1.1.2. Quantitative analysis

The quantitative analysis for the different language categories has been conducted on a collection of 181 commercial spaces that have been identified along the axis. Figure 6 provides an overview of the distribution of the commercial spaces along the axis and the numbers refer to the units identified for each stretch (7 in total) of the axis. The number of units ranges from 18 (stretch 2) to 43 (stretch 4).

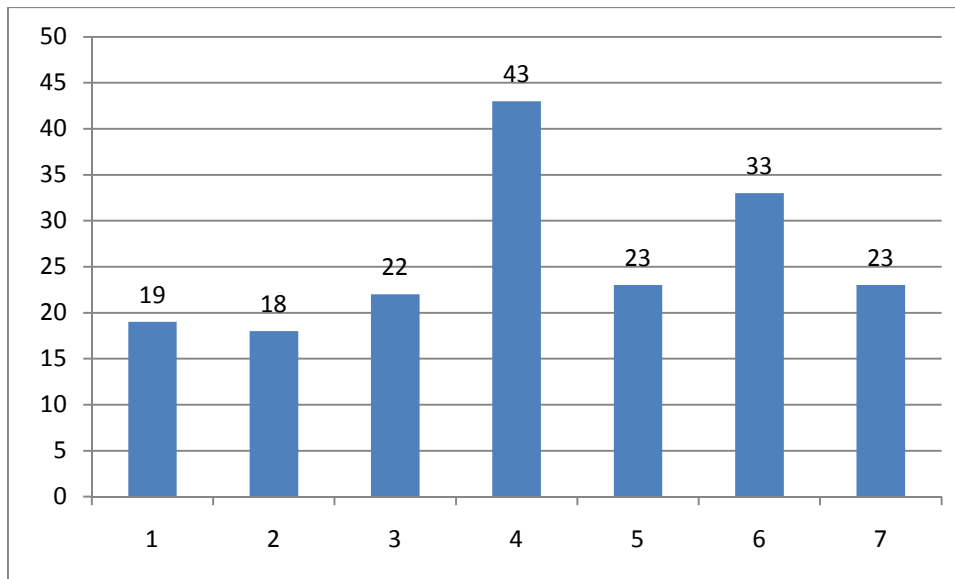


Figure 6: total number of units (axis 1)

The following series of figures (7a to 7g) gives a visual representation of the results of the quantitative analysis of the data by means of the EV score system. The different figures represent the different stretches along the axis beginning at the centre of the city and show the relative EV scores and the frequency of dominant or subordinate position of each language category on each stretch.

The circle diagrams in the left panel present the proportion of the relative EV scores for each language category. As explained in Chapter 1, the relative scores of each language category are calculated by dividing the absolute EV scores of each language by the number of units on each stretch. The total value of each circle diagram always ranges between 3 and 5, depending on the number of units and the absolute EV scores of each language category within each stretch. The right panel in each figure shows how many times (frequency) each language occurs in a dominant or subordinate position, i.e. as exclusive (score 4) or dominant

(score 3) language, as equal to (an)other language(s) in multilingual signs (score 2) or as a language used for additional elements or minor translations (score 1).

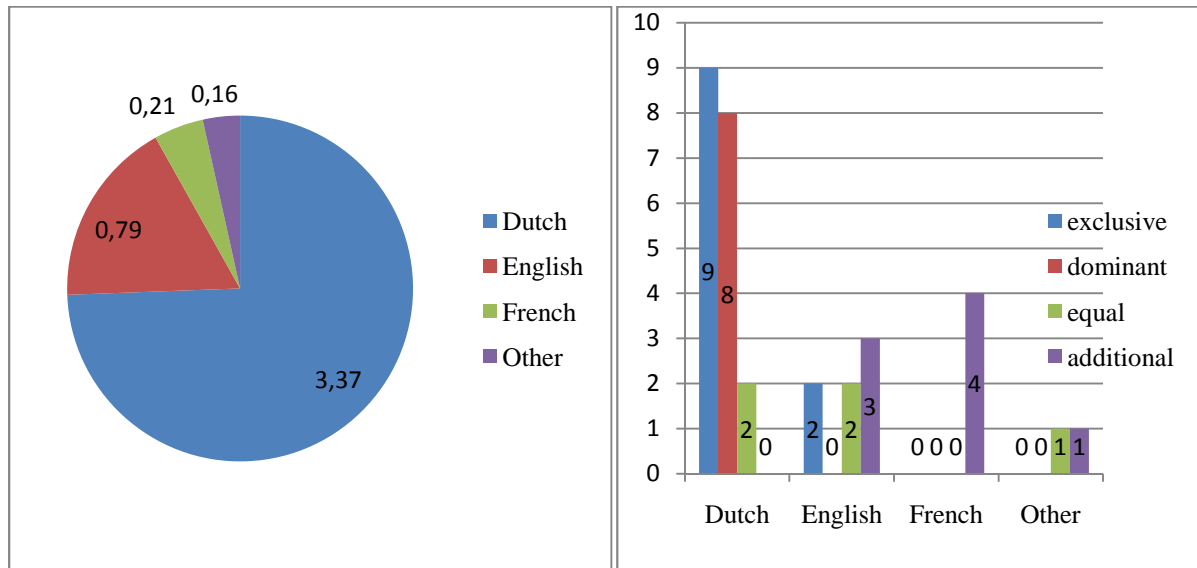


Figure 7a: stretch 1, axis 1

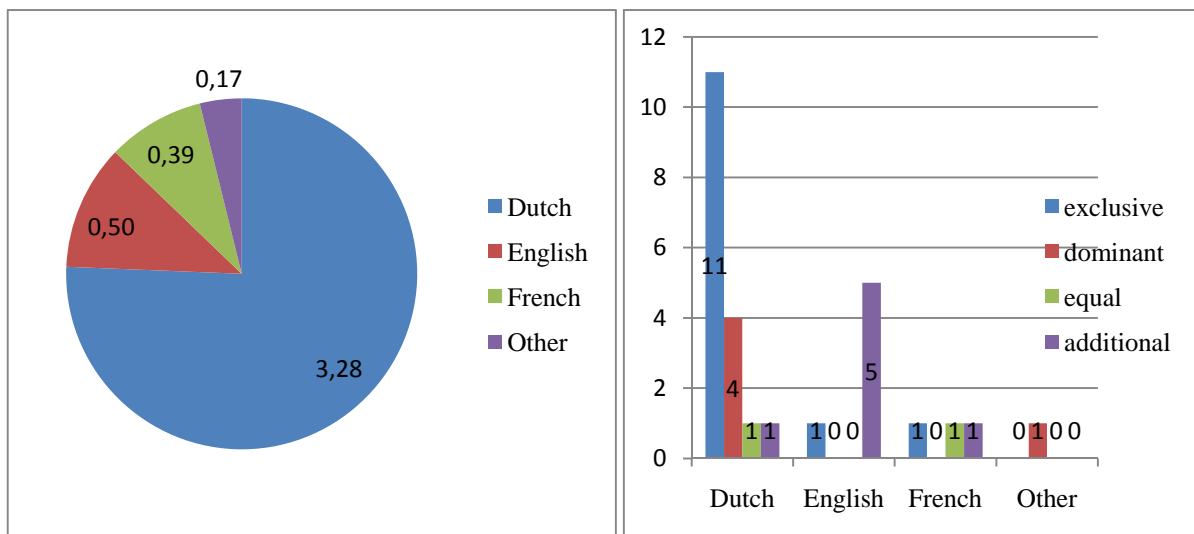


Figure 7b: stretch 2, axis 1

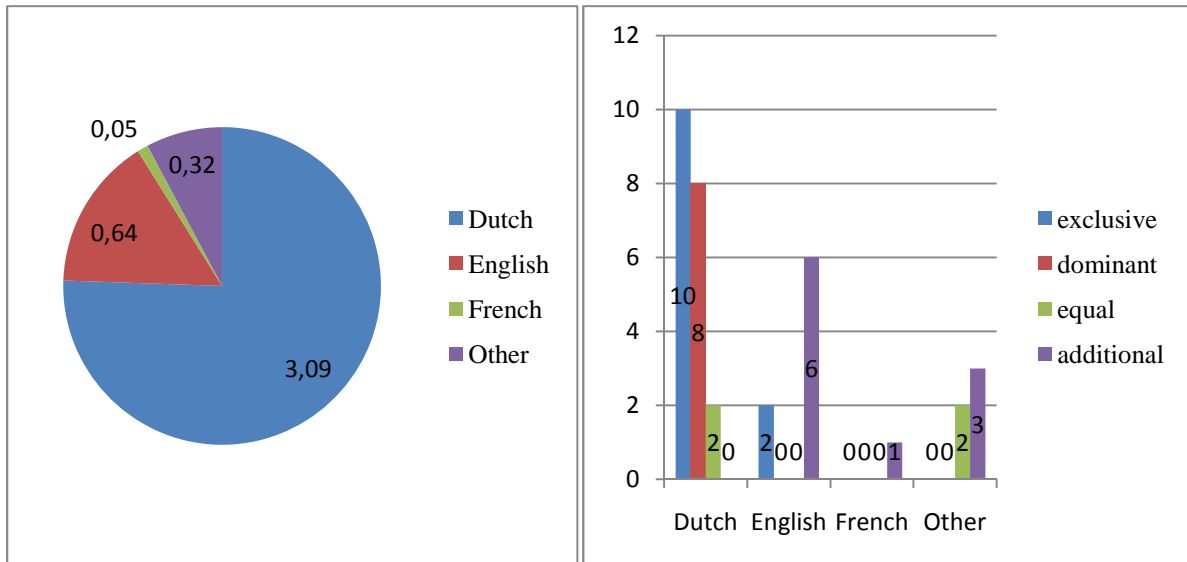


Figure 7c: stretch 3, axis 1

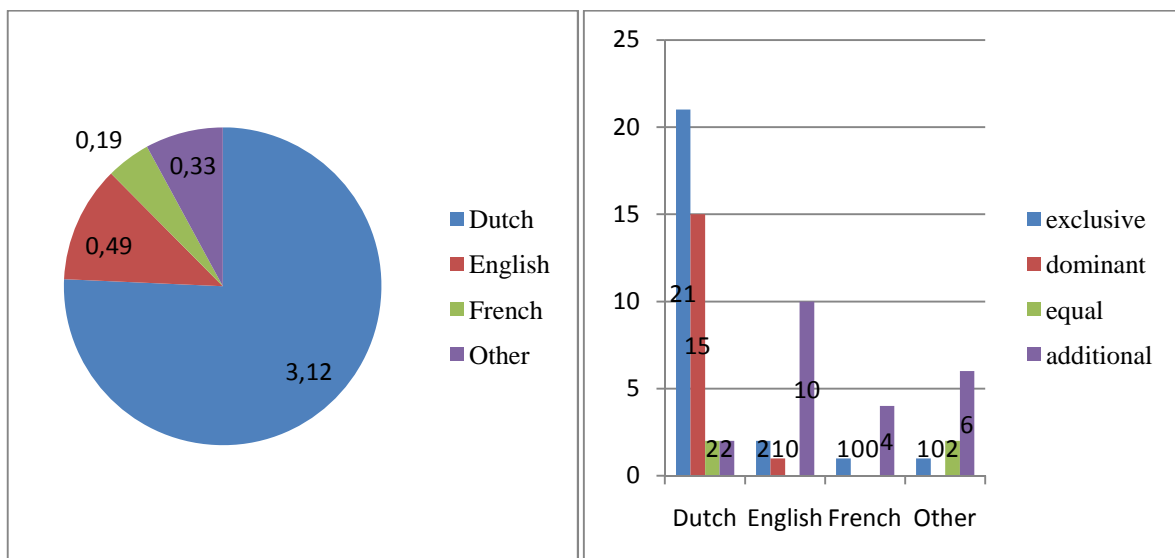


Figure 7d: stretch 4, axis 1

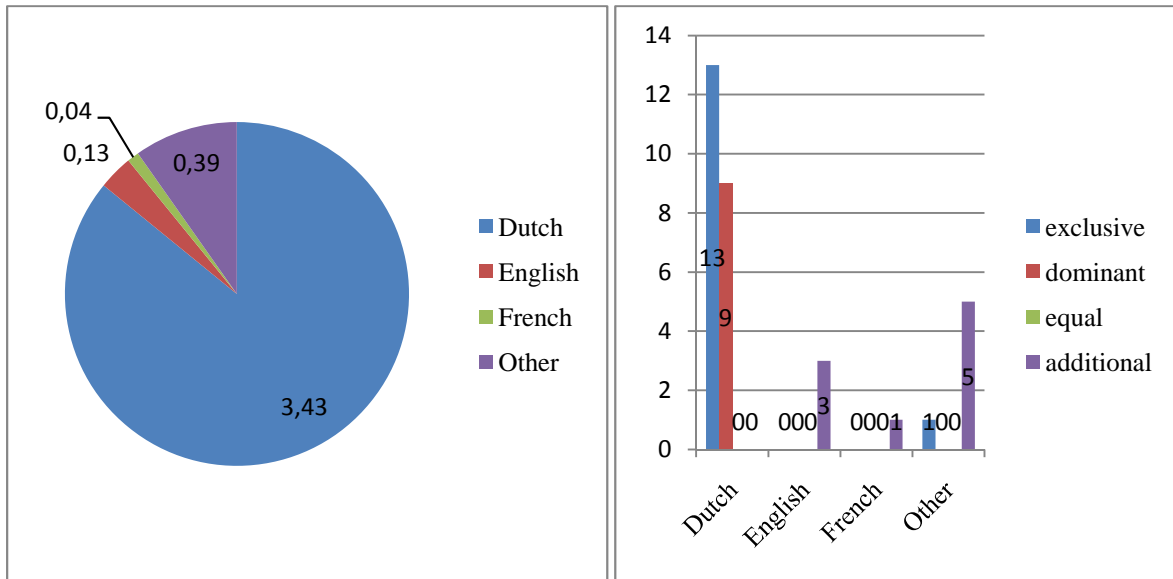


Figure 7e: stretch 5, axis 1

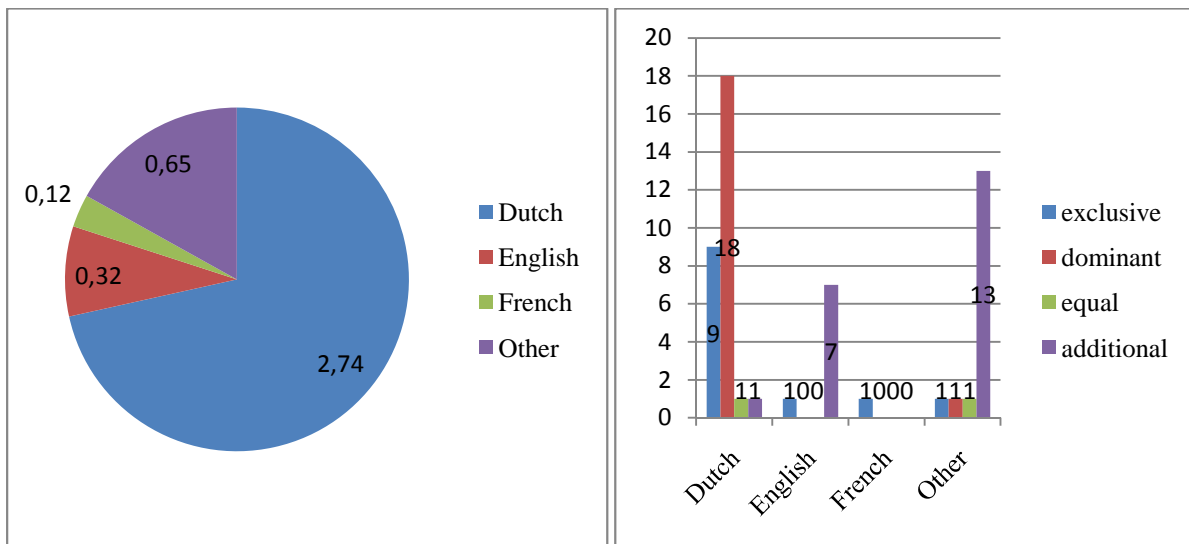


Figure 7f: stretch 6, axis 1

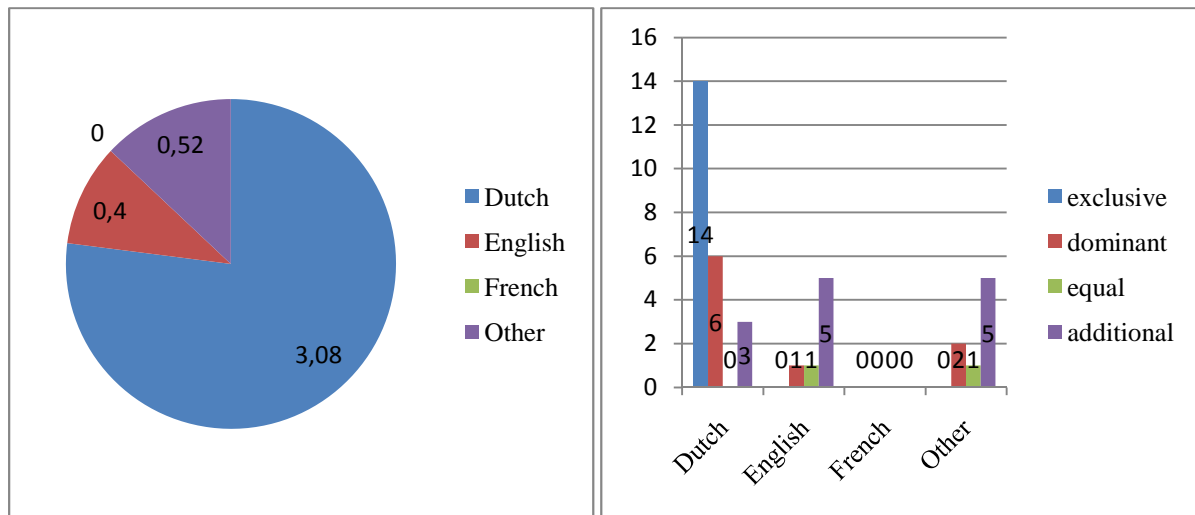


Figure 7g: stretch 7, axis 1

From the data presented in the different figures, the following observations can be made.

Looking at the overview of the relative EV scores in the circle diagrams, it is evident that Dutch is the strongest language along the whole axis, as expected. As can be concluded from the frequency tables, this language is either used in an exclusive way in monolingual signage or as the dominant language.

English scores particularly high on the first three stretches of the axis, followed by a clear decline on stretches 4 and 5. From stretch 6 onwards, however, the EV score of English rises again, which contradicts with my expectation that English would maintain a low score along the remainder of the axis. The English language is mostly used to provide additional elements on signage, but is also found a few times to occur as the exclusive language on signage.

The French language generally has the lowest EV score along the axis and only once exceeds the EV score of another category, i.e. on stretch 2 where French has an EV score of 0,39 and the 'Other' category only scores 0,17. French also scores very low in the second half of the axis and even is absent on the last stretch. From the frequency tables it can be deduced that French is as expected predominantly used for minor comments or partial translations as it occurs mostly in the 'additional' position.

The category of 'Other' languages (in this case Turkish, Arabic, Italian, Spanish and Czech) score relatively low on the first half of the axis, whereas their presence clearly rises on the second half of the axis, which is as expected. Despite the fact that the presence of the 'Other' category rises along the axis, the use of the languages in this category is generally

restricted to additional elements, which, especially for the second half of the axis, was not expected.

1.2. Axis 2: Koophandelsplein – Sint-Pietersstation

1.2.1. Introduction

Similarly as for the other axis, a cursory first assessment of the linguistic landscape along the axis is provided. In general, a similar trend as for the previous axis is expected, but given the location some different occurrences of languages seem plausible. I expect again that Dutch will have the highest relative EV score and the highest frequency of exclusiveness or dominance along the axis.

Secondly, one can assume that the English language will score relatively high along the whole axis, for the same arguments as explained in the previous section. Regarding the dominant or subordinate position, I expect that English is likely to be used for equal translations and additional elements especially in the beginning and the end of the axis, since both the square Koophandelsplein and the neighbourhood of Sint-Pieters railway station are junctions where a lot of tourists come together on a daily basis. On the stretches along the middle of the axis, on the other hand, I expect English to be predominantly used for minor translations or slogans and therefore to be found in the ‘additional’ position.

As regards French, it is expected that this language will score particularly high in the centre, linked to the phenomenon of language fetishization, whereas along the remainder of the axis its score may be very low. One can also expect, similar as for English, that French will be found mostly in equal and additional position on signage on the first and last stretch of the axis, whereas along the axis itself French will be predominantly used for additional elements on signage.

Finally, the ‘Other’ category is expected to score rather low along the whole axis; and when ‘other’ languages are present on signage, they will be mainly used for additional elements such as names of for instance Chinese or Italian restaurants in the centre of the city.

1.2.2. Quantitative analysis

Before turning to the relative EV scores and the frequency tables, the figure 8 provides an overview of the number of commercial spaces identified on each stretch along the axis. In

total, 168 commercial spaces were encountered. The number of units ranges from 18 (stretch 5) to 38 (stretch 6).

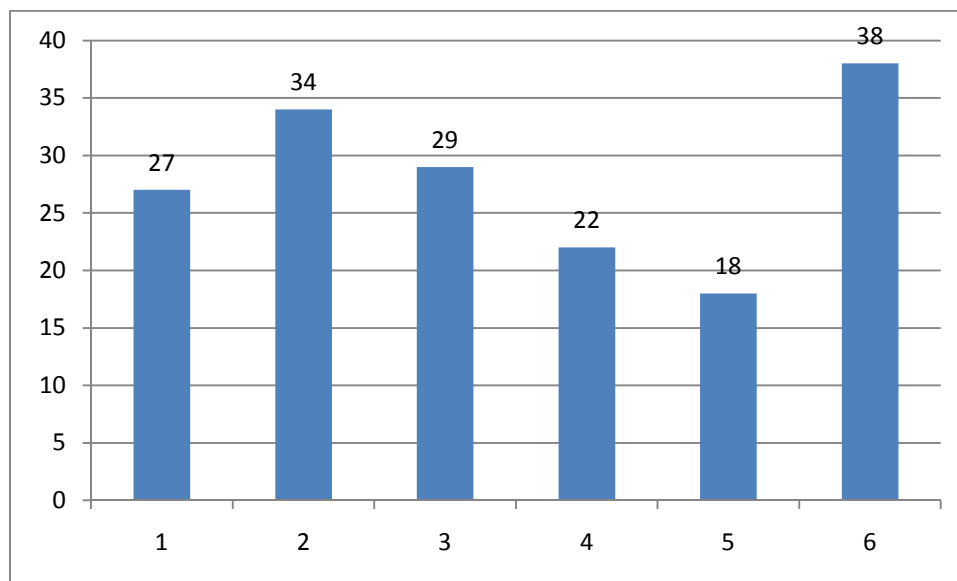


Figure 8: total number commercial spaces axis 2

The figures 9a-9f present the EV scores of each language on each stretch together with a frequency table that displays the dominant or subordinate position of each language on each stretch. As explained in the previous section, the circle diagrams in the left panel presents the relative EV scores. The frequency tables in the right panel show how many times each language occurs in a dominant or subordinate position, i.e. as exclusive (score 4) or dominant (score 3) language, as equal to (an)other language(s) in multilingual signs (score 2) or as a language used for additional elements or minor translations (score 1).

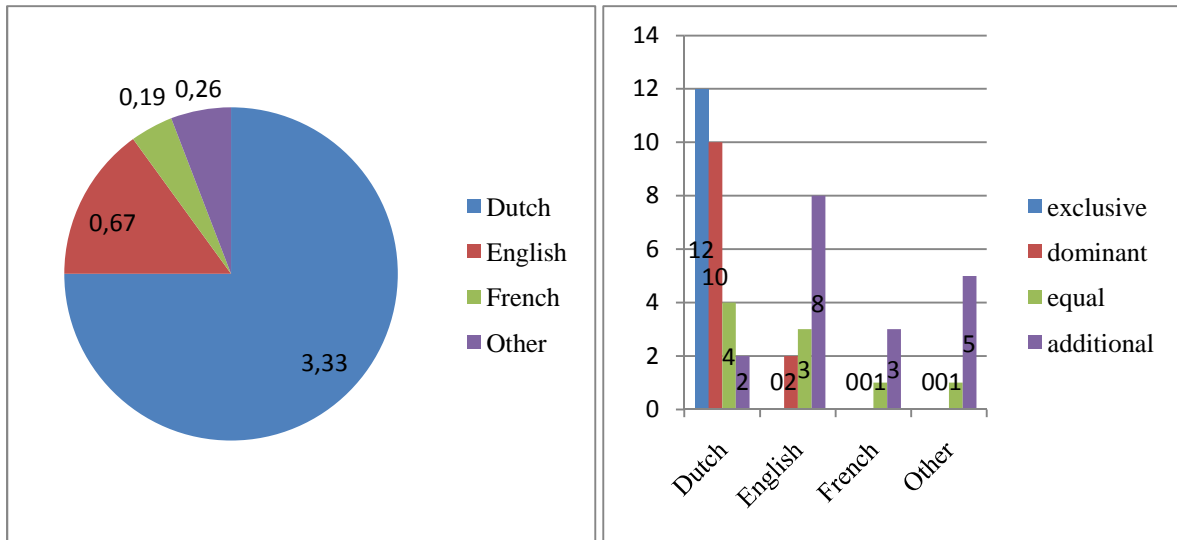


Figure 9a: stretch 1, axis 2

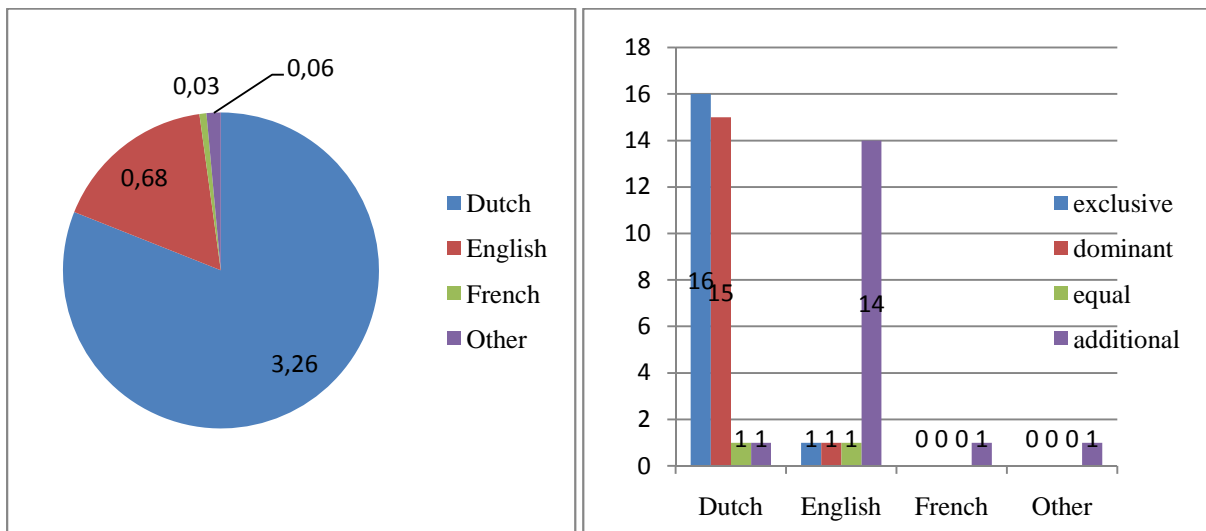


Figure 9b: stretch 2, axis 2

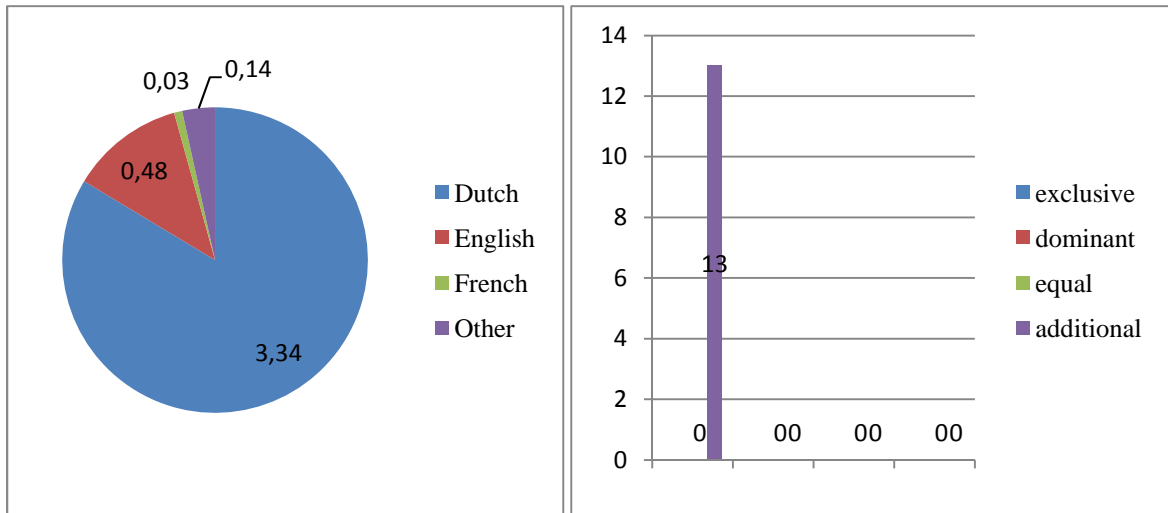


Figure 9c: stretch 3, axis 2

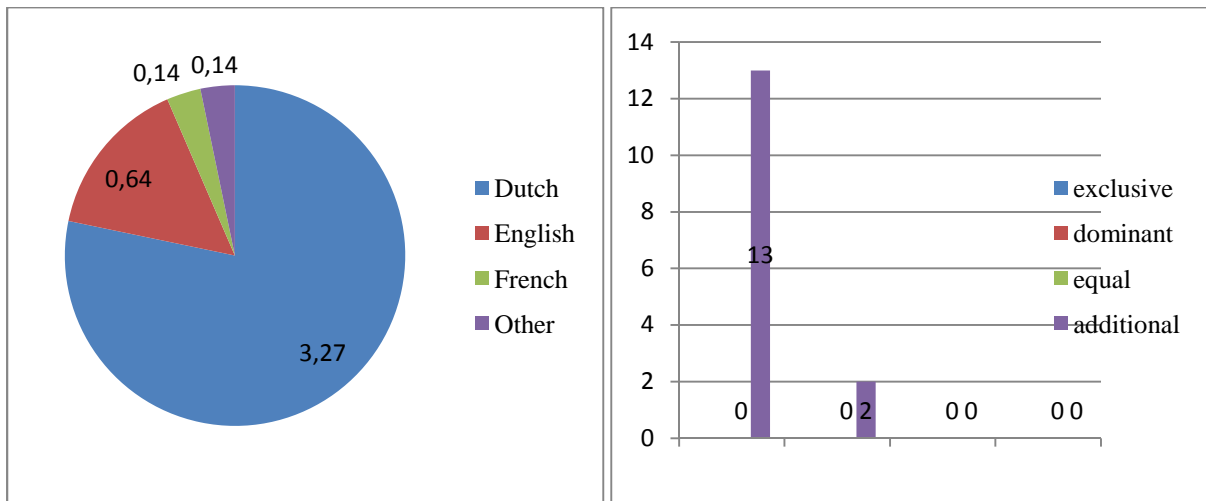


Figure 9d: stretch 4, axis 2

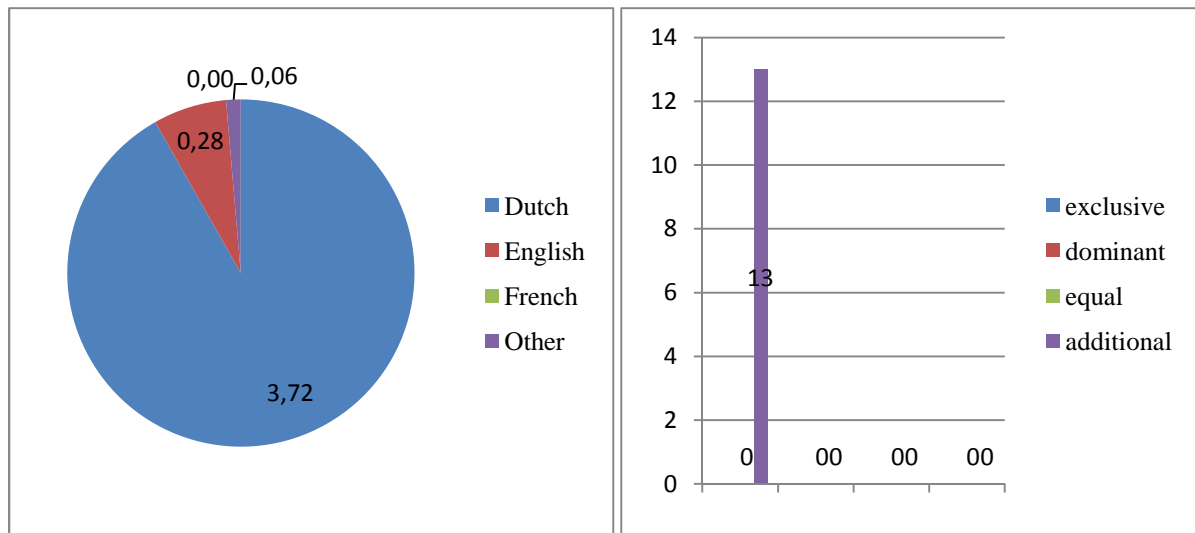


Figure 9e: stretch 5, axis 2

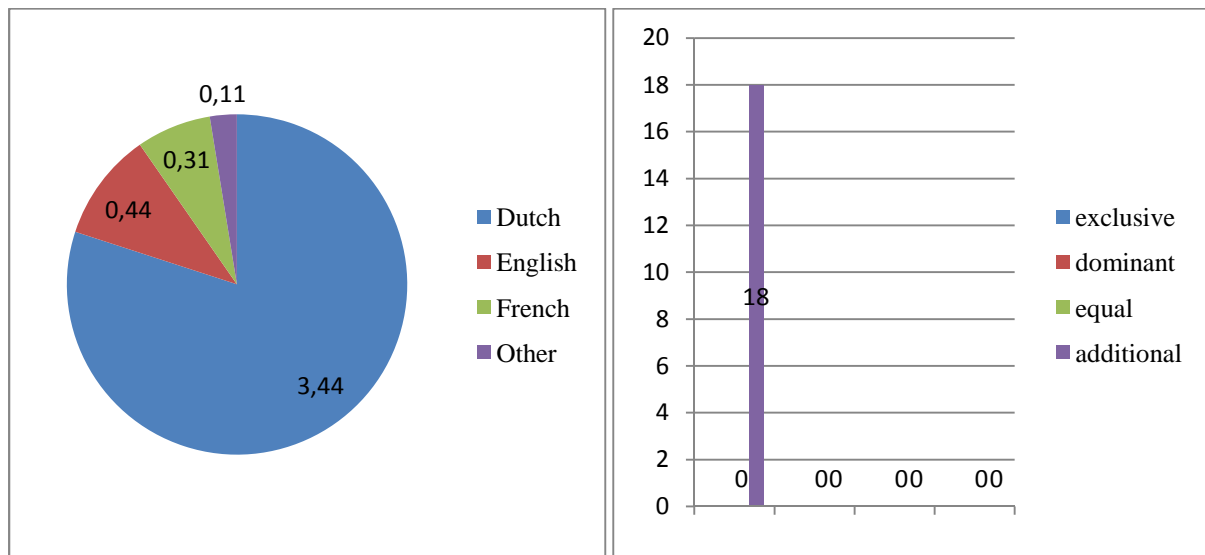


Figure 9f: stretch 6, axis 2

The overview of the relative EV scores confirms that Dutch overall is the most prevalent language and, as shown in the frequency tables, is predominantly used as the exclusive or dominant language.

Looking at the EV scores of English, we see that this language has as expected generally the second highest scores and is significantly more present on the first two stretches than along the remainder of the axis; this may be due to the fact that English is used as a *lingua franca* in the touristic centre. From the frequency tables it can be concluded that the position of English is indeed the strongest in the beginning and the end of the axis and on a few linguistic configurations is even found to be the dominant language, which exceeds my

expectations. Nevertheless, on each stretch of the axis, English is mostly used for additional elements and only occurs a few times in the exclusive or dominant position.

The French language generally scores very low but clearly has its highest score on the last stretch and not in the beginning of the axis, as I expected. Regarding the position in which this language occurs, French is indeed almost exclusively used for additional elements on signage.

The category of the 'Other' languages (German, Spanish, Italian, Ukrainian, Latin, Japanese and Chinese) has its highest EV score on stretch 1 and maintains a low score along the remainder of the axis, which is as expected. Considering the frequency tables, we see that the 'Other' category is predominantly found in the 'additional' position.

1.3. Comparative analysis of the data from both axes

An important observation to be made before drawing conclusions from a comparative analysis of the respective data sets is the fact that along both axes the number of units is of the same order of magnitude and the range of units on the stretches along the axis is similar, as illustrated in figures 6 and 8.

The following observations can be made based on the relative EVs for the different language categories. When comparing the relative EV scores (y axis) for the different stretches (x-axis) along both axes as shown in figures 10a and 11a, it is clear that Dutch is the most powerful language : the relative EV values range from 3 to 4. This is logic given the fact that the implied readership of the signage is predominantly Dutch-speaking and Dutch is the predominantly used lingua franca in the city and the region of Flanders. With regard to the ethnolinguistic vitality of English, the scores vary on both axes between 0 and 1. However, it is fair to state that English scores slightly higher in the case of axis 2 than on axis 1, since English scores only two times lower than 0,5 on axis 2, whereas on axis 1 this occurs three times. Moreover, in comparison to the 'Other' category and French, English scores also higher on axis 2 as the scores of these two other language categories never rise above those of English on this axis. Interesting to note is that on axis 2 the scores of English tend to mirror those of Dutch: when the scores of Dutch decrease, those of English increase and vice versa. Generally, we can state that English occupies a significant position within the linguistic landscape of both axes.

Considering the EV scores of French, we note that on both axes the EV scores range between 0 and 0,5, and it occurs three times on each axis that the EV score is 0. When

comparing the scores of French for each axis, we see that French clearly has higher scores on axis 1, whereas the scores on axis 2 are equally low as those of the 'Other' category. In the case of axis 1, French scores in particular very high in the centre of the city, which is especially due to the presence of some commercial spaces with a French name, such as the Vietnamese restaurant "Riz d'Or" or the antiques store "Le Pain Perdu". Thus, we can state that the presence of the French language on axis 1 seems the result of language fetishization (cf. supra).

Finally, when observing the relative EV scores for the languages belonging to the 'Other' category, we see that these languages clearly score higher on axis 1 than on axis 2 : on axis 1, the scores vary between 0 and 1, whereas on axis 2 the scores are always between 0 and 0,5. Moreover, on axis 1 it seems that the 'Other' category is competing with English, since their scores both vary between 0 and 1; and 'Other' scores higher than English on the last three stretches. On axis 2, on the other hand, the scores of the 'Other' category are generally on a rather equal footing with the scores of French. Regarding the languages of which this category consists on axis 1 there is a clear difference between the centre and the periphery (see Excel file): towards the centre the 'Other' category predominantly consists of Italian and Spanish, whereas closer to the periphery of the axis, most present 'Other' languages are Turkish and Arabic. Therefore, we can conclude that in the case of axis 1 the central area is dominated by European languages, whereas in the peripheral area the immigrant languages are more prevalent. Considering the languages of 'Other' on axis 2 , on the other hand, we note that both in the central and the peripheral area of this axis the dominant other languages are European, such as Spanish and Italian.

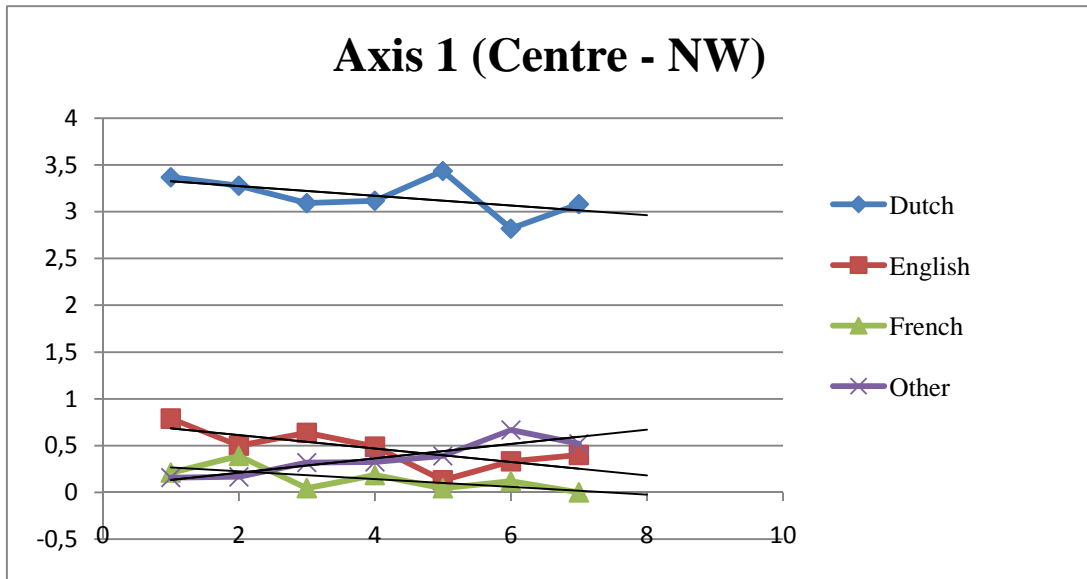


Figure 10a: relative EV scores axis 1

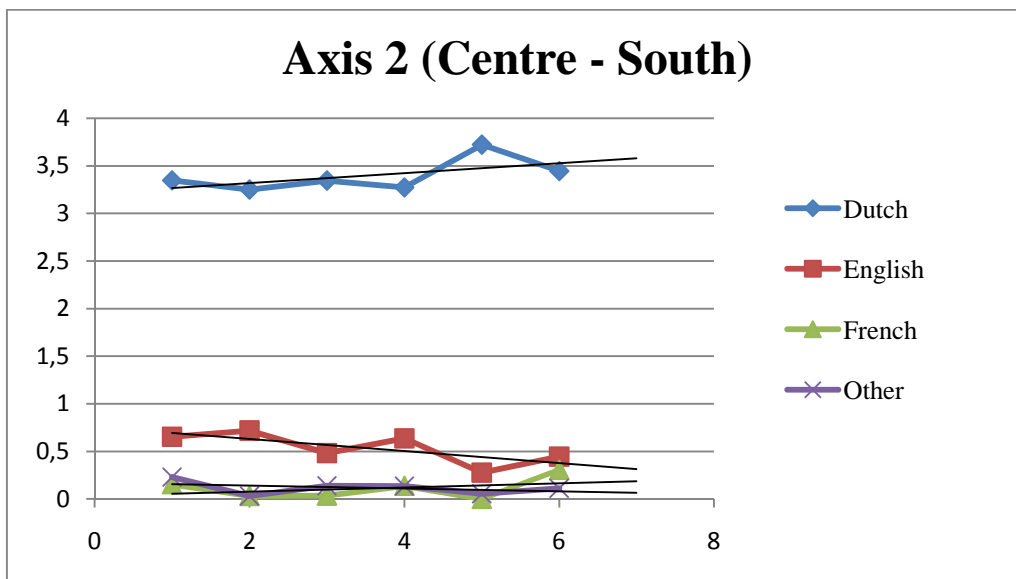


Figure 11a: relative EV scores axis 2

In order to have an idea of the tendencies of the ethnolinguistic vitalities of the languages along the stretches on the axis from the centre to the periphery, straight lines were added on the figures 10a and 11a by means of Excel, showing whether a language tends to rise or to decline. In figure 10a we see that the scores Dutch, English and French decline, whereas the 'Other' category's rise. Regarding axis 2 (figure 11a), we observe that the presence of Dutch rises, whereas English declines and French shows to be rising only slightly. The scores of the 'Other' category, on the other hand, stagnate along the whole axis. In other

words, axis 1 shows a positive evolution for the ‘Other’ category, whereas axis 2 presents a rising evolution for Dutch.

The figures 10 b-e and 11 b-e below give an overview of the frequency tables for each language for the several stretches along the axis. If we compare the figures 10b - 11b for Dutch, we see that on both axes the exclusive and dominant positions prevail, whereas it barely occurs that Dutch is used for equal or additional translations. It should be pointed out, however, that the number of ‘additional’ occurrences is larger on axis 1 (7 in total) than on axis 2 (2 in total). This observation is not surprising, since a relevant part of axis 1 is located within the immigrant neighbourhood; hence it is no surprise that the ‘Other’ category will occur more in equal multilingualism or in the dominant position at the expense of Dutch.

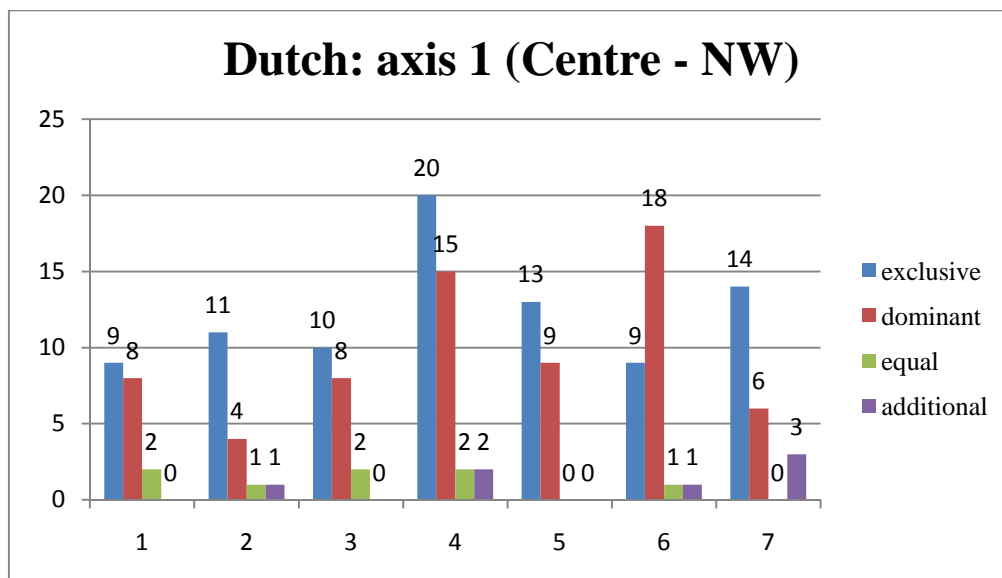


Figure 10b: frequency table Dutch, axis 1

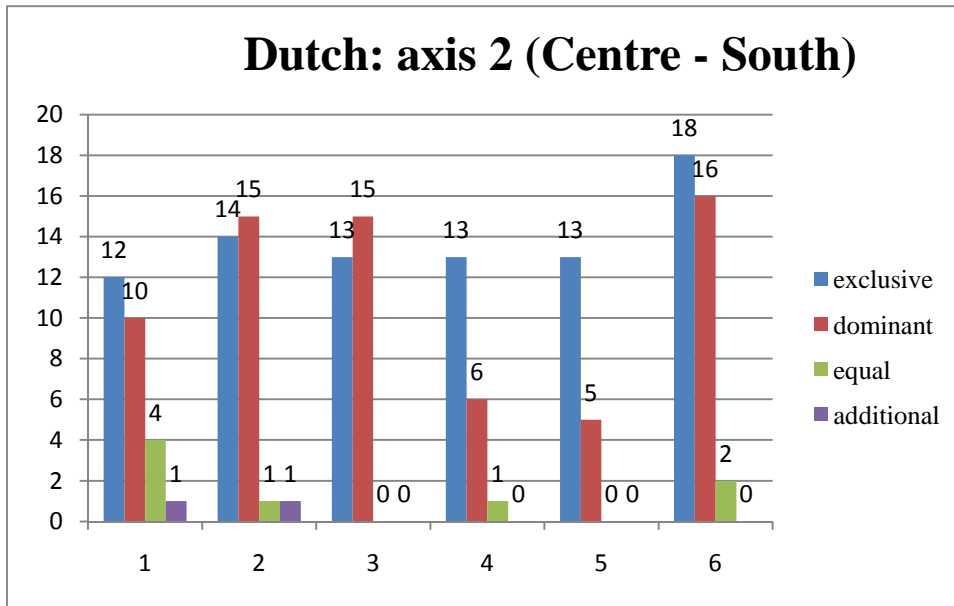


Figure 11b: frequency table Dutch, axis 2

Looking at the frequency tables for English as presented in figures 10c and 11c, we note that on both axes English is most frequently used for additional elements. One important difference between the two axes is that English is more frequently used as the exclusive language on axis 1. On axis 2, on the other hand, English appears more frequently on signage with equal multilingualism than on axis 1. This would fit the assumption that in the case of axis 1 English is also used as a lingua franca in the immigrant neighbourhood apart from functioning as a tourist language in the centre of the city.

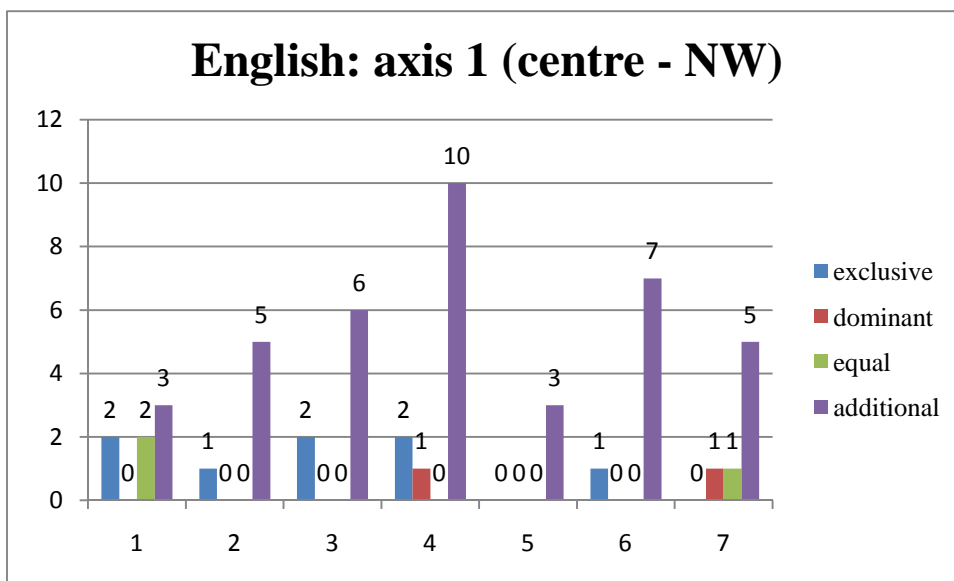


Figure 10c: frequency table English, axis 1

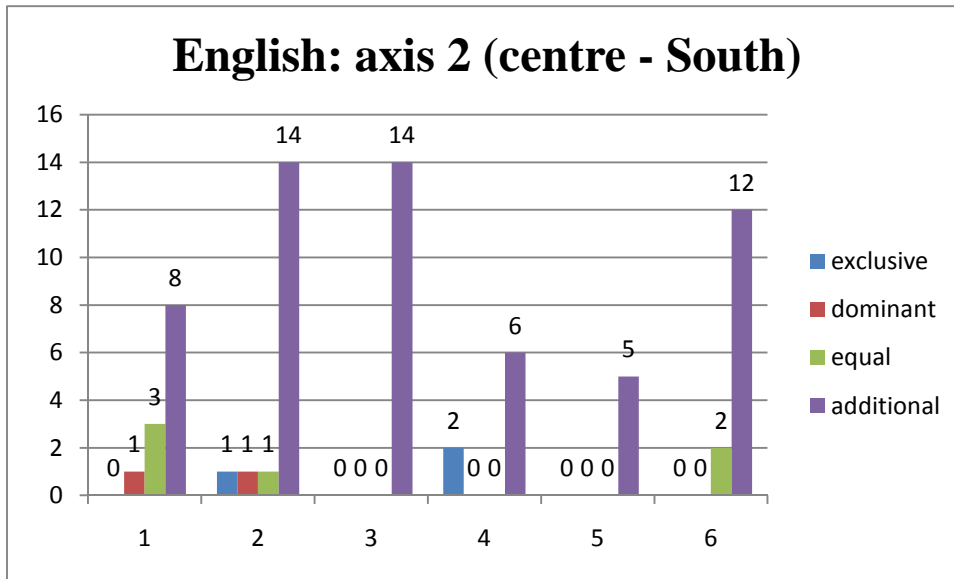


Figure 11c: frequency table English, axis 2

As regards the French language, we can deduce from the frequency tables presented in figures 10d and 11d that the ‘additional’ position for this language prevails on both axes. A first remarkable difference between the two axes is that French occurs three times as the exclusive language on signage on axis 1, whereas this is never the case on axis 2. Secondly, French occurs more in equal multilingualism on axis 2 than on axis 1.

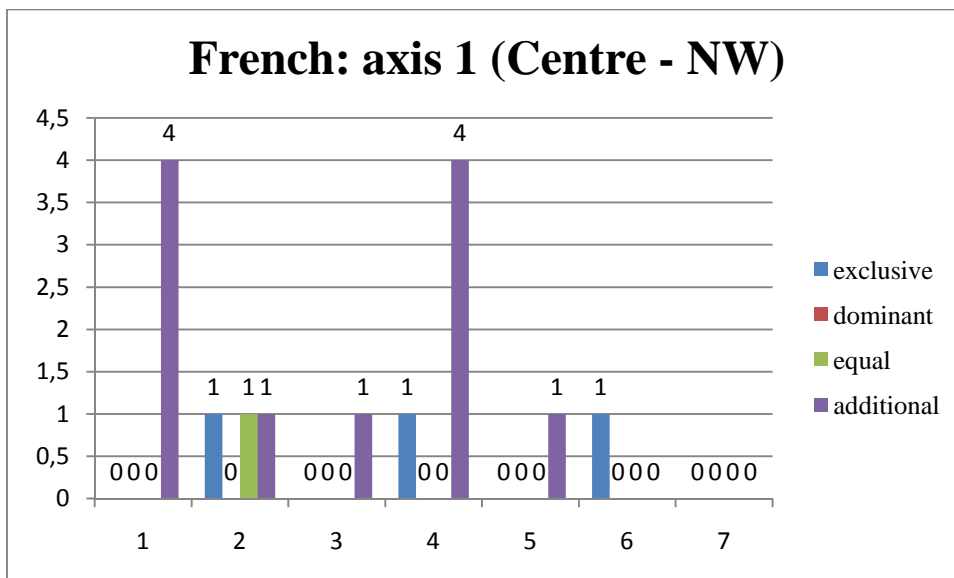


Figure 10d: frequency table French, axis 1

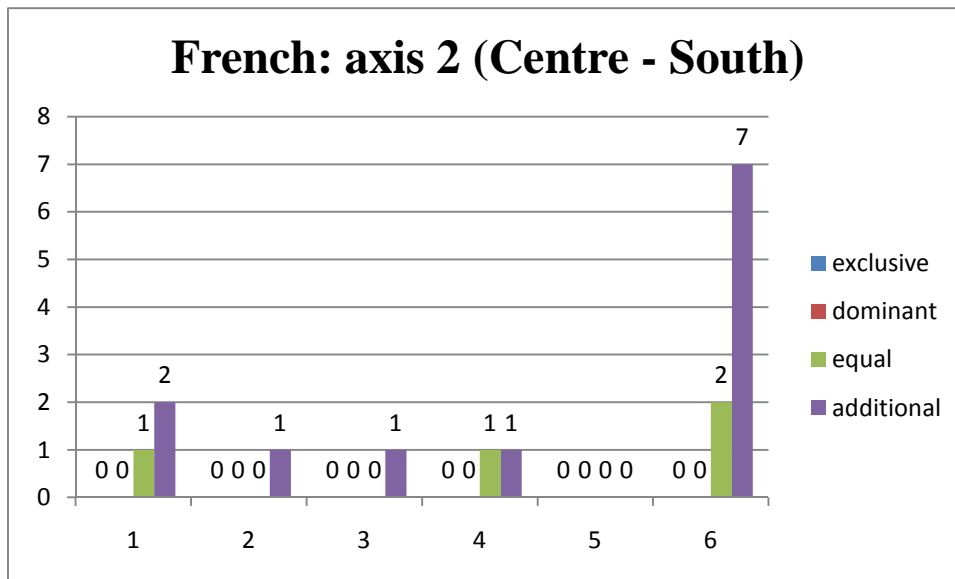


Figure 11d: frequency table French, axis 2

When looking at the figures 10e and 11e for the ‘Other’ category below, we see that this category is on both axes mostly used for additional elements. It should be pointed out, however, that the number of occurrences of ‘Other’ languages in exclusive, dominant or equal position is clearly larger on axis 1 than on axis 2. In the case of axis 1, this means that Turkish, Arabic, Italian, Spanish and Czech generally are more dominant than German, Spanish, Italian, Ukrainian, Latin, Japanese and Chinese on axis 2. These results are in agreement with the fact that a considerable part of axis 1, i.e. the Brugse Poort area, is inhabited by immigrants. Despite the fact that the position of the other languages is generally restricted to additional elements, which implies that also in the immigrant neighbourhood the targeted readership is a mixture of both speakers of Dutch and speakers of other (immigrant) languages, they tend to claim a stronger position within the immigrant neighbourhood than along the remainder of the axis.

When looking at the analyses, we see that these languages often are used for additional elements since they mostly occur in the name of the shops. In the first place such foreign shop names can be used “to give a product or a shop a foreign flavor” (Edelman 2009: 144) as a means to “appeal to emotions through the connotations of languages (Edelman 2009: 143). Secondly, when such commercial spaces are owned by immigrants, not only the goods that are sold but also the name of the commercial space in their native language can serve to maintain a connection with their homeland.⁸ In other words, as formulated by Mankekar

⁸ Examples of such commercial spaces are the Chinese Restaurants “Golden Ring” and “Ocean City”, who each display their name also in Chinese; the Czechoslovakian food shop “Kleer Potraviny”, the Turkish bakery “Bayram Paşa”, etc.

(2002) such shops try to “participate in the creation and consumption of discourses of the homeland” (Mankekar 2002: 81).

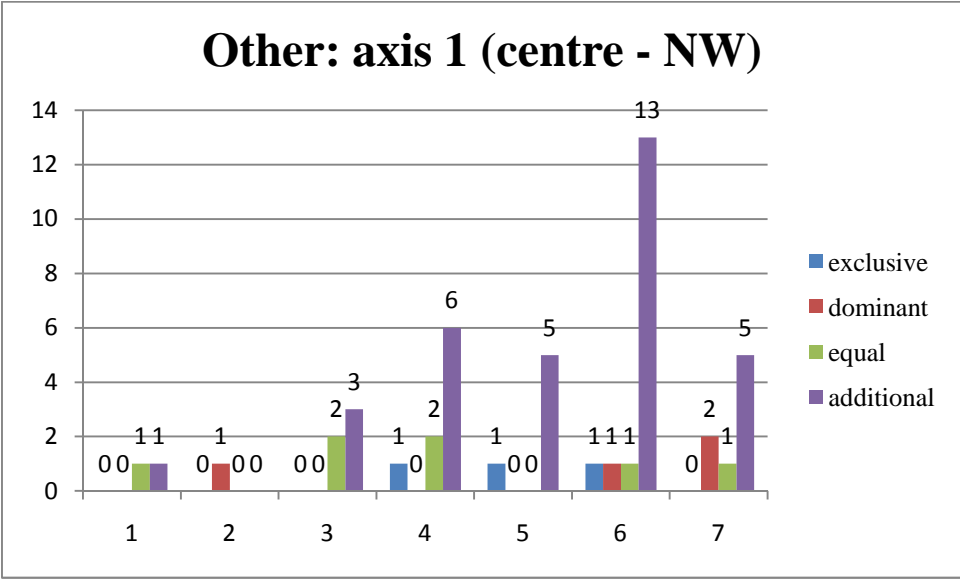


Figure 10e: frequency table Other, axis 1

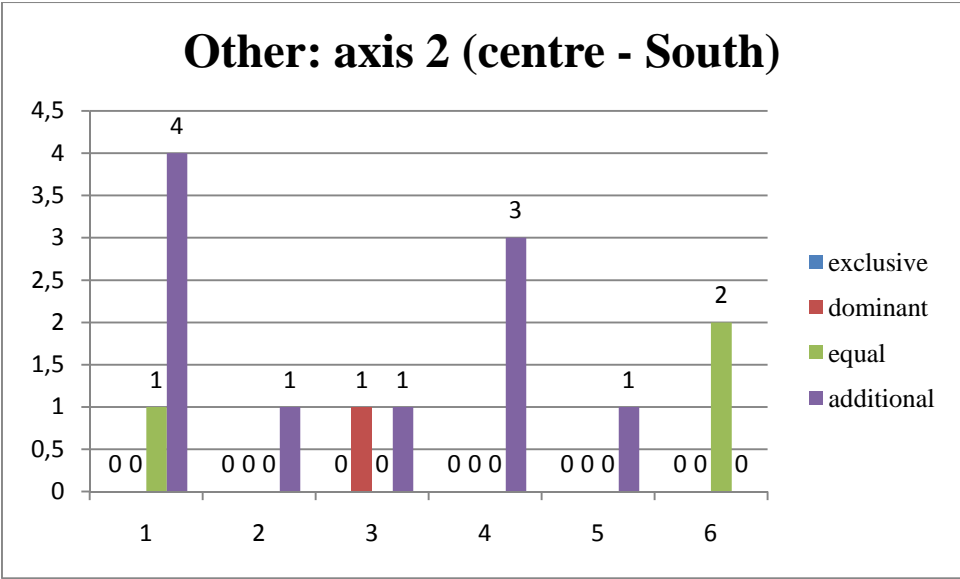


Figure 11e: frequency table Other, axis 2

1.4. Top-down vs. bottom-up signs

As mentioned above both official (top-down) and non-official or private (bottom-up) signs are included in the study, with the large majority of all the encountered signs being of the bottom-

up type. Concerning the difference in linguistic configuration between these two types, it was observed that private signs tend to display multilingualism, whereas official signs are more considerate of the official language policy of Flanders by displaying monolingual Dutch.

Nevertheless two exceptions to the trend of official signs should be put forward. The first one is a sign located near the Sint-Michielsdelling, indicating a pedestrian area (figure 12 below). This sign displays apart from Dutch also French, English and German, which is due to the fact that it is located near the Korenmarkt, which is one of the city's important touristic areas as it is a historical market place. Since a lot of tourists walk around there on a daily basis, this sign is conformed to an international implied readership. The second exception is a monument encountered in the Bevrijdingslaan and will be extensively discussed in the qualitative analysis of this study (chapter 3).



Figure 12: voetgangerszone, axis 1

2. Category 1: Commercial spaces belonging to a national chain

2.1. Introduction

The first category represents commercial spaces belonging to a national (or Belgian) chain.⁹ The presence of national chains on each axis is expected to be aligned with the classification of the axis to be of the ‘up-market’ or of the ‘down-market’ type. This distinction can be made on the basis of the kind of commercial spaces that is found along the axis. Considering axis 1 in this context, one will tend to find here commercial spaces which offer products for a merely cheap price representing the ‘down-market’ type. This is especially the case for the (privately owned) commercial spaces located towards the peripheral area of the Brugse Poort; think of local hairdressers, groceries, bakeries and shops that offer foreign products. Therefore this axis can rather be considered to be of the down-market type. Along the axis 2, one expects to encounter commercial spaces that offer goods of the more luxurious kind, such as clothing or lingerie shops, perfume stores, travel agencies, etc. This distinction amongst the type of market is relevant for this category of commercial spaces, because one expects commercial spaces belonging to a national chain to be located in an area that is of the up-market type which is less influenced by local shops. Based on this consideration, I expect a fairly large number of national chains to be present along the axis 2, whereas the number of national chains along the axis 1 should be rather small.

Regarding the language used on displays, one can expect that the position of national chains is somewhere in the middle between the international chains on the one hand and privately owned commercial spaces on the other. For the international chains (which are not covered in this study) we can assume that the languages on display are aligned with the official language policies of Belgium and not with the languages spoken by the local ethnolinguistic communities, which implies that predominantly Dutch and/or French will be displayed, and languages belonging to the ‘Other’ category will be absent. Privately owned

⁹ In this study the term “national chain” encompasses two types of chains : chains across the nation of Belgium and more local chains with branches within the region of Ghent. An example of the former type is the national bank “Fintro” which has 330 independent agencies across Belgium (www.fintro.be). The travel bookshop “Atlas & Zanzibar”, on the other hand, has one shop in Ghent and one in Sint-Denijs-Westrem (www.atlaszanzibar.be), which is a municipality that is part of the city of Ghent; therefore “Atlas & Zanzibar” can be considered an example of the latter type of national chain.

commercial spaces, on the contrary, tend to be influenced by the local ethnolinguistic dynamics and therefore will display more ‘Other’ languages, whereas Dutch and/or French are less prevalent on signage. As regards the use of English for these both categories, we may assume that this language will be equally present, either because it is used as a lingua franca or as a result of language fetishization. Since in this case the encountered national chains are located within the officially Dutch-speaking region of Flanders, we can assume that within this category Dutch will be the prevailing language on display. Dutch is expected to be followed by English, whereas the number of displays of languages belonging to the ‘Other’ category is assumed to be small.

In the following sections the results of national chains identified on each axis and their relative ethnolinguistic scores will be presented and discussed. It is important to notice that the data set is consisting of a limited number of entries and hence care need to be taken when observing trends along the axis since they can be influenced by the presence of a few eye-catching establishments.

2.2. Axis 1: Sint-Michielselling – Bevrijdingslaan

A total of 17 commercial spaces belonging to a national chain were encountered. The figure 13 displays the number of commercial spaces on each stretch, revealing that the occurrence of national chains is present along the whole axis. The highest number of national chains is found on stretch 4 (7), whereas stretch 2 has the least national chains (1).

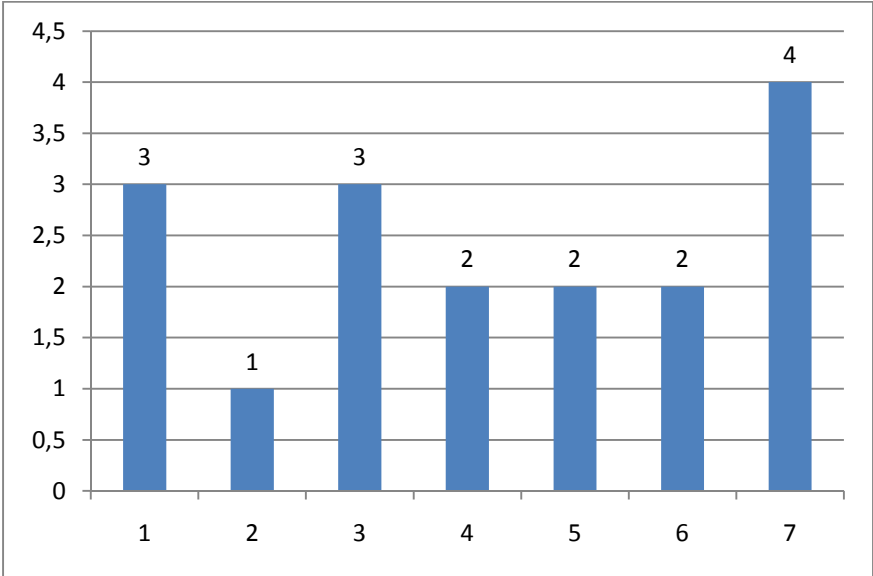


Figure 13: total number national chains, axis 1

A similar approach is followed as for the overall linguistic landscape (cf. supra), with a set of figures (14a-g) presenting an overview of the relative EV scores and the frequency tables of each language for each stretch.

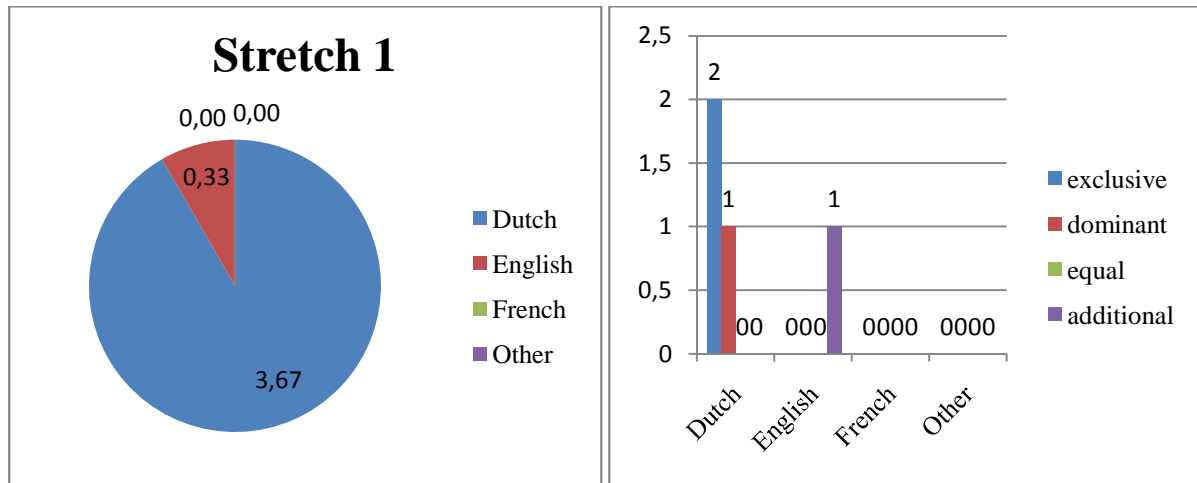


Figure 14a: stretch 1, axis 1

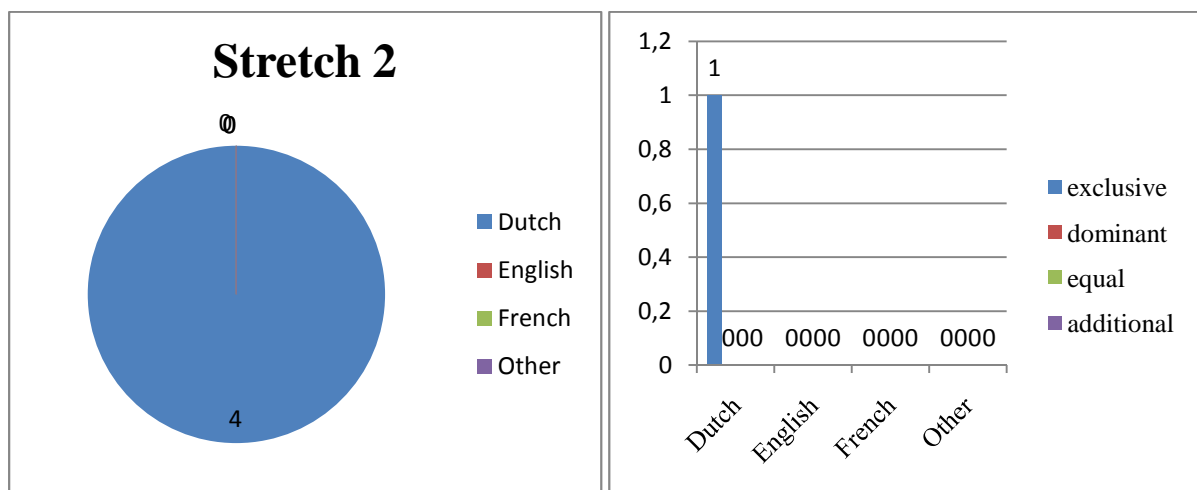


Figure 14b: stretch 2, axis 1

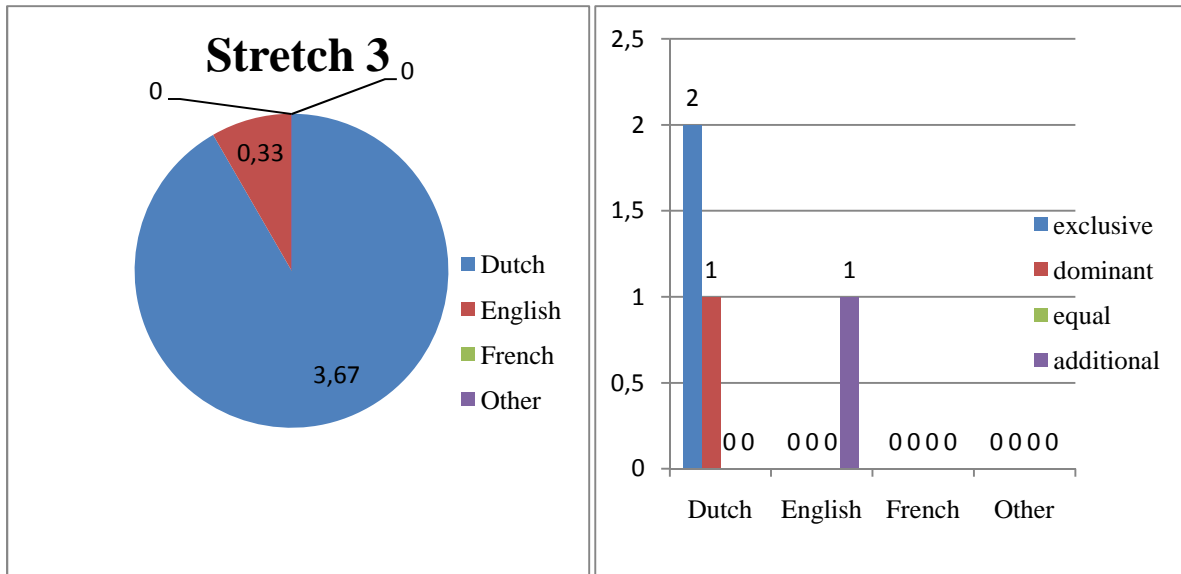


Figure 14c: stretch 3, axis 1

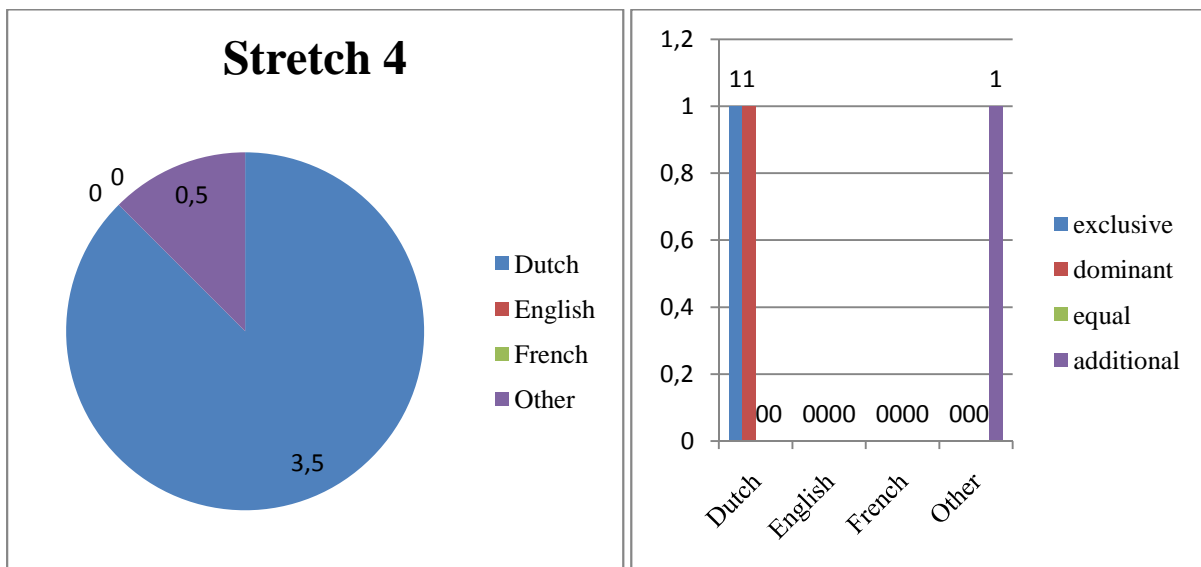


Figure 14d: stretch 4, axis 1

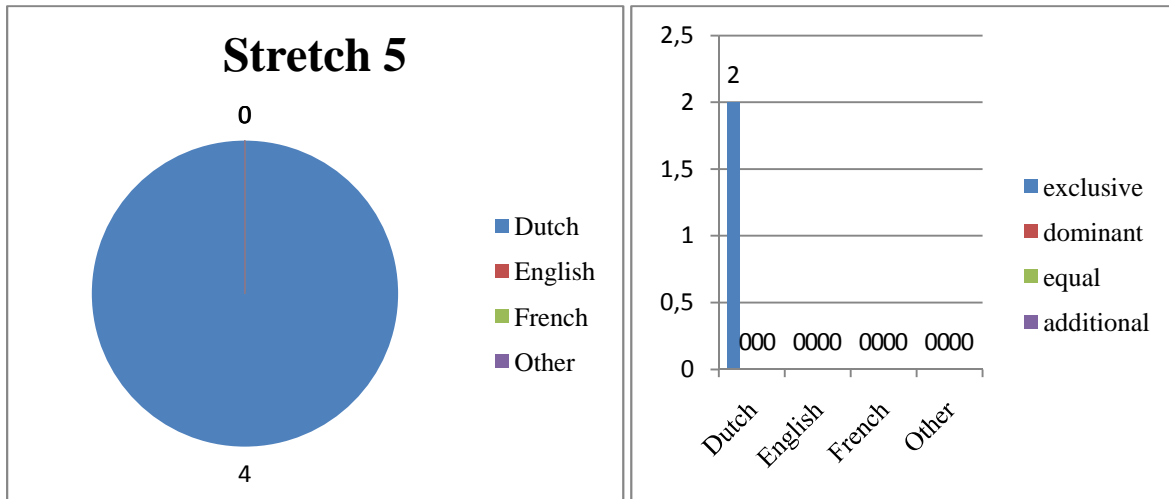


Figure 14e: stretch 5, axis 1

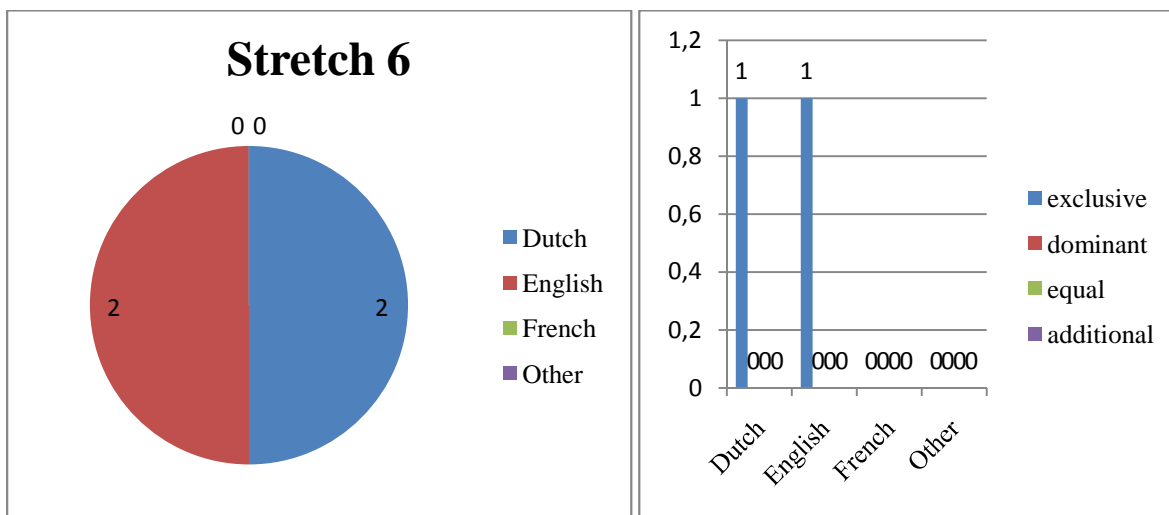


Figure 14f: stretch 6, axis 1

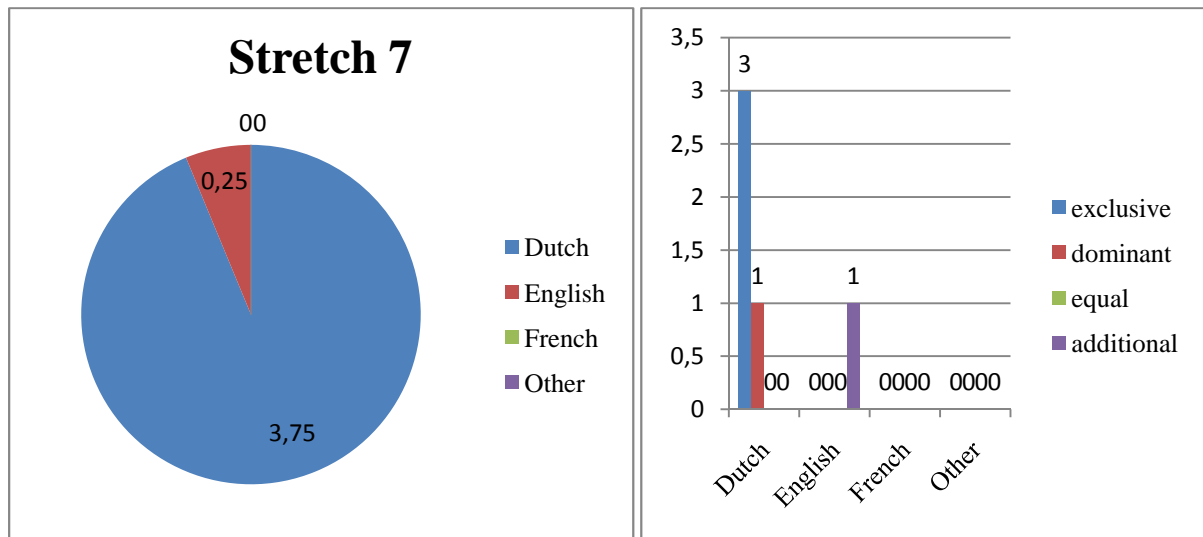


Figure 14g: stretch 7, axis 1

In line with my expectations, Dutch is the most powerful language in the national chains' linguistic landscape of this axis, followed by English. The presence of the 'Other' category (Spanish) on stretch 4 is remarkable but is this is linked to the presence of the driving school "Rijschool Merelbeke": this entity is a local national chain having also a display of an 'Other' language. Considering the frequency tables above, we see that Dutch occurs on six out of the seven stretches as the only exclusive and/or dominant language, except for stretch 6 where both Dutch and English are in the exclusive position. English and the 'Other' category, on the other hand, are predominantly used for additional elements on signage. An interesting observation is the fact that French is never present on signage of this category along this axis. In conclusion, we can state that the expectations for the national chains are generally confirmed in the case of this axis, since the national chains indeed reflect the official language policy of Flanders. The relatively high score of English can be aligned with its status of being a fashionable language.

2.3. Axis 2: Koophandelsplein - Sint-Pietersstation

As expected, a larger number of national chains is present on this axis: 30 in total. Figure 15 represents the number of national chains on each stretch of the axis. The number of national chains is highest in the first half of the axis with a total of 19 (5+6+8), whereas along the second half of the axis only 11 (3+3+5) national chains were encountered, which is as

expected. The highest number of national chains is found on stretch 3 (8), whereas stretch 4 and 5 each have the lowest number of national chains (3).

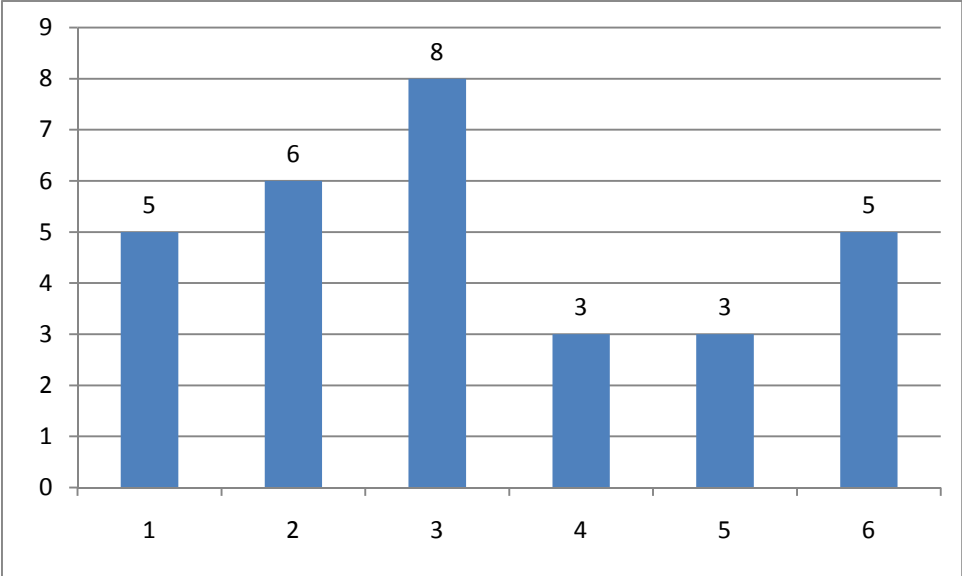


Figure 15: total number national chains, axis 2

The figures 16 a-f present the EV scores and the frequency tables of each language for each stretch.

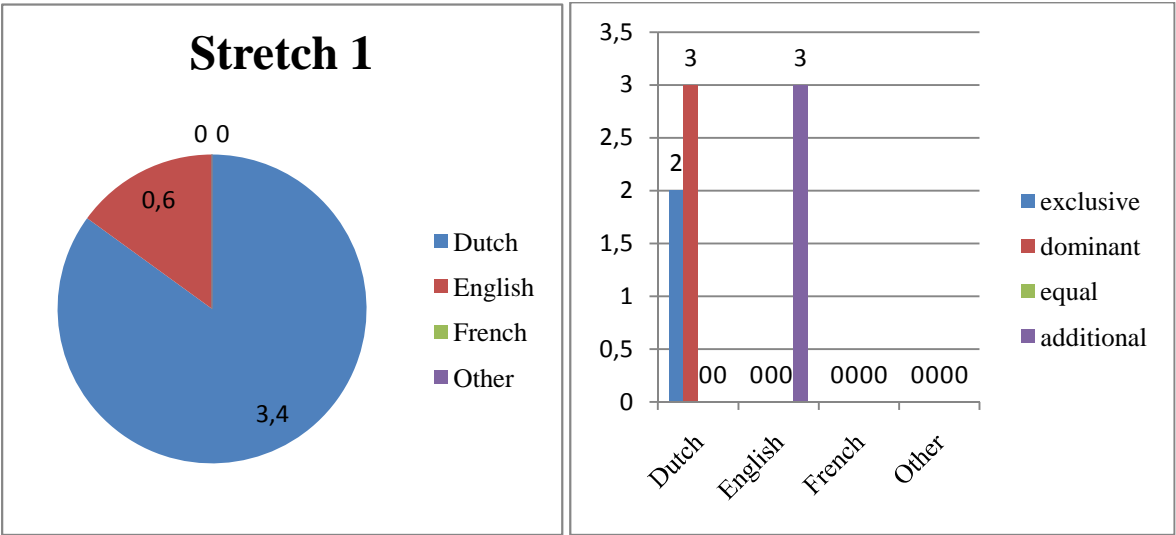


Figure 16a: stretch 1, axis 2

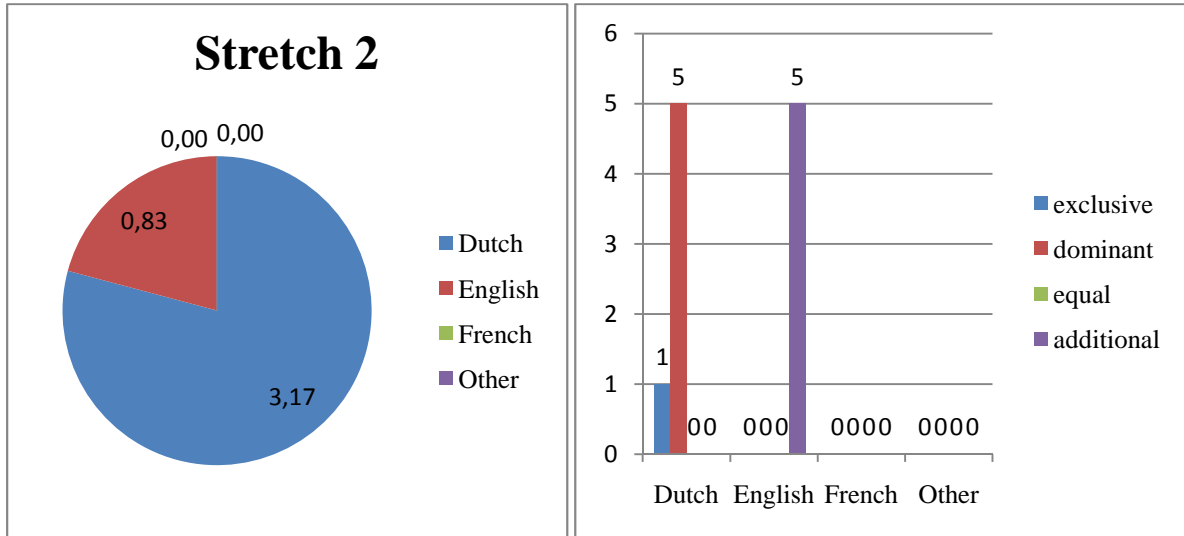


Figure 16b: stretch 2, axis 2

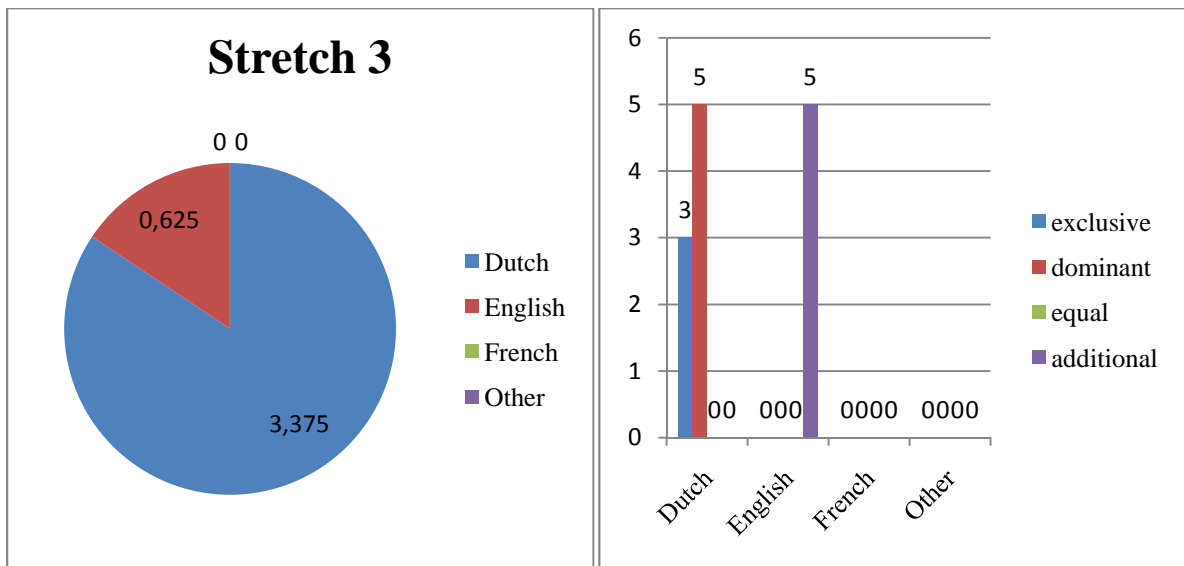


Figure 16c: stretch 3, axis 2

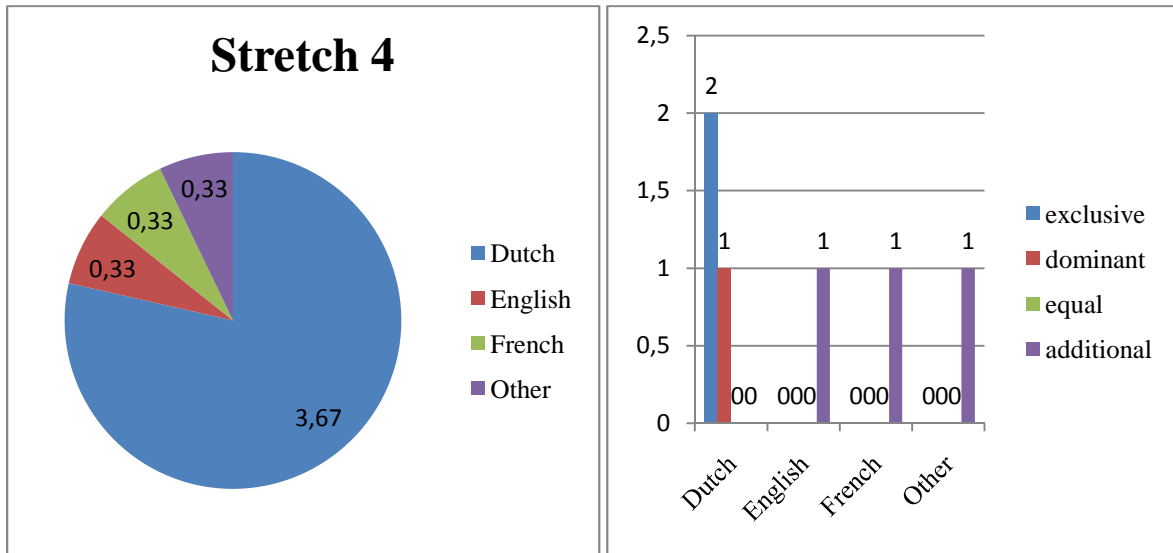


Figure 16d: stretch 4, axis 2

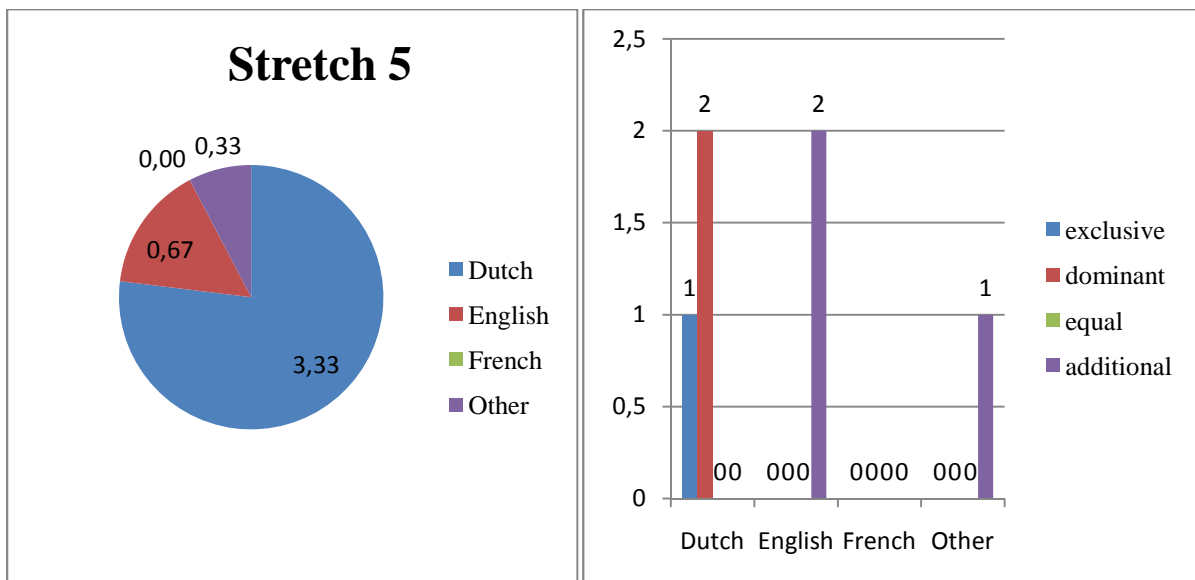


Figure 16e: stretch 5, axis 2

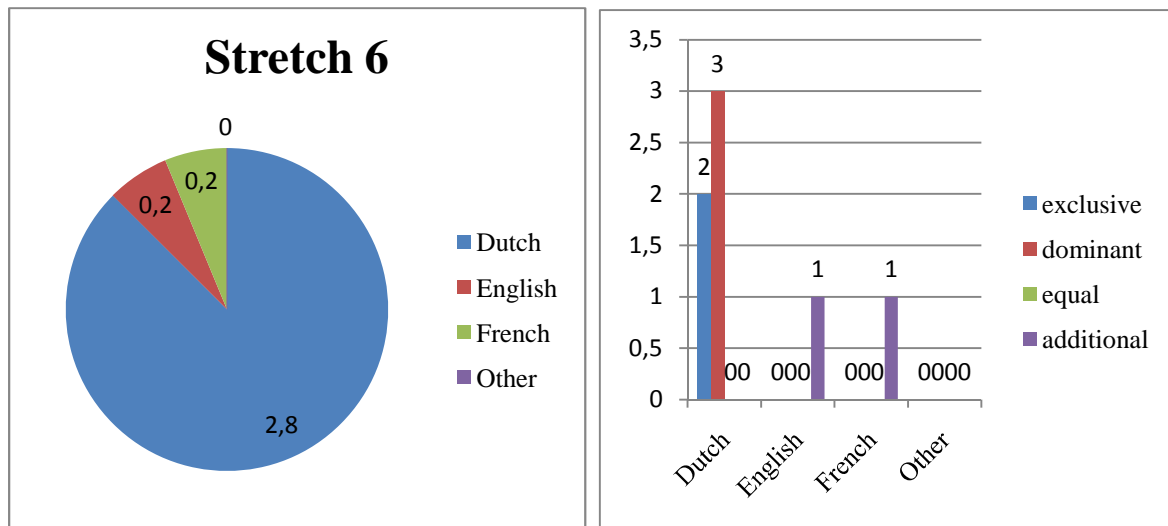


Figure 16f: stretch 6, axis 2

From the data shown in the figures above, one can conclude that also on this axis Dutch has the highest EV scores, followed by English. My expectations are in particular confirmed as regards the first half of the axis, since along this part only Dutch and English are displayed. In the second half of this axis, on the other hand, all four language categories are present, nevertheless with Dutch and English still having the highest EV scores. A few peculiarities on some of the stretches are linked to some specific establishments. On stretch 4, the book shop “Atlas & Zanzibar” is present; this is a local national chain bookshop offering maps and travel guides in several languages (for a more thorough discussion of this bookshop, see Section 2.5.2). In the case of stretch 5, it is the local national chain (“Karoshi”) that is responsible for the presence of the ‘Other’ category (Japanese). Finally, on stretch 6, French is also displayed triggered by the real estate office “Agence Rosseel”, more specifically because of the word “agence”, which is assumed to be the result of language fetishization, i.e. as a more fashionable substitute for the Dutch “agentschap”. When looking at the frequency tables above, we see that Dutch occurs always as the exclusive or dominant language, whereas English, French and ‘Other’ are in the position of additional language.

2.4. Comparative analysis of data from both axes

When comparing the relative EV scores of the national chains along the stretches of both axes as presented in figures 17 and 18, we see that Dutch is the prevalent language on display. The next language of importance is English, which scores particularly high on stretch 6 of axis 1 at the expense of Dutch. Both French and ‘Other’ have the lowest scores on both axes.

Generally, we can state that the relative EV scores of axis 1 are the most in accordance with my expectations, since French is not present and 'Other' occurs only once. This observation is somewhat peculiar, since it is axis 2 that has the most national chains due to its up-market outlook. This can be explained by taking into account the influence of the number of local national chains on each axis. As has been observed above, this type of national chain tends to display other languages than Dutch and English only, such as French and Spanish. In the case of these two axes, I observed that axis 2 has a large number of these local national chains, whereas axis 1 has a smaller number of national chains of this type. This can serve as an explanation for this at first sight peculiar results. In conclusion, we can state that on both axes the national chains are in compliance with Flanders' official language policy, which is reflected in the high scores of Dutch.

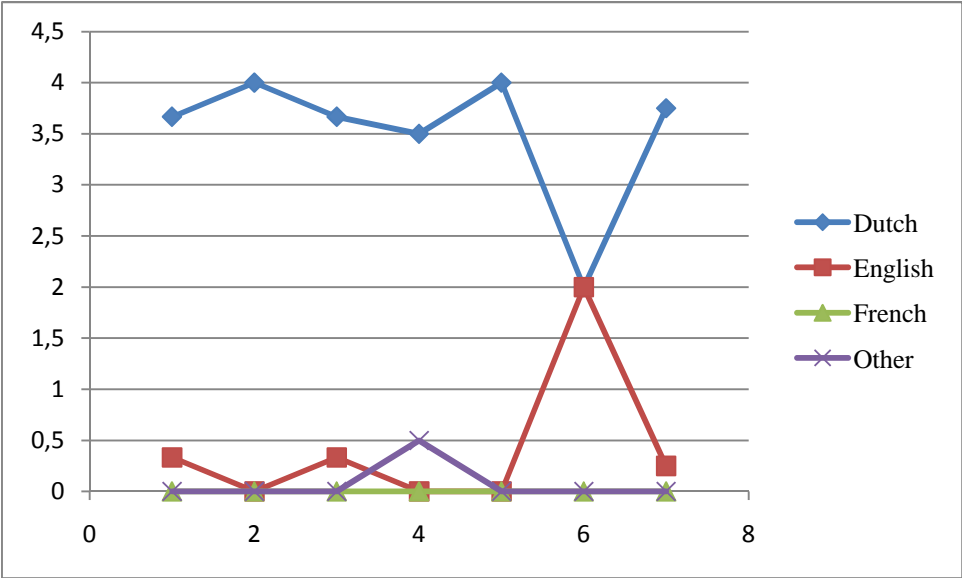


Figure 17: relative EV scores national chains, axis 1

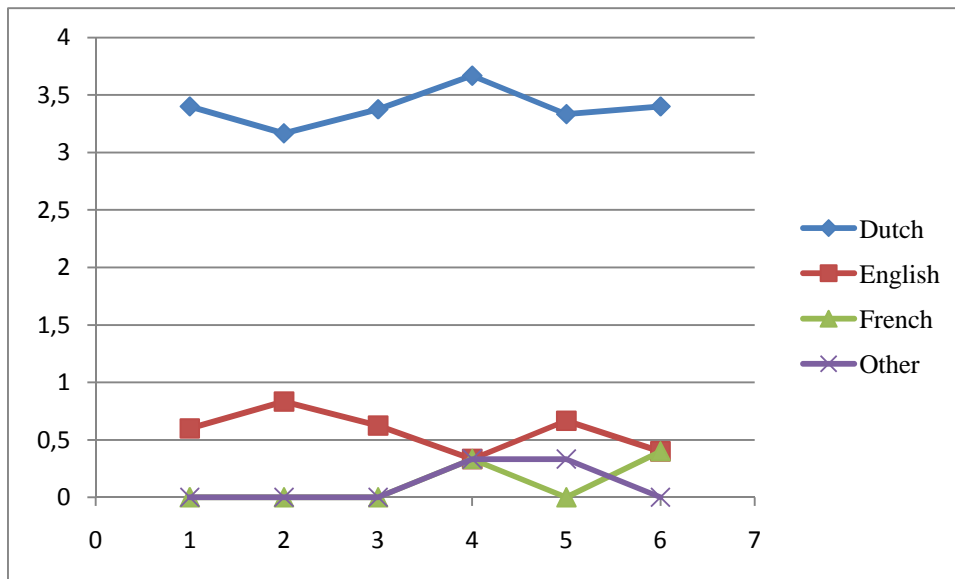


Figure 18: relative EV scores national chains, axis 2

3. Category 2: Privately owned commercial spaces

3.1. Introduction

The expectations for the category of privately owned commercial spaces, will not be extensively outlined, since the introduction of the category of the national chains already contained some statements about the language on display in the case of privately owned commercial spaces (cf. supra). Moreover, since the major part of the commercial spaces encountered along the axes consists of privately owned spaces, the results of the quantitative analysis of this category will resemble those of the overall linguistic landscape (cf. supra). Therefore, the relative EV scores of each axis for this category will only be comparatively discussed (cf. infra). Regarding the general expectations of the privately owned commercial spaces, we can assume that this category is less considerate of the official language policy, but instead tends to reflect the languages spoken by the local ethnolinguistic communities inhabiting the area. In the case of axis 1 for instance, this implies that especially in the immigrant neighbourhood the private owner shops will display languages belonging to the ‘Other’ category, i.e. immigrant languages such as Turkish or Arabic.

3.2. Axis 1: Sint-Michielsdijck – Bevrijdingslaan

As shown on figure 19, along this axis a total number of 151 privately owned commercial spaces were encountered. Most of these are found on stretch 4 (37), whereas stretch 2 has the least number of privately owned commercial spaces (11).

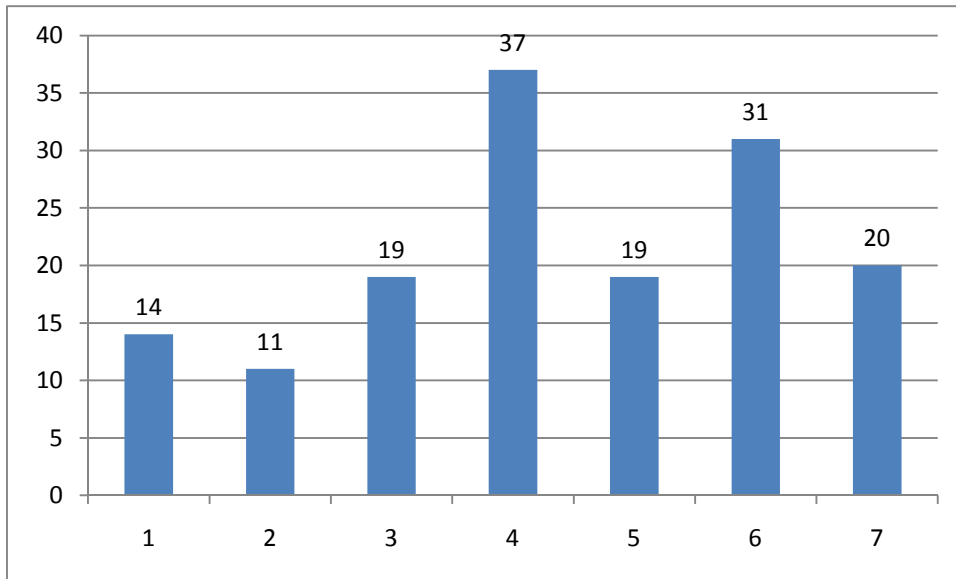


Figure 19: total number privately owned, axis 1

3.3. Axis 2: Koophandelsplein – Sint-Pietersstation

On this axis the number of privately owned commercial spaces is smaller than on the previous axis, 126 in total (figure 20). The largest number was encountered on stretch 6 (31), whereas stretch 5 has the smallest number of privately owned commercial spaces (13).

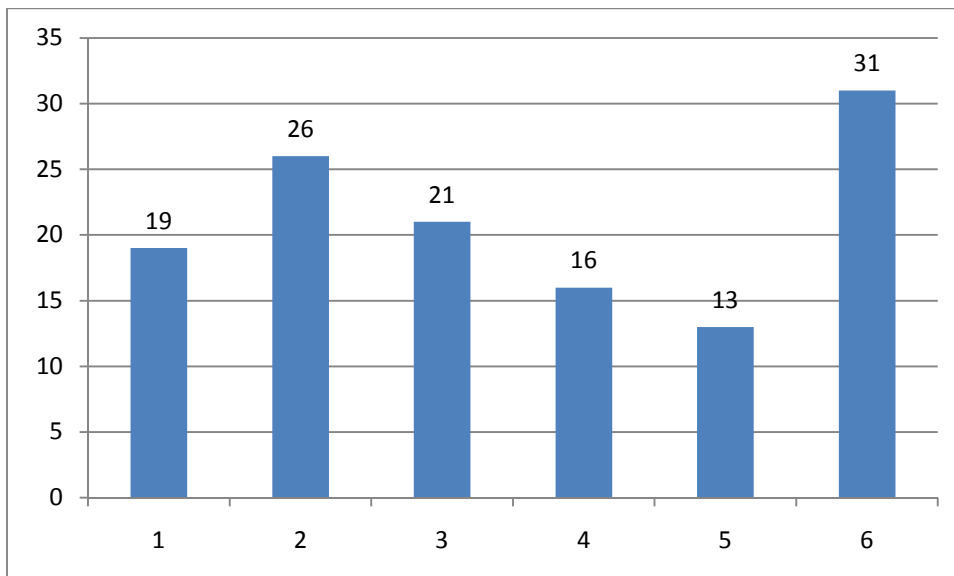


Figure 20: total number privately owned, axis 2

3.4. Comparative analysis of data from both axes

When comparing the relative EV scores of the privately owned commercial spaces of each axis as shown in figures 21 and 22, we see that as expected Dutch has on both axes the highest EV scores. English also scores relatively high, except for the second half of axis 1 (the Brugse Poort area), where its score decreases, whereas the presence of the ‘Other’ category increases. This implies that despite the fact that English has a lingua franca-status, in areas where the concentration of different ethnolinguistic communities is very high, the ‘Other’ languages spoken by these communities will claim a stronger position than English. The French language generally has low scores on both axes, but there are some differences. In the case of axis 1, French scores especially high in the centre of the city (stretches 1 and 2), whereas along the remainder of the axis the scores remain very low. On axis 2, on the other hand, French has its highest scores both in the centre and the periphery, whereas the lowest scores are found on the middle stretches. Generally, we can state that these results indeed resemble the overall linguistic landscape results (cf. supra). Therefore, the discussion of the overall LL results can also be applied on this category.

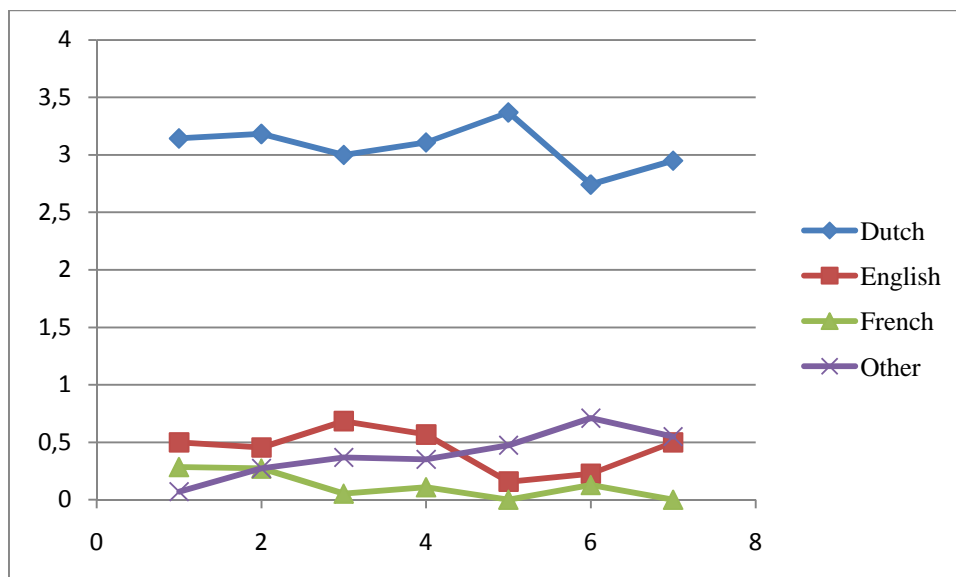


Figure 21: relative EV scores privately owned, axis 1

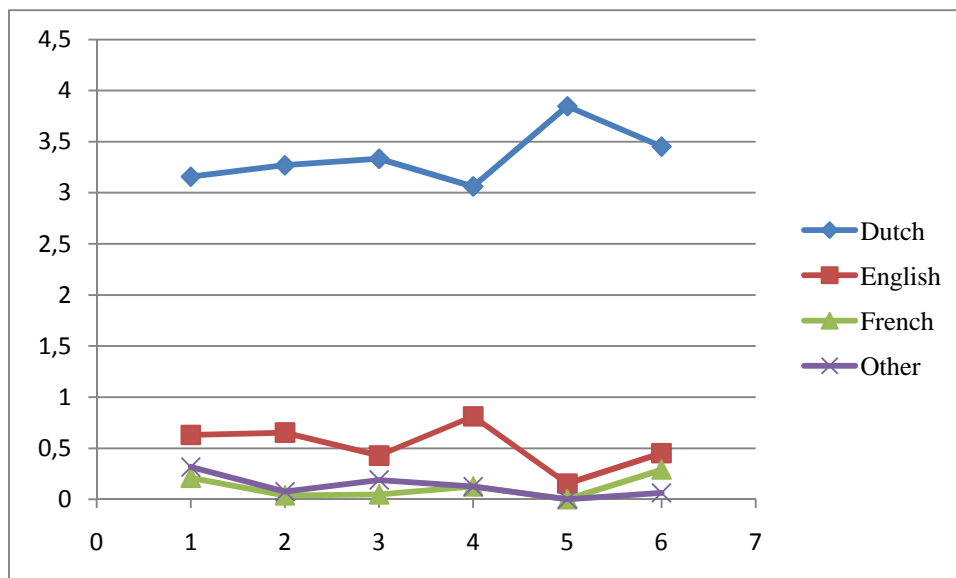


Figure 22: relative EV scores privately owned, axis 2

4. Subcategory 1: bookshops

4.1. Introduction

The first subcategory covered in this study are the bookshops, which includes any kind of shop that sells readable material such as newspapers, magazines or books. The importance of this subcategory is related to the clientele and in particular to the expectations of the implied readers of a bookshop. If a certain bookshop's potential clientele expects to find literature in more languages than Dutch only, we may assume that we will find literature in several languages in the window displays and/or on the shelves of that bookshop. Subsequently, the signs of a particular bookshop or the literature displayed in its window can reflect the general EV scores of the area where the shop is located. Moreover, not only the location of the bookshop, but also the nature of the bookstore can be a determining factor for the ethnolinguistic vitalities. The kind of bookshops that offer newspapers and magazines aims at a clientele that consists of speakers of Dutch as a lingua franca and hence will offer predominantly literature in Dutch only. Bookstores selling genuine literature, on the other hand, tend to have an international implied readership and will therefore offer literature in several languages. In order to have a full overview of the kind of literature that is offered in each shop, I did not only cover the window displays, but also made an investigation of the literature that was stored on the shelves inside the bookshops. The results of the analysis below will either confirm or contradict this hypotheses.

4.2. Axis 1: Sint-Michielselling- Bevrijdingslaan

4.2.1. Introduction

I expect to find the largest number of bookshops in the area of the city centre, since a considerable part of the clientele for e.g. a bookshop that offers literature in several languages might be tourists. Moreover, the city centre is generally the area where also Ghent's inhabitants or people working in Ghent spend their spare time, and since reading and visiting a bookshop can be considered to be part of one's sparetime, we can assume that a bookstore located in the centre will attract a larger public than a bookshop close to the periphery of the city. Regarding the literature that is offered, I expect the bookstores on this axis to offer publications in other languages than Dutch only. In the bookshops near the centre this may be to attract a public that also consists of tourists, whereas in the case of bookstores located in the immigrant neighbourhood Brugse Poort, this may be to offer the immigrants literature in their languages as well. Therefore, we may expect that a considerable part of the literature offered by the bookshops along this axis is written in languages belonging to the 'Other' category.

4.2.2. Quantitative analysis

In reality only two bookshops were encountered along this axis, which are located both on stretch 4: the newspaper- and magazineshop "De Brug" and the Christian bookshop "Prevailing Word International". Since stretch 4 is part of the Brugse Poort area, my assumption that the highest number of bookshops would be encountered in the centre is not confirmed. The relative EV scores and the frequency table for the façades of both bookshops are displayed below.

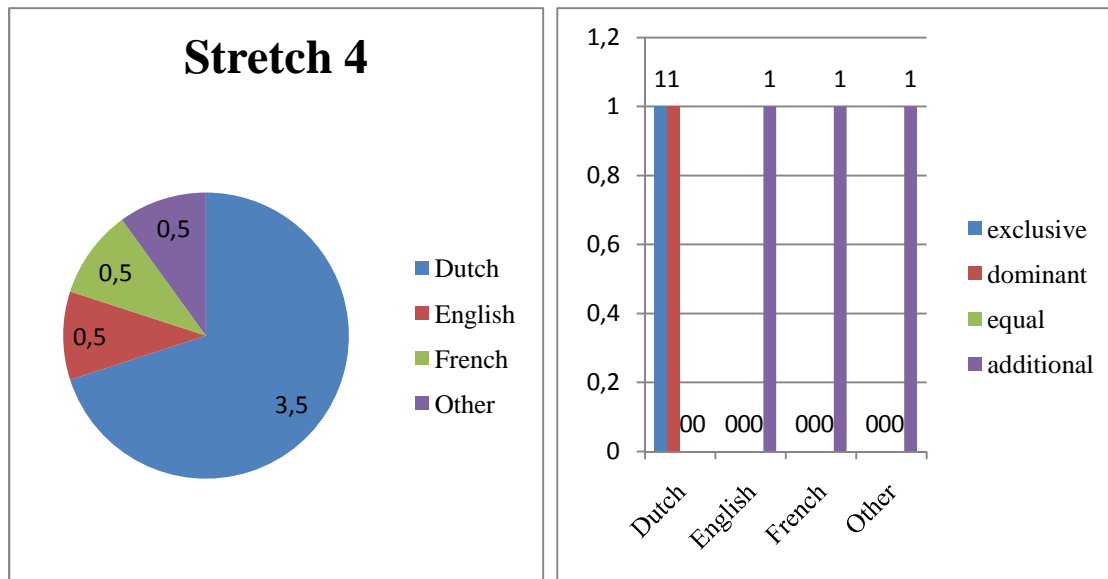


Figure 23: stretch 4, axis 1

The figures only give us an overview of the languages as they are displayed on the storefronts of the bookshops. In order to get a complete idea of the languages present within the bookshops, I also visited each bookshop to see what languages were present in the literature on the shelves. In the case of the newspaper- and magazineshop “De Brug” I observed that magazines and newspapers not only in Dutch, English and French but also in several other languages are sold, despite the fact that the storefront of “De Brug” only displays Dutch. Considering the Christian bookstore “Prevailing Word International”, the façade of this shop indicates that literature in several languages is offered on the shelves, since the storefront displays apart from Dutch also English, French and Spanish. The diverse offer of these bookshops can be related to the fact that they are located in the Brugse Poort neighbourhood: since this area is predominantly inhabited by immigrants, one would expect the bookstores located in such a neighbourhood to be internationally oriented by offering literature in several languages; and here this hypothesis is confirmed by the two encountered bookshops on this axis. One peculiarity to notice is the fact that this is a Christian bookshop, but the immigrant neighbourhood is dominated by people from Turkish or Moroccan descent of which the major part is Muslim. Consequently, we can assume either that this shop presents a niche offering a special type of literature to a broader audience interested in the topic and not directly linked to the neighbourhood or that its implied clientele consists of that (smaller) part of immigrants that is Catholic.

4.3. Axis 2: Koophandelsplein – Sint-Pietersstation

On this axis more bookshops have been found : 10 in total. The figure 24 displays the number of bookshops on each stretch of the axis. The highest number of bookshops was encountered in the beginning (stretch 1 and 2) and on the very end of the axis, whereas on the middle stretches of the axis there were found only two bookshops, i.e. on stretch 3 (1) and stretch 4 (1).

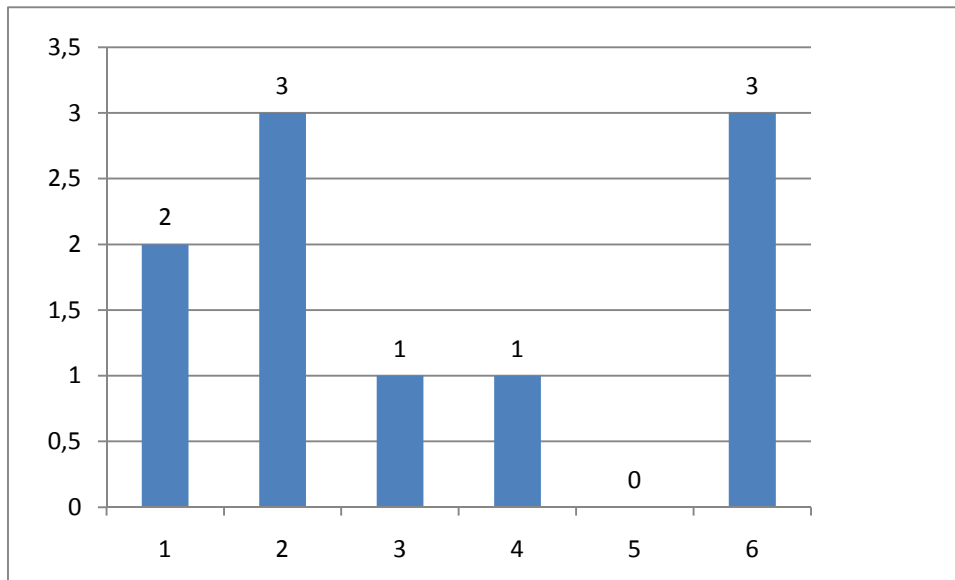


Figure 24: total number bookshops, axis 2

The figures 25 a-e provide an overview of the relative EV scores and the frequency of positions on each stretch, based on the inscriptions on the bookshops' façades. Since no bookshops were present on stretch 5, there are no figures given for this stretch.

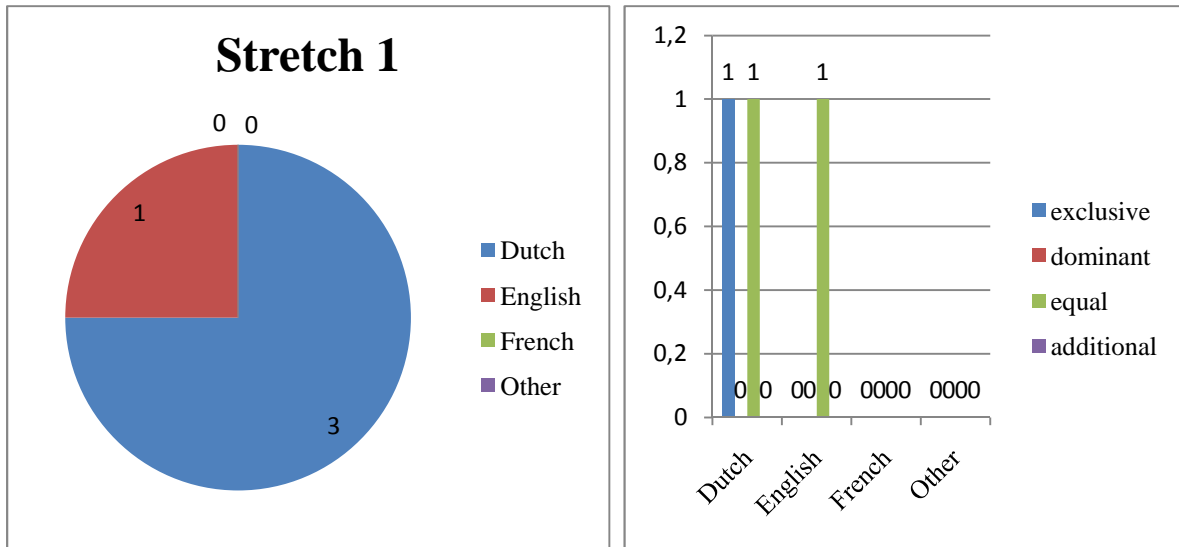


Figure 25a: stretch 1, axis 1

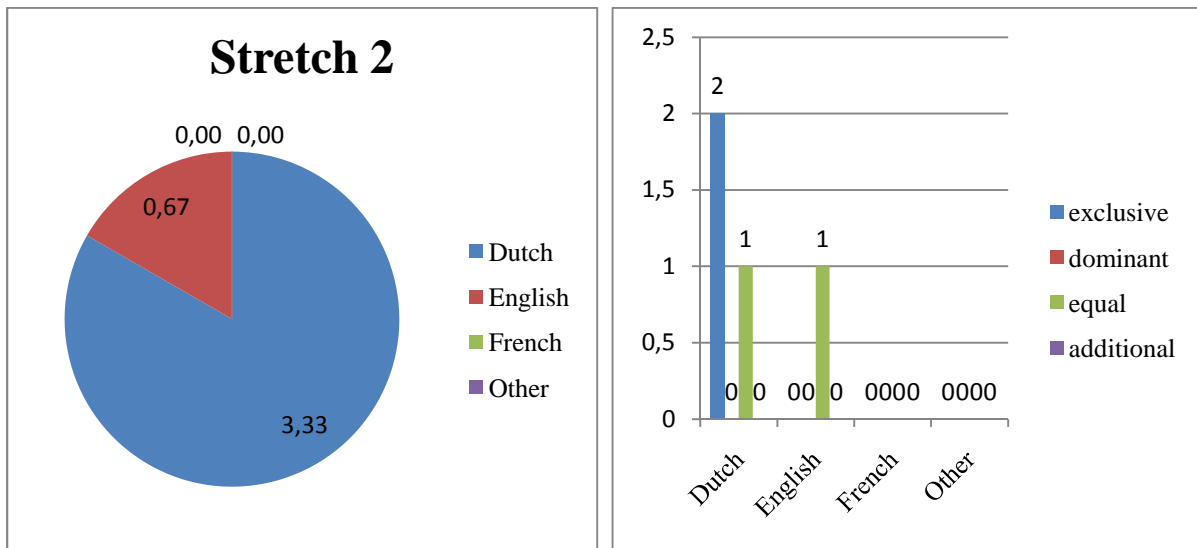


Figure 25b: stretch 2, axis 1

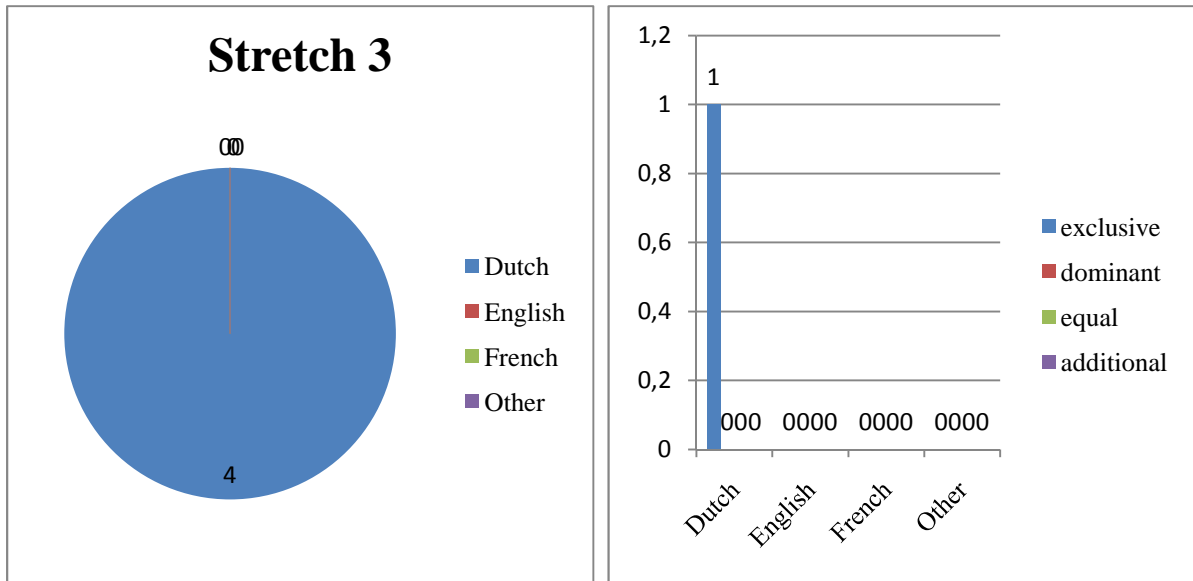


Figure 25c: stretch 3, axis 1

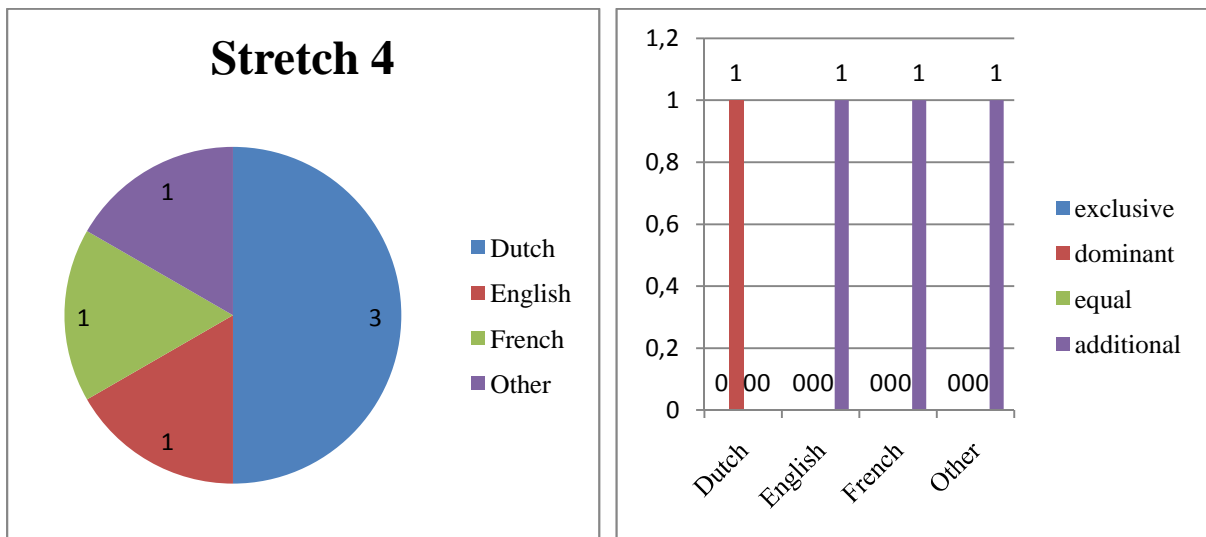


Figure 25d: stretch 4, axis 1

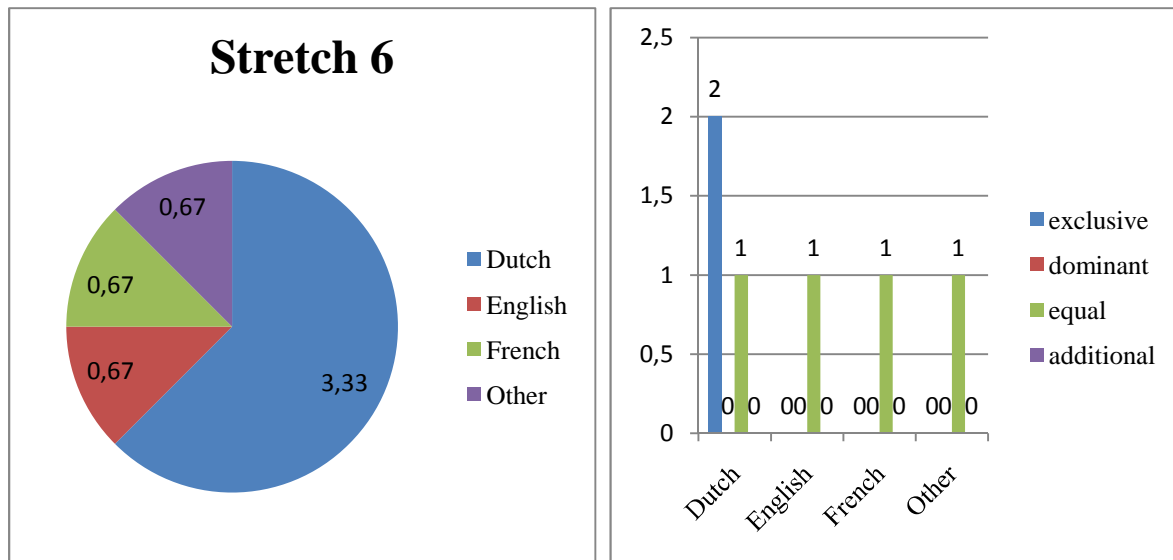


Figure 25e: stretch 6, axis 2

We can deduce from these figures that Dutch is the most prevalent language, followed by English. French and ‘Other’ have exactly the same EV scores on each stretch , i.e. on stretch 4 and 6. Considering the frequency tables, we see that Dutch is predominantly used as the exclusive or dominant language; English mostly occurs in equal multilingualism, whereas French and ‘Other’ either appear in the equal or in the additional position.

Out of ten bookshops in total, six bookshops offer literature in other languages than Dutch only. Note that three out of four bookshops that sell literature in Dutch only are newspaper- and magazine shops (“t Studentje”, “t Hoekske” and “Curd”). The six bookshops that offer literature in more than one language, on the other hand, are all shops that offer books (“Boekhandel Marnix”, “Atlas & Zanzibar” and “Limerick”), comics (“Epic” and “De Poort”) or both books and comics (“De Kaft”). Consequently, we can conclude that the scope of the bookshops plays an important role as regards the languages that are present in the literature that is offered. Shops that offer newspapers and magazines aims at a clientele that consists of speakers of Dutch, whereas book stores selling genuine literature tend to have an international implied readership.

One exception to this tendency seems to be the bookshop “ECI” that offers books in Dutch only. This example contests my expectations regarding not only its nature but also its location: since this international chain bookshop is located opposite to the Ibis Hotel, which means that a lot of passersby of “ECI” are tourists, one would expect this bookshop to be international oriented. Further research showed me that the online service of “ECI” offers

English literature as well. Despite the fact that this particular shop sells only Dutch literature, the offer of the international chain “ECI” is in reality not restricted to this language only.

4.4. Comparative analysis of data from both axes

When comparing the two axes regarding the presence of bookshops, we observe that the axis Koophandelsplein – Sint-Pietersstation has significantly more bookshops than the axis Sint-Michiëlshelling – Bevrijdingslaan (10 vs. 2). These results are in accordance with the national chain results (cf. supra), since in this category the majority of national chains was also encountered on axis 2. Therefore, we can assume that the presence of bookshops is somehow connected to the up-market outlook of axis 2 and in particular the presence of bookshops that offer genuine literature such as “Boekhandel Marnix” and “Limerick”.

Regarding the EV scores, we see that on both axes Dutch is the prevalent language on display. Secondly, English, French and the ‘Other’ have the same scores on both axes, implying that they are on equal footing. Note however, that English deviates from this tendency by scoring relatively high in the centre of the city on axis 2, whereas French and ‘Other’ are not present. The high score of English there is due to the nature of the bookshops that are located there: all of the bookshops there offer genuine literature such as books and comics (“ECI”, “Epic”, “De Poort”, “De Kaft” and “Boekhandel Marnix”), and as already stated bookshops of that kind tend to be more internationally oriented (cf. supra).

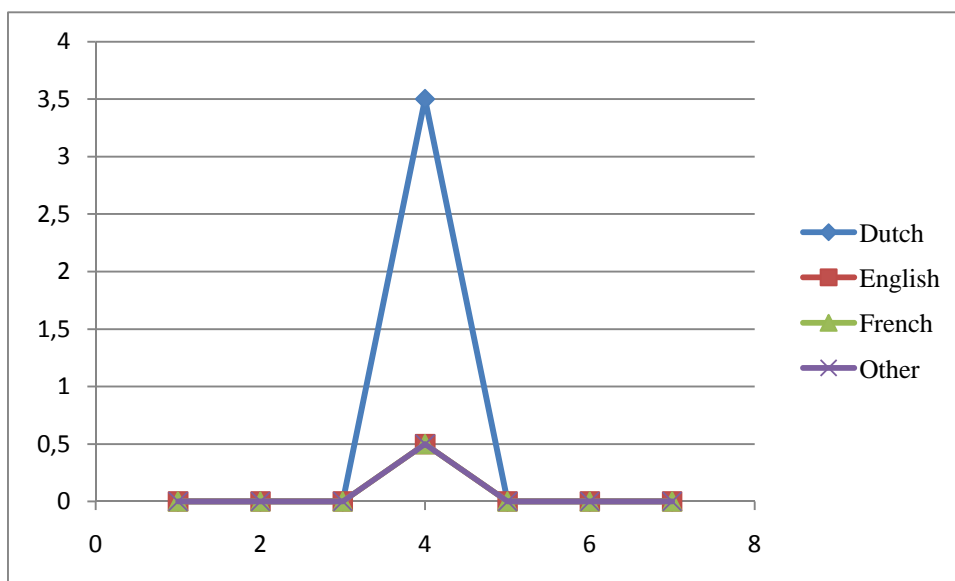


Figure 26: relative EV scores bookshops, axis 1

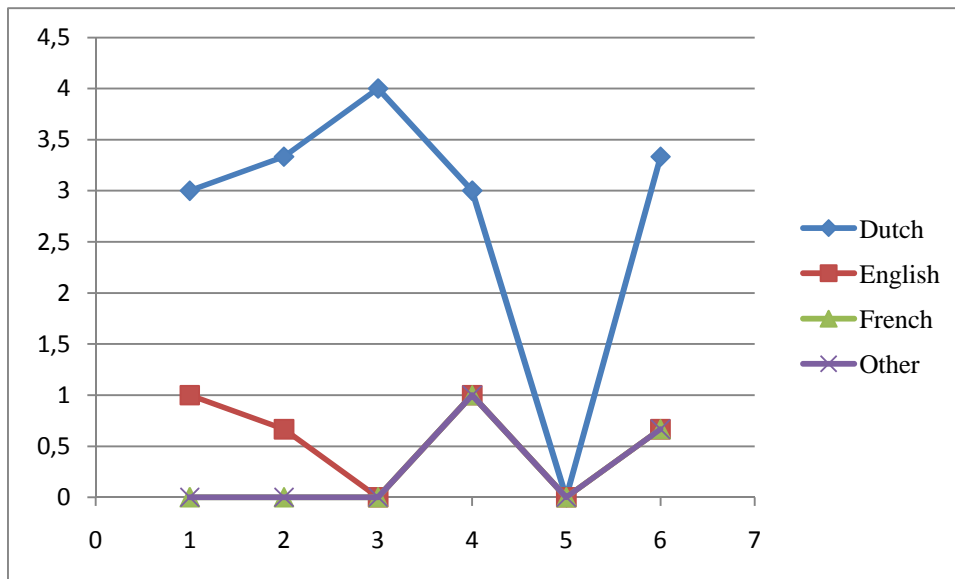


Figure 27: relative EV scores bookshops, axis 2

5. Subcategory 2: eating venues results

The last subcategory consists of the eating venues. This subcategory includes any kind of establishment where meals are served, such as restaurants, snackbars and taverns. For each axis first some hypotheses regarding the evolution of the EV scores will be lined out and afterwards we will see how the results of the analysis respond to the expectations.

5.1. Axis 1: Sint-Michielselling – Bevrijdingslaan

5.1.1. Introduction

I expect the highest number of eating venues at the beginning of the axis, since this part is close to the Korenmarkt, which is a very touristic area and one of the city's historic marketplaces. Moreover, also people living or working in Ghent may tend to spend for instance their lunchbreak in the centre of the city. When moving further along the axis I expect the number of eating venues to decrease. Regarding the nature of the eating venues in the Brugse Poort, we can take into account that this immigrant neighbourhood is still one of the poorer areas of the city. Therefore I assume that the eating venues located in the periphery will be of the kind that offers cheaper meals, such as snackbars and pizzerias. This is contrasted with the more luxurious outlook of the centre of the city, which is expected to have more restaurants of the genuine kind that has more expensive menus.

Regarding the EV scores, I anticipate that the languages on display in the centre of the city will tend to be European, such as Dutch, French and Italian. When approaching the peripheral area, I expect the languages to change from European to typical immigrant languages such as Turkish and Arabic. Nevertheless, Dutch is assumed to score relatively high in the peripheral area as well, i.e. as language for equal translations of the ‘Other’ languages.

5.1.2. Quantitative analysis

I identified a total number of twenty eating venues, of which the highest number is located on stretch 7 (7) (figure 28). Along both stretch 5 and 6 there no eating venues were found.

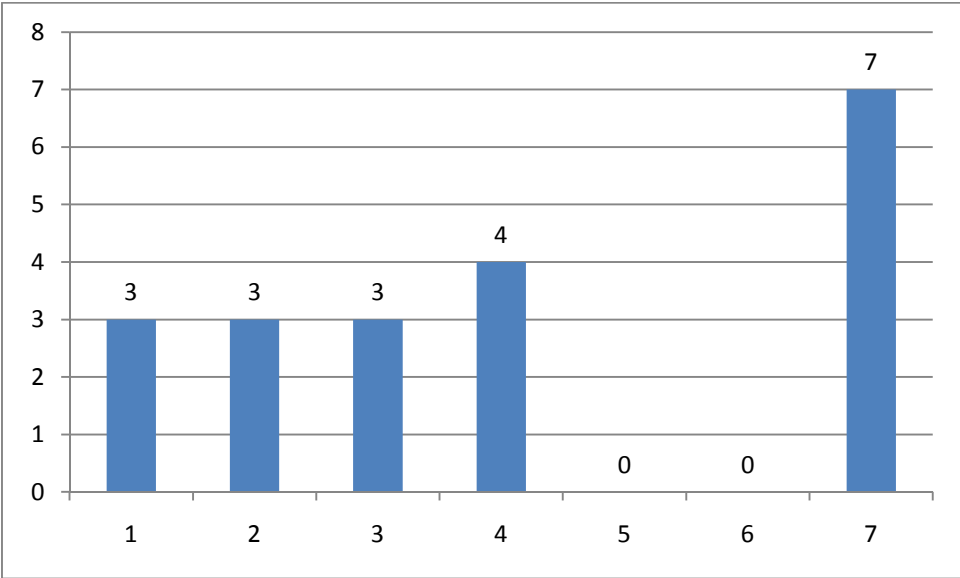


Figure 28: total number eating venues, axis 1

The figures 29a to 29e below present the relative EV scores and the frequency tables of each stretch, except for stretches 5 and 6 where no eating venues are present.

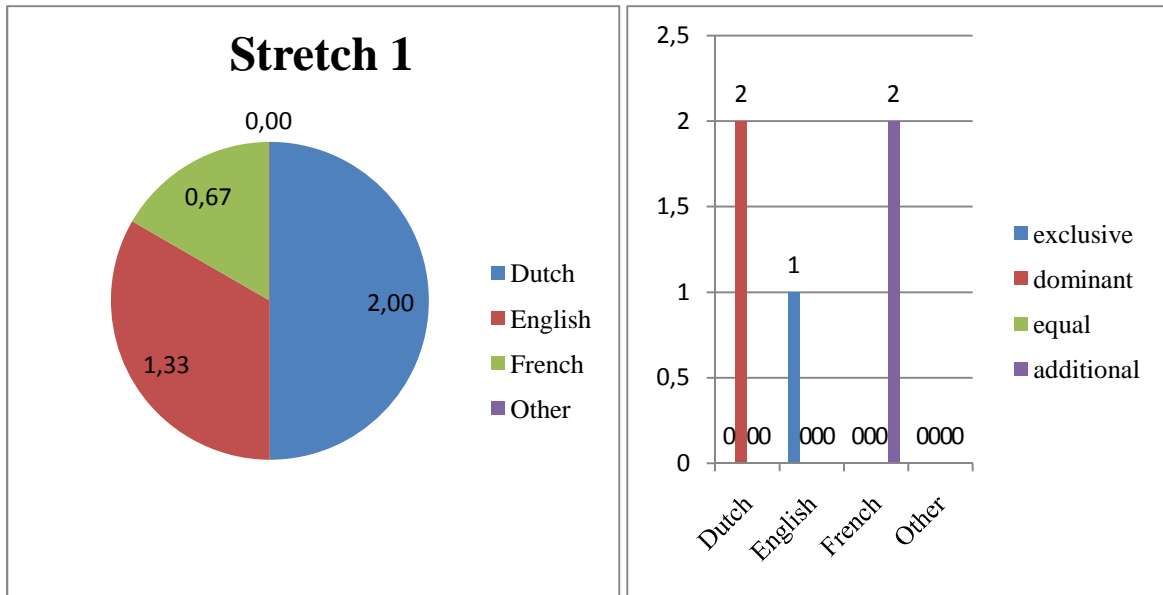


Figure 29a: stretch 1, axis 1

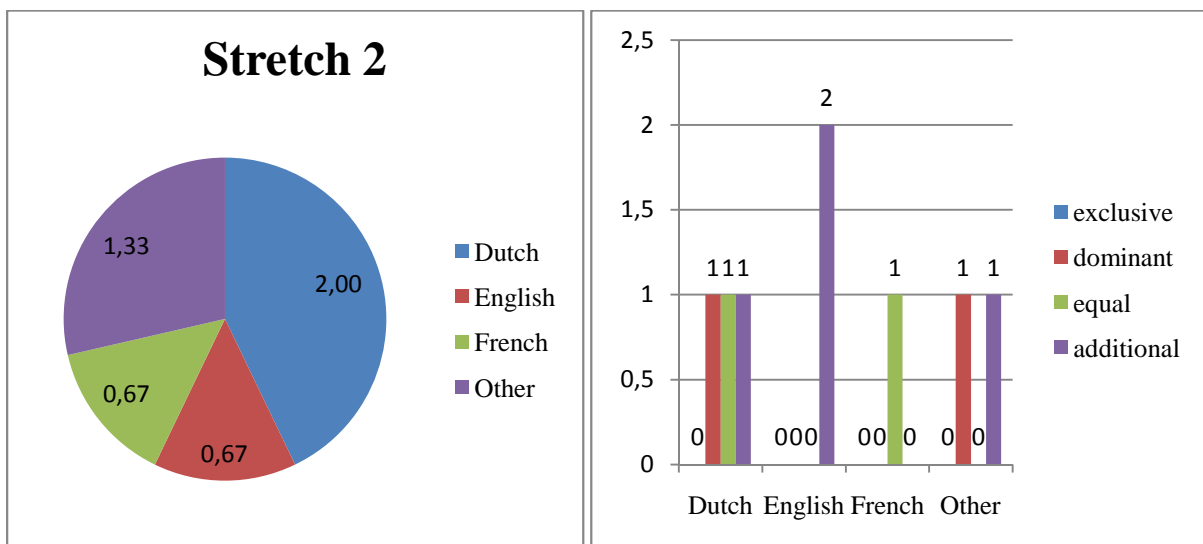


Figure 29b: stretch 2, axis 1

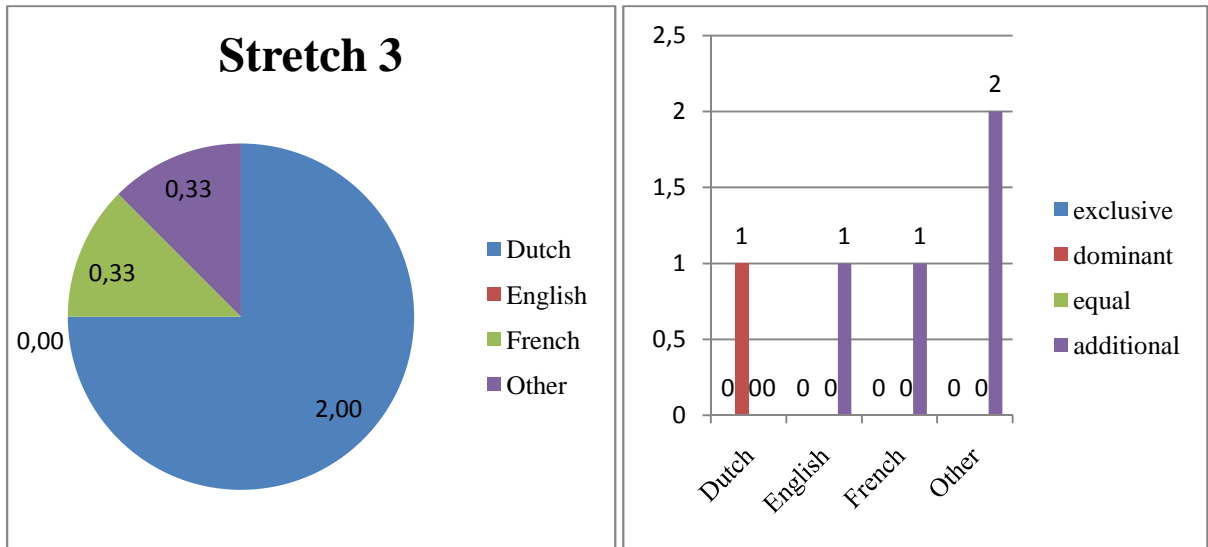


Figure 29c: stretch 3, axis 1

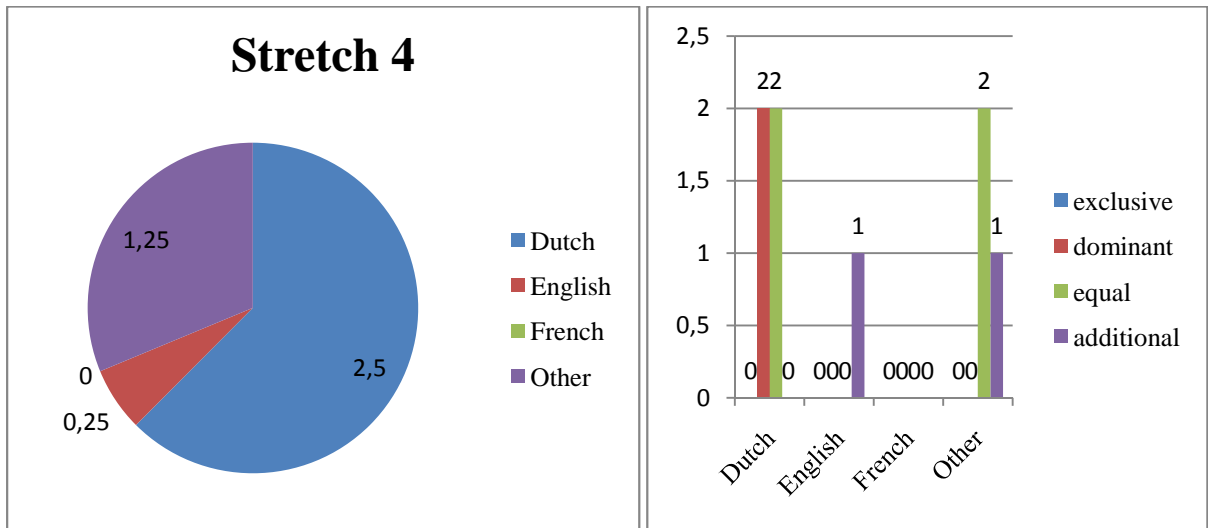


Figure 29d: stretch 4, axis 1

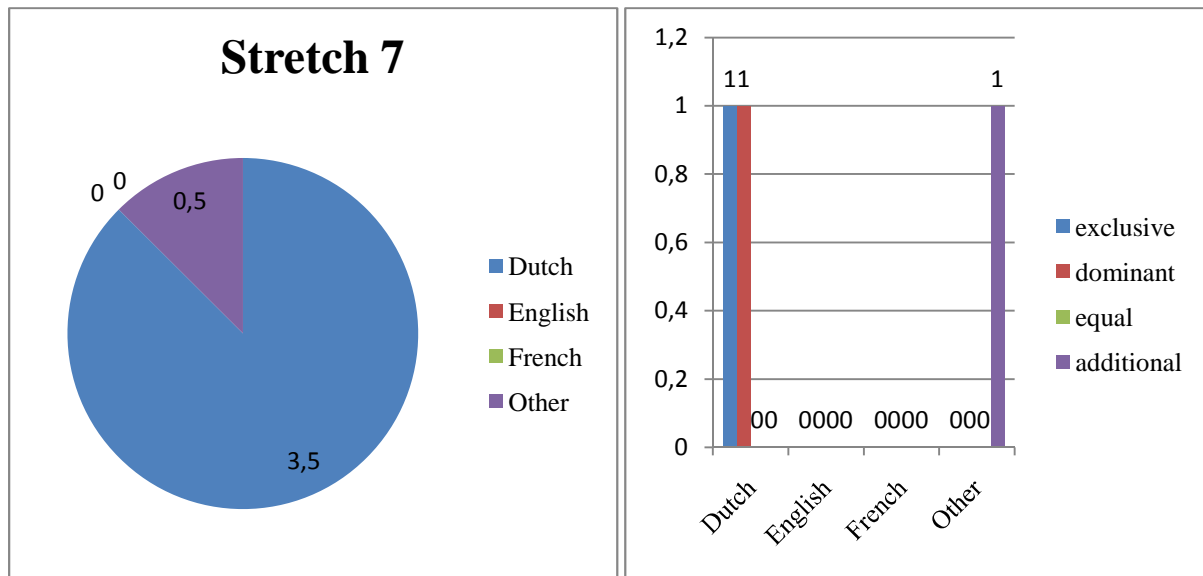


Figure 29e: stretch 7, axis 1

From the figures above we can tell that on each stretch Dutch is the prevalent language on display and is mostly in the dominant position. In line with my expectations English and French score particularly high on the first stretches of the axis, as a result of the touristic oriented eating venues that are located in the centre of the city. Nevertheless, both English and French predominantly occur in the subordinate position. In the case of French this is especially due to the fact that restaurants often have a French name, such as “Riz d’Or” and “Toi et Moi” on the first stretch. Regarding the ‘Other’ category, we see that the language on display in the centre is indeed an European language, in this case Italian, with eating venues such as “Giardino di Roma” and “Vicini di Casa”. Also in line with my expectations the languages belonging to the ‘Other’ category on display in the peripheral area, on the other hand, tend to be typical immigrant languages (such as “Snack Lhouma” and “Snack Marrakech”) though they are never used as the dominant language but are used either for minor elements or for equal multilingualism. Finally, considering the nature of the eating venues, the eating venues in the centre of the city are mostly of the genuine restaurant kind, whereas the eating venues located in the Brugse Poort area tend to be snackbars, which is again as expected.

5.2. Axis 2: Koophandelsplein – Sint-Pietersstation

Regarding the spread of eating venues along this axis, I expect the number of eating venues to be the highest close to the centre of Koophandelsplein, since this part of the axis is predominantly occupied by tourists, people working in Ghent who have their lunch break or simply some of the city’s inhabitants who like to spend their spare time in the centre. When

moving further along this axis, I expect the number of eating venues to decrease, because this part of the axis is no longer part of the centre. Note that people who use this road will mostly do this by means of the tram that brings them from the centre straight to the railway station, or vice versa; therefore, it is not likely that there will be a large number of eating venues on the middle stretches of this axis, since most people will not interrupt their transportation. Finally, the number of eating venues might increase again towards the end of the axis, since the end of this road coincides with the Sint-Pieters railway station. People or tourists arriving at the station after a journey by train, for instance, might want to eat something before they go home or to the centre; therefore it can be expected that this area will have a considerable number of eating venues.

Concerning the evolution of the ethnolinguistic vitalities of the language categories along this axis, I expect the EV scores to be more spread in the beginning of the axis: since this part is still in the central area of the city, we may here encounter an international variety of restaurants. The diversity of eating venues may be reflected in the signage, and therefore it is expected that all four language categories will be present in the linguistic landscape. When considering the eating venues further along the axis, the EV scores of French and 'Other' might decrease. Since the remaining part of the axis is no longer situated in the touristic and commercial area, the eating venues are presumed to be less varied and more adapted to a public that consists mainly of commuters; therefore the kind of eating venues are likely to be smaller and more 'functional' and as this is reflected in the signage, both Dutch and English are expected to be predominantly used.

Figure 30 displays the number of eating venues on each stretch within this axis. On this axis 19 eating venues were encountered. The first stretch has the largest number (6), whereas both stretch 3 and 5 have the smallest number of eating venues (1).

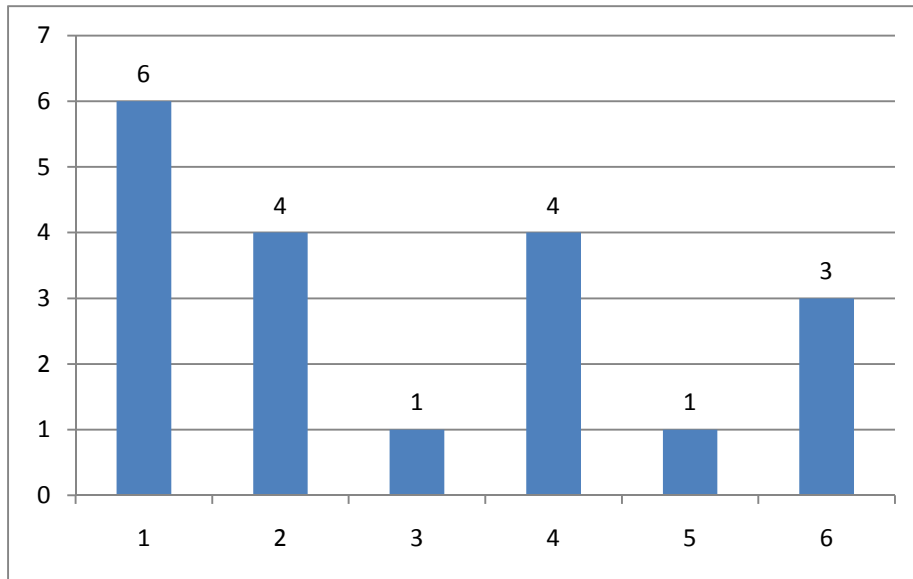


Figure 30: total number eating venues, axis 2

As is shown in this figure, the occurrence of eating venues largely confirms my expectations. The highest number is found at the beginning and the lowest number is found towards the end of the axis.

The figures 31 a-f present the relative EV scores of each language category for each stretch.

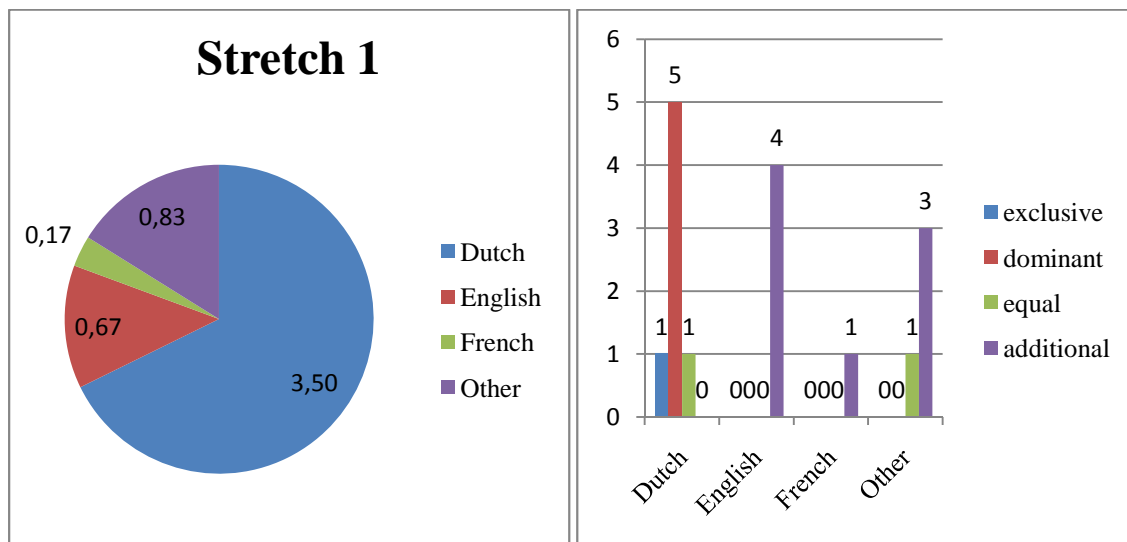


Figure 31a: stretch 1, axis 2

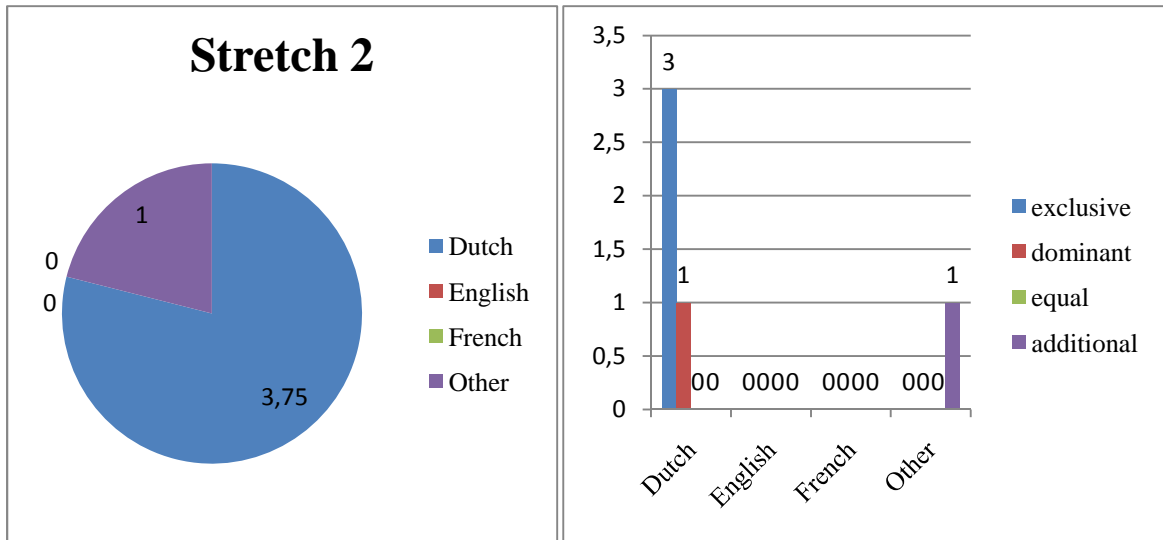


Figure 31b: stretch 2, axis 2

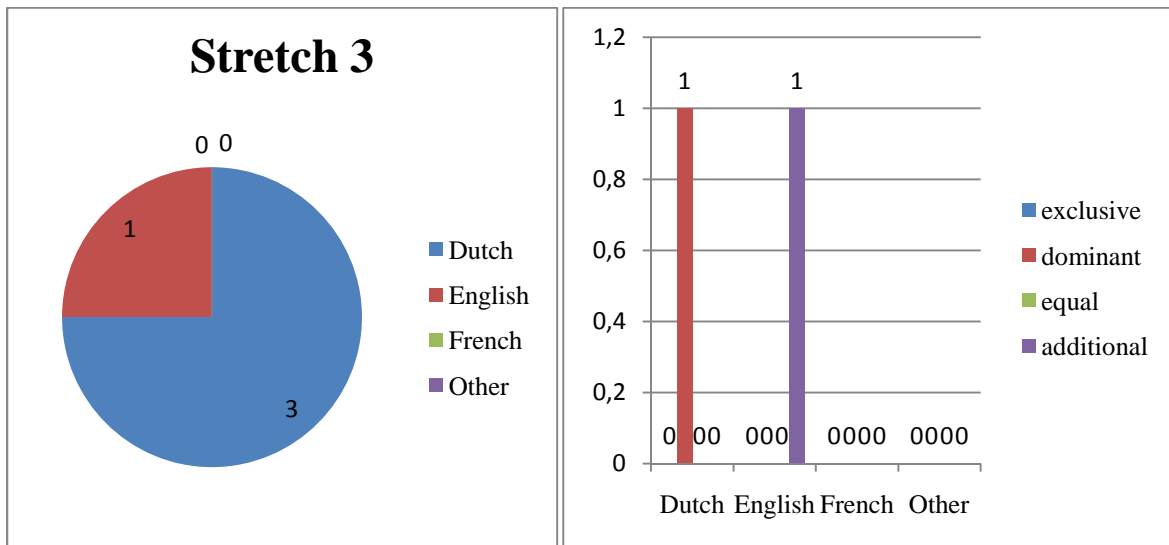


Figure 31c: stretch 3, axis 2

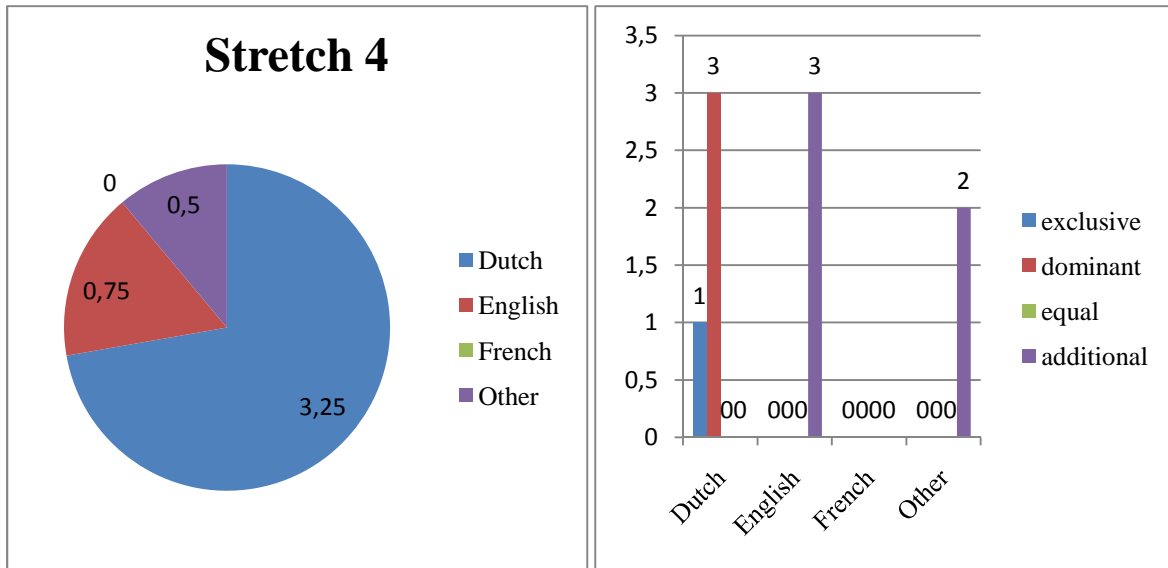


Figure 31d: stretch 4, axis 2

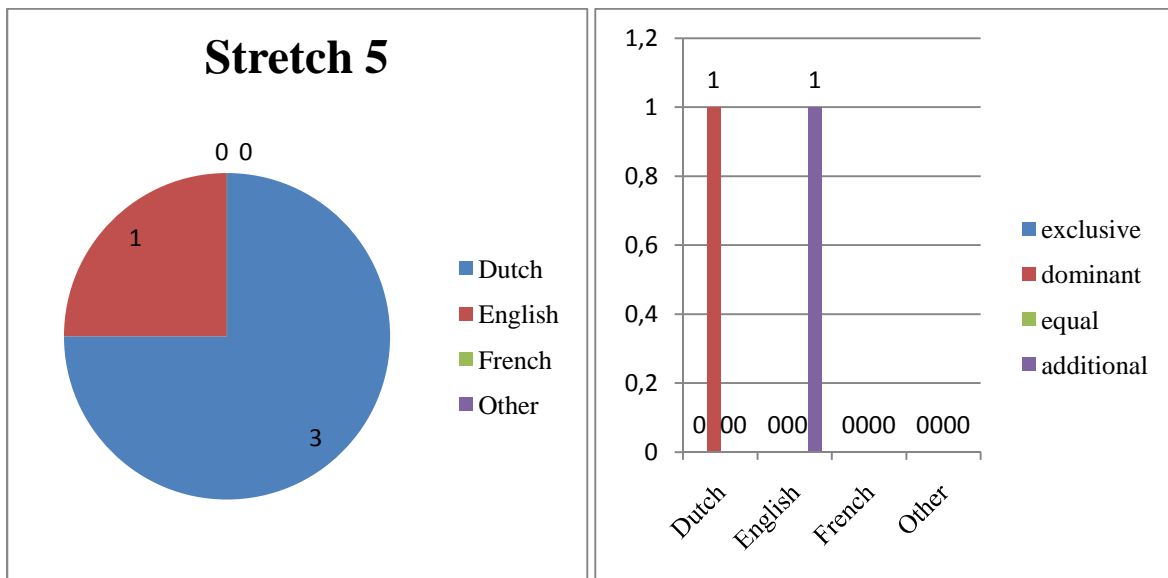


Figure 31e: stretch 5, axis 2

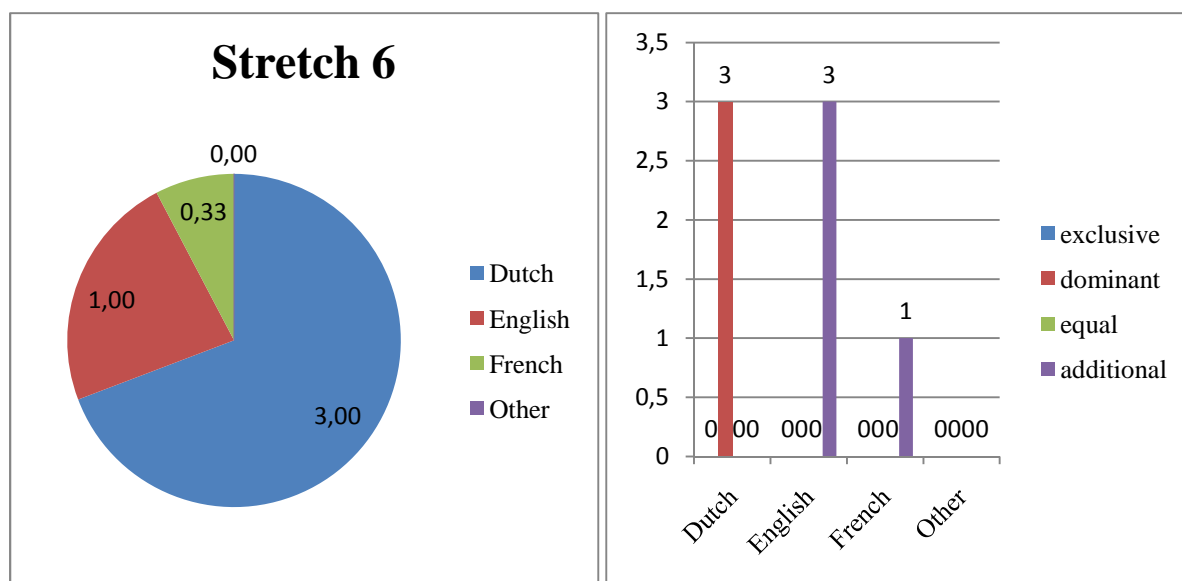


Figure 31f: stretch 6, axis 2

On stretch 1 of the axis, all language categories are present in the linguistic landscape, which is as expected. The high score of the ‘Other’ category on the first stretch of the axis is in line with the international variety of restaurants in this area. Note that on this axis the languages on display in the centre are non-European as well, due to the presence of the Turkish restaurant “Alaturka” and the Ukrainian restaurant “Ukrainian Country House”. Nevertheless, it should also be pointed out that these languages only occur in the subordinate position. The remainder of this axis is dominated by Dutch and English, whereas French is absent and ‘Other’ occurs only on stretch 4, which is as expected. The presence of the category of ‘Other’ on this stretch is due to the fact that there are two Chinese restaurants on this stretch, “Golden Ring” and “Ocean City”, that also display their names in Chinese. Note that French is again present on the end of the axis and even has the highest score on stretch 6; the presence of French is here because of a lunchbar with the name “Passe Vite”. Regarding the nature of eating venues, my assumptions are largely confirmed as the eating venues in the centre are of the genuine restaurant kind, whereas those along the remainder of the axis tend to be more of the modest kind, such as the lunchbars “Breakpoint” and “Rotonde”. Note that the two encountered Chinese restaurants (cf. supra) do not contest this tendency, as such restaurants typically offer a take-away service, which illustrates that they are of the more functional kind.

5.3. Comparative analysis of data on both axes

When comparing the relative EV scores of each axis on figures 31 and 32 below, we see that both axes have a similar number of eating venues, with 20 on axis 1 and 19 eating venues on axis 2. Also concerning the nature of the eating venues the tendencies along both axes are alike: the genuine restaurants tend to be located in the beginning of the axis, whereas the eating venues located closer to the peripheral area are of the cheaper and more functional kind.

Regarding the relative EV scores for this subcategory, we can deduce from the figures 32 and 33 below, providing an overview of the relative EV scores on each stretch for each axis, that Dutch has the highest scores on both axes. English scores particularly high on axis 2, whereas the EV scores of this language on axis 1 are only high on the first two stretches, which is as expected, since the eating venues located closer to the Sint-Pieters railway station are more of the functional type rather than the kind of genuine restaurants with a specific kitchen that are found in the central area of the city. French has a high ethnolinguistic vitality on the first two stretches on axis 1 but is not present from stretch 4 onwards, i.e. towards the peripheral area. On axis 2, French is only present on the first and the last stretch. French is in other words a language typically present in the centre of the city since several eating venues have a French name. Finally, as regards the languages belonging to the ‘Other’ category, we observe that the language typically displayed in the centre is for axes Italian. The ‘Other’ languages in the peripheral areas, on the other hand, are in the case of axis 1 predominantly immigrant languages such as Turkish and Arabic, whereas this category is present in the very periphery of axis 2.

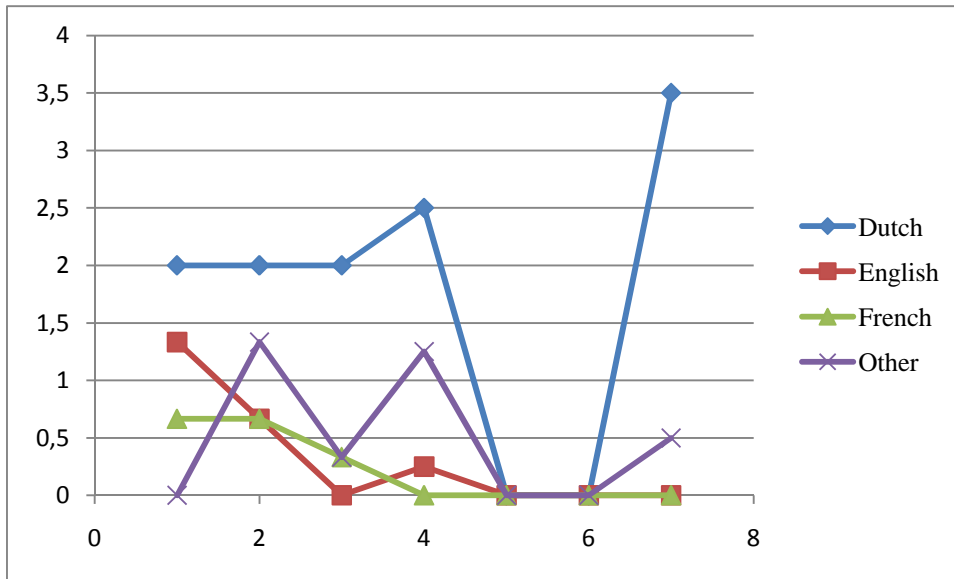


Figure 32: relative EV scores eating venues, axis 1

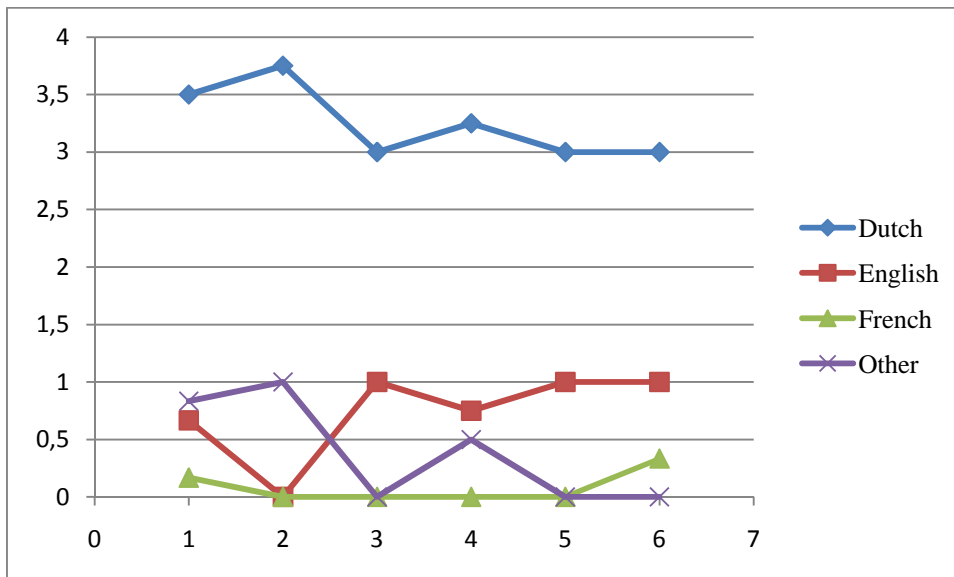


Figure 33: relative EV scores eating venues, axis 2

Chapter 3: Qualitative observations

The final part of this study also investigates the data from a qualitative perspective. The following sections provide some examples of peculiarities within the signage I have found during the fieldwork. These cases illustrate some of the complexities run into faced with the classification of the signs on the façades for the quantitative analysis. Moreover, the signage on display of a façade can give some indications regarding the languages spoken by the owner of the shop and the implied clientele of the commercial space.

1. Mixed signs

The term ‘mixed sign’ here refers to a separate sign, i.e. “a material object that indicates or refers to something other than itself” (Scollon & Scollon 2003: 216) such as a paper note or an inscription showing opening hours in more than one language. More specifically, the languages displayed on a mixed sign do not translate each other, but are rather presented in an unorganized way. A first example of a mixed sign is found in the display of the prices of the shop “Caballeras” and may serve as an illustration of this linguistic obscurity. A paper with prices stuck to the window refers to a costume, a shirt, a trench coat, a pair of shoes, a necktie and a belt shown on a dummy in the window (figure 33a). Instead of listing these items in one language only, the owner of this shop chose for a mixture of both Dutch and English. The shirt, the necktie, the costume and the shoes are referred to in Dutch (“hemd”, “das”, “costuum”, “schoen”). This is contrasted with the English terms ‘belt’ (Dutch: “riem”) and ‘trench coat’, the latter of which is also an English loanword; also frequently used in Dutch fashion magazines for instance. Concerning the costume and the shirt, the material these items are made of is described given in English, whereas the fact that the shoes are made of genuine leather is shown in Dutch: ‘echte leder’. It should be pointed out, however, that the Dutch spelling is not always correct: ‘costuum’ should have been written as ‘kostuum’ and ‘echte leder’ should be ‘echt leder’. This implies that the owner of the shop or the producer of the sign is not a native speaker of Dutch and opted for English where the knowledge of Dutch fell short, assuming that the readers of the sign understand both Dutch and English. This linguistic display shows how within one sign two different languages are present without the sign being equally bilingual.



Figure 34a: Caballeras (Nederkouter, axis 2)

Another example of a mixed sign was encountered on the same façade of the shop “Caballeras”. As shown on figure 33b, the sign displaying the opening hours is entirely in English: “Monday to Saturday 10.00 – 19.00. Sunday closed”. Behind the window, however, an extra sign shows in Dutch (“gesloten”) that the shop was closed on the day the picture was taken. Quantitatively speaking, in the case of the shop “Caballeras” English is the dominant language over Dutch, because more informational content is given in English. Moreover, the English inscriptions on the window are permanent, whereas the “gesloten”-sign is a removable piece attached to the window afterwards. Thus, from a qualitative perspective, one could state that the Dutch sign is a secondary sign added to the primary sign in English.



Figure 34b: Caballeras (Nederkouer, axis 2)

2. Hybrid signs

Another complexity I came across during my research was the occurrence of shops with a name being a blend of two languages. Names that have the French words ‘café’ or ‘restaurant’ in combination with a Dutch term, are not taken into account here, since these are French loanwords which are no longer felt to be of French origin. As Maria Schlick states in her article ‘The English shop signs in Europe’, this kind of terms are adopted in the local language, being in this case Dutch, since “[m]ost of them found their way into other European languages at a time when French was still a language with high international status, as was the case in the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century, before its importance declined due to the emergence of English as the world language” (Schlick 2003: 5). The instances of hybrid names dealt with here are of a more creative kind. Consider for instance the following example represented in figure 34 of the shop “Golden Friet”. This shop’s name consists of both English (“golden”) and Dutch (“friet”). This poses again the problem of how to classify this sign: Dutch or English dominance? Because the other signs on this façade were in Dutch, it may be clear that Dutch is the dominant language in this case.



Figure 35: Golden Friet (Brugsepoortstraat, axis 1)

Another example of a hybrid sign can be found in the sign found on the façade of the clothing shop “Caballeras” (figure 33a above). Note how the word “costuum” in the sign can resemble both “kostuum” in Dutch and “costume” in English and is therefore a hybrid form of two languages. The occurrence of this hybrid word is not surprising, as the other words on the same paper are a mix of Dutch and English words.

3. Monolingual Dutch signs

A third class of signs which I ran into during my investigation are the occurrences of monolingual Dutch signs. I distinguished two types of such signs which somehow deviated from written Standard Dutch, i.e. signs with errors and signs with dialectal features.

3.1. Signs with errors

A first type of monolingual Dutch signs I encountered are signs with errors in them. This kind of signs was encountered especially in the immigrant neighbourhood Brugse Poort. Consider for instance the following example of a hand-written note stuck to the window of a house in the Phoenixstraat (part of axis 1) offering a bike for sale (figure 36):



Figure 36: Te Koop sign (Phoenixstraat, axis 1)

The adjective ‘moie” should have been written like “mooie”. Although the remainder of the text is written correct, the error immediately catches the eye. Slembrouck and Collins, who conducted research within the same area in 2003, point out the following about the awareness of Flemish-Belgians of the frequent presence of errors on encountering these signs:

Flemish Belgians are quite aware of considerable dialect variation in Dutch found in Flanders and of their own national ambivalence vis-à-vis the “Dutch-Dutch” of the Netherlands; further, Belgium is a known multilingual country and Flemish are noted for their polyglot ways, so it is common to encounter a range of proficiencies and competencies in differing languages. (Collins & Slembrouck 2007: 336)

3.2. Signs with dialectal features

A second type of monolingual Dutch signs that fits within this category are the signs that contain dialectal features. The deviations from Standard Dutch in these signs are not to be identified as signs with errors, but nevertheless the dialectal features can be labeled as a departure from correct written Standard Dutch. The following photographs (figures 36 and 37) of the façades of two cafés in the Brugse Poort area can serve as an illustration:



Figure 37: Café 't Schuurken (Bevrijdingslaan, axis 1)



Figure 38: Café 't Smiske (Bevrijdingslaan, axis 1)

The name of the café “t Schuurken” would in correct standard spelling look like “t Schuurtje”; and in the case of “t Smiske” the name “t Smisje” would be correct written Dutch. A qualitative approach to this second type would classify these signs as examples where the symbolic value of language comes into play and even overrules the communicative function (Kelly-Holmes 2000). As dialect is associated with the language of the common people, the dialectal features in these signs may represent coziness, down-to-earthness and sociability. Not surprisingly, the examples above are each the name of a café, which is the preferred location for people to go when aiming to gather with friends or acquaintances to have a drink and to talk about everyday life.

4. “Kreatos” on axis 1 vs. “Kreatos” on axis 2

A quite specific example identified has been the international chain hairdresser “Kreatos”. I have encountered two “Kreatos” salons; one in the Contributiestraat (part of axis 1) and one in the Nederkouter (part of axis 2). Below the photographs I took from each “Kreatos” salon are displayed.



Figure 39a: Kreatos (Nederkouter, axis 2)



Figure 39b: Kreatos (Contributiestraat, axis 1)

When comparing the façades of the two salons above, we notice that the salon in the Contributiestraat shows a monolingual Dutch signage. The salon in the Nederkouter, on the other hand, not only displays Dutch on for instance the inscription with the opening hours, but also English: consider the inscription of the slogan “It’s your hair” on the window. The

different linguistic configurations on the façades can be aligned with the location of each salon. The Nederkouter-salon is located close to the centre of the city and can be more specifically found in a students' neighbourhood, since the Faculties of Arts and Philosophy, of Law and of Engineering and Architecture from the University of Ghent are located there. As a consequence of its location in this particular area, we can assume that the implied clientele of this salon predominantly consists of students. In order to attract this public, the salon displays English on its façade as this language is associated with progress, modernity, youth, and therefore also with students; in other words, the display of English in this case is an illustration of language fetishization (cf. supra). The Contributiestraat-salon, on the other hand, is located more towards the peripheral area of the city. Due to this location, the façade of this salon is less likely to be subject to the process of language fetishization. Instead, this international chain hairdresser shows to be considerate of the official language policy of Flanders, by displaying only Dutch on its façade.

5. Monument

The picture below shows a monument I encountered at the square Emilius Seghersplein, which is part of axis 1 and therefore is also located in the immigrant neighbourhood Brugse Poort.



Figure 40a: Monument (Emilius Seghersplein, axis 1)



Figure 40b: Monument (Emilius Seghersplein, axis 1)

When examining this picture, we see that it is a monument in commemoration of those who died during the First and Second World War, i.e. soldiers, civil victims, political captives, etc. (<http://inventaris.vioe.be/dibe/relict/212434>). More specifically, we note that the monument was resurrected for the victims who lived in the sixth district of Ghent ('6de wyk') also known as the district Brugse Poort-Rooigem, in which also the Emilius Seghersplein is located.¹⁰ Note that this monument not only displays Dutch ("aan onze helden" and "zij stierven opdat wij zouden leven"), but also French ("à nos héros"). As the production and placement of this monument was commissioned by the official authorities of the city, we could have expected that this official sign would reflect the official language policy of Flanders, which implies that the sign should be in monolingual Dutch. Since this monument was resurrected after the First World War (the names with the victims of the Second World War were added afterwards), we should be considerate of the fact that Ghent's linguistic situation was different at that time. As explained in the fourth section of the first chapter, during the period between the two World Wars, Dutch was not yet Flanders' official language as the Flemish Movement was still continuing its struggle for the recognition of Dutch in Flanders when French was the dominant language in this region. Moreover, the World Wars were a historical event in which not only Flanders, but the entire country of Belgium (and

¹⁰ The city of Ghent is divided into a total of 25 districts. Each district has its own council that organizes specific activities for the district such as festivities, etc. for which the active participation of the local inhabitants is essential in order to promote the social cohesion within each district.

several other countries as well) played its part. Consequently also this fact can be considered a reason for the display of both Dutch and French.

6. Dutch vs. other languages in the immigrant neighbourhood

6.1. “Zeko Video”

In the Noordstraat, which is situated in the Brugse Poort area, I encountered the videoshop “Zeko Video”. The photographs below represent the signage on the storefront of this shop.



Figure 41a: Zeko Video (Noordstraat, axis 1)



Figure 41b: Zeko Video (Noordstraat, axis 1)

We see that the sign displaying the opening hours of the shop is in monolingual Dutch: “alle dagen open van 18h tot 01h – donderdag gesloten”. The note stuck to the window, on the other hand, is entirely in Turkish and is translated as follows: “We are having a ‘going out of business sale’. We are selling all of our movies at a whole sale price.” A qualitative approach to these two signs points out that the Dutch sign with the opening hours is made of a more durable material in order to be permanent on display, whereas the Turkish sign is a simple paper sheet with a handwritten text stuck to the window with tape and is therefore not meant to stay on the window permanently. These observations provide indications about this shop’s implied clientele and its consideration of the official language policy. The permanent Dutch sign illustrates that the shop owner is considerate of the fact that Dutch is the official language here and that among the amalgam of different languages that are spoken in this

neighbourhood, Dutch remains the coordinating language that everyone has in common. The handwritten note, on the other hand, reveals that the owner of the shop is a native speaker of Turkish. In the first place, this sign is illustrative for the location of this shop, which is in this case clearly an immigrant neighbourhood where Turkish is a prevalent language. Secondly, as this note provides some significant information, it reflects that the implied clientele of the shop consists predominantly of speakers of Turkish. Moreover, this is confirmed by the fact that the few movies displayed in the window all had Turkish titles.

6.2. “Alwafa”

Another example of this kind of signage is the Libanese foodstore “Alwafa” in the Brugsepoortstraat, which is also part of the axis Sint-Michielsdelling – Bevrijdingslaan. Figures 42a and 42b below show the signage on the façade of this shop.



Figure 42a: Alwafa (Brugsepoortstraat, axis 1)



Figure 42b: Alwafa (Brugsepoortstraat, axis 1)

The first picture above shows the entire storefront of “Alwafa”. As we can see, both Dutch and Arabic are equally present on the yellow banner above the windows. On the windows, however, there are only inscriptions in Dutch: “telefoon & printen – faxen – scannen” and “nationaal & internationaal”. When considering the notes stuck to the door of the shop we see that on the first paper both Dutch and Arabic are equally present displaying the closing day of the shop. On the paper below, on the other hand, there is only Dutch “terug open om 15.00 – DANK VOOR U BEGRIJP”. For the quantitative analysis, this implies that the Dutch language would receive the score of 3 and the ‘Other’ category would be given 1, since on this façade clearly most information is given in Dutch. When we approach the signage from a qualitative perspective, on the other hand, we can deduce from the signs that this shop clearly caters for a clientele speaking either Dutch or Arabic, since the name and the closing day of “Alwafa” are displayed in both languages. The Dutch inscriptions on the window displaying the special services the shop offers, i.e. telephone calls, printing, faxing and scanning, imply

that the clientele that makes use of these services at least understands Dutch. Moreover, the Dutch note informing that the shop is temporarily closed, but will be open again at a certain time during the day, confirms that the major part of the clientele understands or speaks Dutch, probably as a second language apart from Arabic. From these signs we can also tell that the owner of the shop speaks both Arabic and Dutch, but since the Dutch note stuck to the door has an error (“begrijp” should be “begrip” in correct written Dutch), we can conclude that the owner is a native speaker of Arabic and speaks Dutch as a second language. The decision of the shopowner to display most information in Dutch can also be regarded as an illustration of a way to integrate oneself into a region that is officially Dutch-speaking. In Collins & Slembrouck (2007) similar linguistic occurrences were observed during the fieldwork in the Brugse Poort area; two assisting people commented on the signage as well and regarded the Dutch signs with errors “as evidence of interlingual transfers” (Collins & Slembrouck 2007: 351). Subsequently, “such transfers supposedly result from either direct translation or a “loss of Turkish”, which are in turn due to the migrants’ sociolinguistic position in Belgium and their projected ancestry in rural Turkey” (ibid.).

6.3. “Dagwinkel”

A final example that will be discussed in this category is the small shop “Dagwinkel” found in the Bevrijdingslaan, which is part of axis 1. The first picture below shows the entire storefront (figure 43a); the second picture shows in detail a sign on the window of the shop (figure 43b).



Figure 43a: Dagwinkel (Bevrijdingslaan, axis 1)



Figure 43b: Dagwinkel (Bevrijdingslaan, axis 1)

The first picture above shows that the language on display on the storefront is Dutch: “tabak – telekaarten – postzegels – tram + buskaarten”. The flashing sign displaying “open” could be regarded as being either Dutch or English. The second picture, i.e. the paper note stuck to the

window is in English: “We make photocopy here”. In the quantitative analysis of this commercial space, Dutch received the score of 3 as being the dominant language on display, whereas English received the value of 1, since only one sign on the façade is in this language. From a qualitative perspective, we can make a few observations about the shopowner and the clientele the shop is catering for. Assuming that the owner of the shop has a different ethnic origin, the dominant display of Dutch can first of all be regarded as a sign of integration into an officially Dutch-speaking community. Secondly, this also implies that the shopowner speaks Dutch and that the implied clientele at least understands Dutch. The note stuck to the window displaying the extra service of photocopying that the shop offers, on the other hand, implies that the clients that like to make use of this service are speakers of English. Moreover, this sign shows that the shop owner has a very basic knowledge English, since the note is not written in fluent English. Consequently, we can state that the clientele of this shop consists of people either understanding Dutch or English, implying that a considerable part of the clients is from a different ethnic origin. Regarding the shop owner, we can still assume that he or she has a different ethnic origin, despite the fact that we cannot deduce this origin from the languages on display on the façade.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

The objective of this study was to provide both a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the linguistic landscapes of two different axes in the city of Ghent. The unit of analysis studied in this case was the façade of an establishment and its signage on display. The quantitative analysis was conducted in order to show the evolution of the EV scores of each language on each axis. Before describing the results, first some hypotheses regarding the results of the evolution of EV scores on the axes were outlined; this was done for each (sub)category. The actual quantitative analysis was conducted by means of a specific EV system attributing scores to each language according to their dominant or subordinate position on the signs. When the results contested my expectations, I tried to provide possible explanations for these peculiarities. In this chapter I have conducted a quantitative analysis of the languages displayed on the signage of storefronts encountered during the field work. First some expectations on the expected trend of the linguistic landscape along the axes have been postulated. The data analysis is based on the calculation of the ethnolinguistic vitalities of each language by means of the EV score system. Subsequently, these quantitative data were

used to describe some tendencies or peculiarities for each axis and to compare them with the expected trend.

Looking at the overall linguistic landscape of both axes, it is a fact that Dutch is the dominant language on both axes, which is as expected. Secondly, the important role of English on both axes as a result of language fetishization and increasing globalization. French was found to play a minor role with clearly a higher EV in the centre of the city, confirming my hypothesis that the occurrences of French in the centre are examples of language fetishization. Finally, the languages belonging to the 'Other' category showed in line with my expectations an increasing importance on axis 1 which illustrates the presence of immigrants. In the case of axis 2, on the other hand, this category has very low scores because it is more 'local' and mainly addresses commuters heading for or coming from the centre of the city.

The results in the category of the commercial spaces belonging to a national chain confirmed my expectations that the number of this kind of commercial spaces would be higher on axis 2 than on axis 1. Regarding the EV scores, on both axes this category generally proved to be considerate of the official language policy of Flanders, which translated itself into a predominance of Dutch.

The majority of the encountered units belong to the category of privately owned commercial spaces. Consequently the results in this category were in line with those of the overall linguistic landscape. Therefore, the discussion of the results in this category were not as extensively discussed as in the other categories. Nevertheless it should be pointed out that my expectation that the signage of privately owned shops would be influenced by the local ethnolinguistic communities inhabiting the area.

The first subcategory in this study was that of the bookshops. As expected the EV scores in this category confirmed the assumption that the languages both on display on the façade and in the literature offered on the shelves inside the bookshop would reflect the implied clientele. Subsequently, also the hypothesis that the nature of the bookshops plays an important role regarding the implied readership was mostly: bookstores selling genuine literature are more international oriented, whereas shops selling magazines and newspaper tend to offer them in Dutch only.

The second subcategory covered the results of the EV scores of the encountered eating venues. I anticipated that the languages on display would be more tourist oriented in the centre of the city. Regarding the peripheral area, I expected that the immigrant languages would be dominant in the case of axis 1, whereas the periphery of axis 2 would maintain its orientation towards tourists. These hypotheses were generally confirmed.

The qualitative analysis covered a selection of examples of categories of signs that were extensively discussed. This was done in order to illustrate the sometimes problematic classification of the signs and the general complexity of the linguistic landscape.

It should be pointed out, however, that the qualitative analysis covered only a small selection out of the data; hence not all possible qualitative observations were included. Consequently an extensive qualitative analysis of all the photographic material found along the two axes is a topic that was beyond the scope this study and could therefore be of interest for a future study about the LL within Ghent. Secondly, it is also clear that this master dissertation encompassed a synchronic study of the signs. Thus, another issue that was not addressed here but that could have been a possible subject is the comparison of older and newer signs in the city of Ghent.

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Appendices

1. Disk (DVD): photographs of the axis Sint-Michielshelling – Bevrijdingslaan and the axis Koophandelsplein – Sint-Pietersstation

2. Disk (CD-R): quantitative analyses of the axis Sint-Michielshelling – Bevrijdingslaan and the axis Koophandelsplein – Sint-Pietersstation