

Sign Language: Interpreting the Linguistic Landscape of a Manitoba Town

by

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## **Dedication**

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## Abstract

Linguistic Landscape refers to linguistic objects that mark the public space (Gorter, 2006). The focal point of this research project is to examine how the informational and symbolic messages conveyed through the Linguistic Landscape (LL) portray the personality, language attitudes, and culture of a rural town; Carman, Manitoba. Since people play an active role in designing the LL, this research project was designed to accurately describe a rural Manitoba town through analysis of the language and symbols found in the landscape as representative of it as a community. By implementing an ethnographic approach utilizing critical language study (CLS) (Fairclough, 2001) and a communication framework (Hymes, 1972) this paper argues that the language used in the public space cannot be ignored or taken for granted. The language that is used on signs in public spaces is evidence of this. It manifests itself in power of the language used for communication, capitalism, values and lifestyles, and inclusion and exclusion of the population.

## CHAPTER 1

### **Introduction**

#### **Aim**

The aim of this study is to examine the informational and symbolic messages conveyed through the Linguistic Landscape (LL) in the rural town of Carman, Manitoba. Using a qualitative approach, I take a critical look at publically visible signs that convey information and meaning to both residents and visiting people through language and symbols. I then describe and interpret the messages that are passed both consciously and unconsciously to local and visiting people. I did this by taking digital photographs within the rural town of Carman, Manitoba. The photos were critically analyzed to determine what the words, language choice, and symbols, in conjunction with the surroundings, implied both explicitly and implicitly. Themes were drawn out that resonated across the photographs. In Chapter 4 I describe the location where the analyzed photographs were taken and give a written account of my impressions of the sign's meaning from both an informational and symbolic perspective.

#### **Justification**

The LL is a rich source of information that can indicate the sociolinguistic composition of groups in an area as well as the power relations between them (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). Reh (2004) supports that the study of language used on signs 'enables conclusions to be drawn regarding, among other factors, the social layering of the community, the relative status of the various societal segments, and the dominant cultural ideals'. The languages visible on signs convey messages of language diversity and views of diversity, social processes and social practices. Expectations can be

developed about what languages will be available for communication, e.g. to access goods and services. As well, the value and status of languages can be evaluated in comparison to other languages. The LL can play an important role in language planning and policy (Landry and Bourhis, 1997) as well as economic processes (Cenoz & Gorter, 2009).

Much of the research to date on LL has taken the approach to explore the use of various languages and symbols on signs in countries, specifically cities: Bangkok (Huebner, 2009); Tokyo (Backhaus, 2006; Backhaus, 2007); Jerusalem (Ben Rafael, Shohamy, E., Amara, M.H., & Trumper-Hecht, N., 2006); Taipei (Curtin, 2009); where English is not the dominant language and juxtapose English next to the native language of the country under study. All the studies I have reviewed to date, with the exception of two; Kotze & du Plessis (2010) who looked at both rural and urban landscapes in The Free State, South Africa; and Macalister (2010) who analyzed the LL in New Zealand; have analyzed the LL within urban settings.

I feel there are interesting sources for interpretation within rural settings. Rural towns still follow cityscape structures by having a high concentration of signs in the commercial or industrial areas. These signs are used to attract the public's attention. By being conscious of the LL, I find it just as telling of a rural community's language attitudes and culture as that which has been studied in urban settings. As well as being a source of information, the LL also creates a language expectation. People can form an impression relating to the languages that are likely to be encountered (Kotze & du Plessis, 2010). This leads to issues of power and the relationship between language and power (Fairclough, 2001). This is true for urban as well as rural settings.

Along with the urban focus, the research has flourished in countries where English is not the dominant language. My study will contribute to the existing research but will add a new dimension by focusing on informational and symbolic signs (defined in the next chapter) found in the public and private spaces (meant to be publically visible) of a rural English speaking community. The piece I wish to add is: what is implied to residents and visitors who do not see themselves represented in the LL of an English dominant rural town? I wanted to replicate other studies by analyzing the data gathered through digital photography and juxtaposing to some extent the use of French next to English, but more specifically using CLS, focus qualitatively on the messages conveyed about the personality and attitudes conveyed through signage in this town. I wondered how the signage used for advertising/business, religion, recreation and food and living habits convey personality and community values.

Finally, I have a personal connection to this community as it is where I am currently living and raising my three children. As this is the only community my children remember or have lived in, I wondered what messages they are receiving and what attitudes about languages and society they will develop. I wondered how this will prepare them for life in a more multicultural diverse setting. I have received comments from community members such as “I don’t do well with accents,” “If people want to live in Canada they should speak English,” and “She has a very bad accent.” I question if these values and beliefs resonate with the LL and if this is the message passed along through public signage, what impact it will have on how youth in the community value diversity.

As someone who has relied on the LL in foreign as well as unfamiliar contexts, I wondered how the LL appears to people taking notice of it in Carman. Are people oblivious to the LL? What messages are being passed both consciously and unconsciously?

## **Evolution of the Study**

### **Description of Carman, Manitoba.**

The town of Carman is located 65 km southwest of Winnipeg, the capital of Manitoba. With a population of 2880 people (2006 census), it serves a larger market population of 15000 (townofcarman.com; accessed June 1, 2010). The surrounding district is the Rural Municipality of Dufferin. Strong Dutch and Mennonite influences have shaped the religious beliefs and culture of the community. Diversity is not strong, and a homogenous look and feel to the community is evident through the unilingual signs, Caucasian background of the majority of population, the similar skin tone and appearance of its residents, the language heard and spoken in the stores and on the streets, as well as the uniform look to the architectural design of the houses and commercial buildings. The uniform design is that of sided, single family home bungalows with neatly kept yards and gardens. The commercial buildings are large in structure, since physical space is not an issue. Most commercial buildings have ample parking space with store names above the entrance. The dominant language of the residents of this rural Manitoba town is English.

The residents appear to take social pride in maintaining their properties and being involved in committees and group work that sustain town organizations. It boasts

several famous connections to sport legends and offers many sporting opportunities such as golf, ice arena sports, soccer, baseball, and track events to its residents and those belonging to smaller neighboring communities. Along with the sporting and recreation opportunities, services such as a hospital, senior housing, a library, financial institutions, several Christian churches, and survival amenities such as grocery stores, pharmacies and gas stations are present. Educational opportunities are administered through a kindergarten to grade six school, a grade seven to twelve collegiate, a private Christian school, and an adult education centre. The University of Manitoba has established a satellite campus in Carman offering university courses both live and on-line.

Farming, along with several manufacturing and commercial services are the main economic engines. For example, employment opportunities exist in the areas of government agencies such as Manitoba Agriculture, Hydro and Highways, postal services, as well as in the area of health care.

### **History of Carman, Manitoba.**

Before Manitoba became a province, the area that is now Carman was inhabited by Métis people. With confederation and the desire of lawmakers to populate the west before it was annexed by the United States, many settlers came to Manitoba and staked out land. Most of these people were of Irish and Scottish descent having spent some time in Ontario. The Métis were gradually driven out of the area by European pioneers. In 1882, the Town of Carman was named after Bishop Albert Carman, of the Episcopal Methodist Church (Carman Centennial Book, 1967).

After the Second World War, many Dutch people saw Canada as an attractive immigration destination. Many Dutch immigrants saw Canada as appealing for farming purposes. Large numbers of immigrants settled first in Ontario, and then moved west to Alberta. One Dutch family on their way to Lethbridge ended up in a community near Carman. They missed their church and Dutch contacts and planned to stay in the community for only one year. They then came to appreciate the farming prospects that were available to them and decided to stay. Through their contacts with the Dutch community in Lethbridge and emigration services in Holland, more Dutch immigrants arrived and were placed on farms in the districts surrounding Carman. With an increased Dutch population, the Canadian Reformed Church was instituted in 1952 (The History of the RM of Dufferin, 1980).

The Dutch families continued to work as laborers on farms until they had enough money saved to purchase their own land. The majority decided to become Canadian citizens and continued to be a productive part of the agricultural industry.

Along with the Dutch residents, the Mennonite community accounts for a large portion of the population of Carman. By 1875, approximately 7000 Mennonite settlers (Driedger, 1998) came to Manitoba for various reasons. The majority of these settlers took residency in the southern part of the province.

### **Experiential context.**

I became interested and aware of the topic of linguistic landscapes when it was introduced to me in a graduate class at the University of Manitoba. I found a personal connection to the topic since I have relied on both informational and symbolic signage

when immersed in a foreign context. In some situations my attention has been paid to the LL to access survival goods and services and at other times to navigate the cityscape. Although the former has provided me with the information necessary to access the goods and services I required, it has at the same time conveyed symbolic messages such as the relative power and status of local people that in turn provided opportunities to delve into understanding the language attitudes. For me, the latter is sometimes subliminal and not always apparent at first glance. I may read it this way since I am a speaker, reader and writer of English, the dominant first or second language, or lingua franca used in many countries.

After being introduced to the topic in class, I started to analyze photographs that I had taken while travelling in foreign countries. My curiosity about how I had relied on the LL, without even realizing it in those terms, lead me to wonder how I would analyze the LL of the rural Manitoba town (Carman) where I have resided since September of 2002. I wondered what visitors, travelers, business people, and professionals to Carman would see and interpret. (The term visitors will be used throughout this paper to include all of the above mentioned groups of people). To undertake this research I had to look at Carman with fresh eyes, as I did when I first arrived. This required a conscious effort as I find myself oblivious to the LL in familiar surroundings. Most of the time, people do not pay attention to the linguistic landscape that surrounds them (Gorter, 2006).

I remember my arrival and assimilation into the community as an easy transition from my previous Canadian location. It was not difficult since my family and I physically match the mainstream population. We read, write and speak English with a Midwestern, North American accent. We were culturally familiar with the infrastructure of traffic, the



routine of schools, the food and dietary staples and meal eating patterns, the monetary system, the police, government and health care practices. We did not encounter racial prejudices or require assistance from locals or new acquaintances in order to access the goods and services we required. At the same time, I remember my initial exposure to the language signs in town and being aware that the community was different from the one I had left. One example were the numerous Christian church billboards and signs for youth to belong to Christian activities. This was not strongly represented in any other city or town where I had resided. Having come from a more diverse setting, I also noticed the lack of symbols or language that would indicate the existence of a population other than that of the mainstream Caucasian base.

The purpose of this research is not to change the signage that appears in Carman, but to broaden my own thinking in an environment that I have taken for granted. “By confronting what is often taken for granted as a matter of routine, definitions of reality and traditional conventions are questioned” (Semali & Watts Pailliotet, 1999, p.16). Dewey (1933) (as cited by Semali & Watts Pailliotet, 1999, p.16) states, “as long as we continue to follow routine and not critique our actions or perceptions, we are likely to fall into the trap of perceiving reality as unproblematic and therefore immune to critique. Such a situation may well serve as an obstacle to recognizing alternative viewpoints.”

I wanted to take a critical look at the deliberate language used both publically and privately in this section of a province where English is the dominant language. The LL is closely related to the people as they are the ones who create it and choose how it is displayed in public and private spaces. I wanted to gain an understanding, by

critiquing and conveying my interpretation of the messages that are delivered about societies, people, class, identity and multilingualism. I planned to describe Carman's personality; something that will distinguish it from other places. Therefore, along with providing myself with an opportunity to grow by critically viewing the LL of Carman and becoming conscious of linguistic conventions involving power of which people are not consciously aware and how language contributes to the domination of some people by others (Fairclough, 2001), I would like to encourage people to think analytically about how language is used in local contexts and to thereby be sensitive to messages that are sent and how they may be interpreted by others. Considering the decision to be analytical of texts or not is unclear, with the dominant culture not promoting analytical behavior in the general public, (Layzer & Sharkey, 1999) and that the LL is often taken for granted, not only by me, but by others as is it part of our everyday lives, it is important that linguistic landscapes as a form of social practice be considered.

### **Research Question**

The purpose of this research was to critically analyze the linguistic landscape of a small Manitoba town to examine how this landscape influences the messages passed both informationally and symbolically to local and visiting people. Immigration in English speaking countries such as Canada has increased over the past few years (Karanja, 2007). With Manitoba's Action Strategy for Economic Growth the province welcomed 13, 520 new immigrants in 2009 (immigratemanitoba.com accessed March 13, 2011). One of the goals of the province of Manitoba's Action Strategy for Economic Growth is to 'promote and support communities that welcome newcomers and embrace cultural diversity' (immigratemanitoba.com). Therefore, with the impact of linguistics within a

global context, the world is shrinking in terms of access and communication with diverse cultures and languages. Although I did not expect to see multilingual signs in Carman (except on government signs), the need for sensitivity to diverseness is necessary with the above statistics. The town of Carman may be receiving newcomers as visitors or residents and the signage of Carman will have an impact on their views and feeling of belonging and acceptance within the community. What could be implied to residents and visitors who do not see themselves represented in the LL? The more the in-group language is seen on government and private signs, the more visitors and residents will perceive the relative power of the in-group (Landry and Bourhis, 1997). The languages in the LL can create an impression relating to the cultural ideals and attitudes toward diverseness that will be encountered in the community. As well as information passed along through the language or dialect written on public and private signage, I wondered how people would view the personality or cultural norms that are emitted through the signage.

The following overarching question guided this research: What does the linguistic landscape of Carman tell us about its societal, cultural, and community beliefs? A secondary purpose was to look at the languages that are represented on government (top-down) and private (bottom-up) signs and the interests of the writers and readers of the signs.

Specifically the objectives were: (1) to digitally photograph the language signs within the town limits of Carman Manitoba; (2) to analyze and describe the photographs from an informational and symbolic perspective as well as from a top-down and bottom-up perspective; (3) to draw out themes that resonate across the pictures; (4) to collect

and synthesize scholarly research on LL in urban and rural settings; (5) to contribute findings to enhance the body of research available on this new and emerging topic.

## **Definitions**

Critical Language Study (CLS) – the study of discourse that views language as a form of social practice.

Linguistic Landscape (LL) – the language represented through words and images in public spaces.

Top-down signs – government related signs.

Bottom-up signs – private signs.

## CHAPTER 2

### Literature Review

#### Introduction

Linguistic landscape research surfaced as a way of addressing issues about language vitality in multilingual settings (Leeman & Modan, 2009). Researchers were concerned with whether and how the LL informs and/or reflects language policy. From the area of language policy and planning, five other themes have emerged from the literature as they relate to linguistic landscapes: language status, attitudes and identity; the spread of English; language as a commodity/econolinguistics; power and political change; language ecology. This last theme is of particular importance to me in order to conduct research in a monolingual community. The impact the linguistic landscape has on linguistic ecosystems relates to the above topics, but also requires attention when examining non diverse communities. Although these themes have been separated, it is important to note their overlap and combined influence on the LL.

LL studies usually take a quantitative approach by counting and classifying all the public signs in a specific area of a city or urban landscape. These signs have been classified and compared according to the language(s) used in the landscape drawing parallels to the ethnolinguistic background, language attitudes of the producer(s) or agent(s) of the signs (usually government or private), linguistic capabilities, and from there proposed that the ratio of languages is related to the power of various ethnolinguistic groups (Landry & Bourhis 1997; Ben-Rafael et al 2006; Cenoz & Gorter, 2006).

Along with empirical studies, another methodological approach uses theories and methods of multimodality (sounds, images, graffiti). This theory postulates that the LL consists of far more than just language signs (see description of Ben-Rafael's gestalt theory later in this chapter). With this come discussions about what constitutes a sign and what should be included as a unit of analysis (described under genre later in this chapter). Ben-Rafael et al. (2006) distinguished the LL as a social construction; symbolic functions of language. These symbolic structures help shape communities and can be very telling of the culture, power and personality of an area. "Texts themselves are among the most powerful tools for the production of social power relations" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p.7). The LL needs to be viewed as a dynamic environment rather than static. By researchers trying to focus not only on *what* they are reading in the LL, but *how* to read it, a qualitative form of research is employed. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Torkington, 2009), allows the description of a dynamic landscape to be explained along side the quantitative methods.

Almost all researchers have used digital photography as a method to collect and analyze the LL in various clearly defined locations. The signs and artifacts photographed can then be observed as a product of the environment, fixed in time. The data collected may be interpreted in different ways according to the approach taken (linguistic, sociocultural or political).

This chapter provides an analytical review of the research literature available on the topic of Linguistic Landscapes (LL). It seeks to explore the relationship between the languages represented on informational and symbolic signs and objects in public spaces and viewers perceptions of language, identity and power.

I will start by defining the term linguistic landscape and will then proceed to discuss the functions, characteristics, and genres of linguistic landscape research. From there, I will discuss the six themes or applications that have emerged from the research. Then I will review the theoretical frameworks used for analyzing LL and methodologies employed. This section will conclude with a look at areas for future research.

### **Defining the Linguistic Landscape**

The term linguistic landscape (LL) is used to describe the language represented through words and images in public spaces. This relatively new and emerging topic of study is intended as a valid source to help explain the messages passed both consciously and unconsciously to local and visiting people. These messages contain information regarding the cultural, political, historical, social and economic conditions of a specified location.

Using the theoretical framework of ethnolinguistic vitality, Landry and Bourhis (1997, p.25) in their seminal paper define the linguistic landscape as:

‘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.’

This definition has been widely accepted by scholars in the field of linguistics (Backhaus, 2005; Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; Lou, 2009). According to Landry and Bourhis



(1997), the study of linguistic landscapes has origins in three areas: language planning; ethnolinguistic vitality; vitality perceptions of language minorities.

The definition given by Landry and Bourhis (1997) above, has been scrutinized by Ben-Rafael, Shohamy, Amara & Trumper-Hecht, (2006) and Ben-Rafael, Shohamy & Barni, (2010) as being too limited and not paying attention to the dynamics of the LL as a field of its own and foregoing the consideration of the LL as a gestalt. Studying the linguistic landscape as a whole as performed by Ben-Rafael et al (2006) within a setting is an interesting way of uncovering social realities. The combinations of professions, commercialism, and institutions are multitude. Neighborhoods can be transformed in terms of demographic makeup and this leads to changes in language and affects the imprint of this language to compose the linguistic landscape.

The gestalt premise as described by Ben-Rafael (2009) positions that the LL creates the accepted standards of the public space, together with architecture, newspapers, art, dance and music. These items appear together to make the viewer perceive the landscape as one whole rather than individual parts. This whole view or ensemble, acknowledges that not all parts equally participate in what the LL stands for, but it confirms that the LL does not work alone. The LL represented through signs is one that is dynamic and can be a rich source of authentic language. Architecture, on the other hand, contributes to the overall makeup of the landscape but it is far more static. Ben-Rafael, Shohamy and Barni (2010) argue that this whole may become the emblem of societies or regions. These emblems can be represented by Times Square for New York and the USA or Piccadilly Circus for London and England.

## Functions of Language Signs

The LL is created by agents and interpreted by an audience. The context of the sign is defined by Ben-Rafael et al (2006) in terms of using a top down or bottom up approach or as Landry and Bourhis (1997) choose to word it: private and government signs. Top down signs are all government related signs. They are expected to reflect the dominant culture. Bottom up signs are all other signs. Bottom up signs are often regulated to some degree by the government; some regions have strict laws that individuals must follow. The bottom up sign creators often seek out certain target audiences, depending on what they have to offer. Both top down and bottom up signs contribute to the LL of a region. More than 30 countries and regional states have laws to regulate the language used on public and private signs (Leclerc, as cited in Landry and Bourhis, 1997). This regulation contributes to the power and status of different languages in a specific sociolinguistic context (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006).

The agents or participants in the top down and bottom up production of the LL range from national agencies or corporation sponsors, to government bodies, to individual entrepreneurs or shopkeepers; all with numerous motivations. The interpretation of top down and bottom up may vary depending on the audience. For example, a sign posted in an apartment building by the management company may be viewed as top down by the tenants, but bottom up from the perspective of the federal government. Huebner (2009) argues that the notion of top down and bottom up signs fail to capture the meaning of agency.

It is important to note that not all participants will compete or vie for the public's attention in the same way. A top down sign such as a post office will simply state the name and location giving basic information, and perhaps remain more static, while a bottom up sign will give more details to promote the commercialism and financial gain of the proprietor of a store and be more dynamic.

Three different theories are outlined by Ben-Rafael et al (2006) in their quantitative study that examined top down and bottom up signs that are significant for LL analysis. These theories range from first, a Bourdieusardian idea that power is evident in the LL from the languages and symbols that dominate the scene creating social structures that indicate a power hierarchy. Second, a presentation of self idea, that ethnic communities assert and imprint themselves on the public scene, to third, the "good reasons" perspective where the actors or creators of the LL consider and aim to attract the interests of the public and influence them with their signage. These perspectives are useful to help describe the symbolic structuring and help to reveal aspects of the dynamics of relationships between groups of people that would not be possible by alternate methodologies. This perspective may help describe the symbolic structuring of a public space that is dominated by many actors who have various motives.

### **The informational function.**

Landry and Bourhis (1997) distinguish between the two basic functions the LL fulfils: informational and symbolic. The informational (communication) function of language signs shows the languages that are used for communication and mark the

geographical territory inhabited by a given language community. The dominance of a particular language may indicate that only the observable language will allow individuals to access the goods and services they want or require. Personal frustration and a sense that one's group language is not respected may be experienced when the languages on the public signs are not matched by services in the corresponding language within the establishment. This value and status that is consciously and unconsciously perceived can be regulated to some extent by top down policies (Waksman & Shohamy, 2010).

The informational function can reflect the power and status of competing language groups. Language signs may be written in the language of the dominant group with only a few signs of the weaker language group.

### **The symbolic function.**

The symbolic (solidarity) function conveys feelings of belonging, acceptance and value to the in-group when one's own language is represented in the LL. When one's language is not visible a negative social identity may develop by implying the language is not valued and has little status within society (Reh 2004, Landry & Bourhis, 1997). Therefore, the LL may target a specific portion of people. To construct meaning from the LL, a process of interpretation and discursive negotiation is required. Individuals make meaning from print based on their prior experiences. The interpretations, therefore, will differ according to the perspectives of those who observe them. Leeman & Modan (2009) pay special attention to the symbolic functions of language and their role in the assembly of social spaces.

The use of symbols within the LL is necessary to analyze. Some symbols are universal, and not dependent on written text to define them. The power that is displayed by use of language through written text must also be a consideration for people whose languages do not have a written script.

### **The mythological function.**

A third function has been noted in the literature. The mythological function (Hicks, 2002) relates to the LL in societies that have kept their native religion. This function, also seen as a folklore function, focuses on places in the landscape that are named to provide a focal point for traditional stories, sagas and myths that in turn help to recall a community's past. These stories are made up the traditional culture of an area and add to a sense of timelessness and belonging for the in-group. When these names are changed or replaced, the community feels a loss or a sense of not belonging to a particular area.

### **Genre.**

The unit of analysis used in LL research (language signs only, or items such as newspapers, for example) has become increasingly important for researchers to identify to extend the work of Landry & Bourhis (1997). The research to date has been inconsistent with its genre of items used for analysis in studying LL. By not having a clearly defined unit of analysis, Huebner (2009) finds research frameworks problematic.

In order to address the need for clarification of genre to limit the controversy over the collection and categorization of written signs, Tufi & Blackwood (2010) advocate for the inclusion of brand names to be included in the analysis of the LL. Their quantitative

study focused on the relevance of trademarks and their linguistic impact on individuals and groups in a globalised world.

Cenoz & Gorter (2006); Coluzzi (2009) considered one shop or business a unit of analysis, not every sign that each shop or business offered. When a shop had its name on the front but also some advertising signs in the window, it was considered one unit. Backhaus (2006) defines the unit of analysis as 'any piece of written text within a spatially definable frame'. This allows for a broad approach.

Brockmeier (2001) encourages a gestalt, or as he terms it, a hybrid approach to research. In trying to determine national identity as it relates to text, his article takes a broad approach to the meaning of text to include not only transcribable language, but also architecture, art and music.

### **Applications of Linguistic Landscape Studies**

It is important to consider the effects of language use in public spaces. Landry and Bourhis (1997, p.34) state, 'the linguistic landscape may be the most visible marker of the linguistic vitality of the various ethnolinguistic groups living within a particular administrative or territorial enclave'. The LL can provide information about societies and the interrelationship of groups of people. This is so since it is the people who create, ignore or obliterate the LL of an environment. The LL may also indicate the relative power and status of the local people that in turn assist in understanding the language attitudes.

The interdisciplinary concept of the LL further expands the definition of linguistic landscapes proposed by Landry and Bourhis (1997). The nature of LL has been related

to other topics such as: language policy and planning (Backhaus, 2009; Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; Coluzzi, 2009; Huang, 2007; Roller, 2002); language status, attitudes and identity (Barker & Giles, 2002; Barni & Bagna, 2010; Reh, 2004; Torkington, 2009; Trumper-Hecht, 2009); the spread of English, (Backhaus, 2006; Griffin, 2004; Huebner, 2006; Kotze & du Plessis, 2010; MacGregor, 2003); language as a commodity/econolinguitics (Cenoz & Gorter, 2009; Curtin, 2009; Inoue, 2005; Leeman & Modan, 2009; Lou, 2010); power and political change (Kotze & du Plessis, 2010; Shohamy & Gorter, 2009); and language diversity/ecology (Bastardas-Boada, 2005; Hult, 2009; Maffi, 2005; Shohamy & Waksman, 2009).

### **Language policy and planning.**

Language laws, to some extent, impact all other domains of the LL. Linguistic landscape legislation is a highly complex matter and has been studied by such scholars as Backhaus (2009). In his case study comparing language signs in Quebec and Tokyo, he states that the formation of LL is consciously shaped and controlled by laws. These laws can affect the linguistic ecologies of allocation. The visibility of a language in a public space has some bearing on the perceived linguistic vitality of a language (Landry and Bourhis, 1997). Quebec's strict language laws are applied to public and private signs. The use of French on signs in Quebec not only shows the power of the political party that has been democratically voted in, but it is felt as necessary to see the French language survive. More often than not, there is greater language diversity in private signs than in government signs (Landry and Bourhis, 1997). In comparison, Tokyo was seen as different in terms of linguistic ecology. Japan, for the most part, is a monolingual country. Therefore, the Japanese language remains unchallenged. While

Quebec strives to limit all other languages, Tokyo encourages the use of languages other than Japanese which shows the linguistic landscape of Quebec is consciously controlled by rules and regulations (Backhaus, 2009).

Cenoz & Gorter (2006); Coluzzi (2009) conducted empirical studies that agreed with Backhaus. They found the effect of a strong language policy was to protect the minority language and influenced how language was displayed on both top down and bottom up signs in The Netherlands, Spain and Italy. Coluzzi (2009) concluded that no policies exist for the presence of minority languages in Italy and in order to slow down the shift towards dominant languages, effective language planning strategies need to be taken into account.

The centrality of language in the Catalan nationalist movement is similarly discussed by Roller (2002). He describes “identity as a social construct and language as an adhesive” (p.274). Language creates boundaries and by maintaining a boundary, identity in turn, is maintained. With fear that Catalan would be absorbed by the more dominant languages of Spain, and to maintain the boundary described above, a need for linguistic policy resulted. The Catalan linguistic policy reported by Roller (2002), was put into place to create a common bond among individuals of diverse backgrounds; reinforce the history and culture as being different from the rest of Spain. These reasons resonate with Backhaus (2009) and Quebec’s wish to maintain its boundaries as separate from the rest of Canada.

Huang (2007) in his critical approach to language planning gives an account of Taiwan’s history in regards to the place names in both the public and private domain.



This comprehensive study demands that researchers do more than just look at the government(s), people, and institutions involved in the LL such as Coluzzi (2009) did, to really understand the social situation behind language planning and policy. The author's accounts of research into Taiwan's extensive history "further define, inform, and hence affect the actual policy outcomes' (Huang, 2007).

### **Language status, attitudes and identity.**

A bilingual or multilingual environment where one language predominates over other(s) can reflect the power and status of the other competing groups. Reh (2004) analyzed multilingual written texts in the public space of Lira, Uganda. This study showed that the language used on signs combined with the language knowledge of residents and visitors can provide information regarding the 'social layering of the community, the relative status of the various societal segments, and the dominant cultural ideals of the community' (Reh, 2004, p.38). Torkington (2009) found the language used in the commercial setting of Portugal make clear statements about the identity of the businesses and the clients they serve.

In their comparative study, Barni & Bagna (2010) analyzed the visibility and vitality of immigrant languages present in various Italian cities. They found that there was not a direct relationship between the presence of a language in an area, its vitality and its visibility. Although the conclusions of this study found these results, the authors still maintain that the more visible a language is, the greater it's potential for vitality and therefore a greater chance of being maintained in an immigrant context. They credit linguistic policies as playing a role in this. Less contact with minority languages in the LL

supports the dominant language vitality as regulated by language policies (Barker & Giles, 2002). The perceived threat of minority languages appearing in the LL and its effect on the dominant population's sense of identity are noted by Barker & Giles, (2002); Trumper-Hecht, (2009). Illustrating minority languages in the LL can influence the degree of political, social and economic power in a society (Trumper-Hecht, 2009). Ethnolinguistic group members experience the LL as a distinct contribution to their vitality independently of other factors such as contact with the media, in schooling, and in the social network (Landry & Bourhis, 1997)

### **The spread of English.**

A common theme of the study of LL is the spread of English. Backhaus (2006) examined this phenomenon in Tokyo, Curtin (2009) in Taipei, Coluzzi (2009) in Milan and Udine, Bruyel-Omedo & Juan-Garau (2009) in S'Arenal, Cenoz & Gorter (2006) in The Netherlands and Spain, and Griffin (2004) in Rome. The authors of these papers have seen English as having a privileged place among language use.

The study of LL in bilingual or multilingual settings is interesting since there are usually top down policies in place that direct the use of an official language on street signs and names of official buildings. But the impact of the top down policy on individuals is reflected in bottom up signs such as posters or shop signs Cenoz & Gorter (2006). The above researchers found that English is indeed the language of international communication; its use is no longer marginal.

The use of English can be viewed as both informational and symbolic. It is informational for foreign visitors who wish to access goods and services, but with the

increasing use of English it can have a strong symbolic function for local populations (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). Using English can be seen as more prestigious and modern than using local languages (Piller, 2001, 2003 as cited in Cenoz & Gorter, 2009), and there can be implications for the future of other languages (Phillipson, 2003 as cited in Cenoz & Gorter, 2009). The spread of English is a large part of the economic piece of the LL.

### **The LL as a commodity/econolinguistics.**

The LL can be viewed as competitive and influential. In today's urban landscape, businesses produce the majority of the LL. The LL that is produced from a culture of consumption can influence ideas about what individuals and groups of people believe is necessary to feel included as part of the society at large. Advertising plays on this as a way of swaying beliefs about what is cool or hip or as Curtin (2009) refers to it as 'the relationship between social identity and the indexical information in the public space'. A year long ethnographic study by Curtin (2009) in Taipei, documented the local Taiwanese prestige that indexed a shop when it used European languages on its signs. The language was seen to create a mood as much as it was to create a message. Curtin (2009) refers to this as 'display English'; text that is not read denotatively, but the script designates it as cool and fashionable. The images and text that are projected can indicate prestige, affluence, and status in the community. People can be categorized accordingly.

Paying attention to linguistics can influence business. When more people use a language, it becomes more useful to other people. This usefulness has an effect on the

attractiveness of particular languages (Cenoz & Gorter, 2009). When business owners adapt to the needs and wants of their customers they can avoid future dissatisfaction with business (Bruyel-Olmedo & Juan-Garau, 2009). Leeman & Modan (2009) describe this in their qualitative approach (case study) that showcases Washington DC's Chinatown as using Chinese ethnicity and culture (graphics, language and architecture) to market Chinatown as a commodity for consumption.

### **Power and political change.**

Power relations refer to the extent to which certain individuals are able to impose patterns of behavior on others. This may come about through the dominant individual's ability to exert their language or wordings and thereby limit the weaker individual's use of their own linguistic power (Ben-Rafael, 2009). The national language is rarely challenged by the LL, however, second or third languages often do not receive the same treatment.

Politicians are inclined to see the public space as an area to exercise their influence and deliver messages (Shohamy and Gorter, 2009). Because of the ability of the LL to offer these opportunities, the work of Kotze & du Plessis (2010) analyses the change from apartheid to democracy in South Africa, particularly the Free State Province. These researchers found that despite the change in government the power that certain languages held (Afrikaans and English) still show the unchanged power relations between the languages of ethno-linguistic groups. The wish for the black population to be viewed as powerful is shown in the use of English signs, the language of status.

## **Language diversity/ecology.**

'In the language of ecology, the strongest ecosystems are those that are the most diverse. Diversity is directly related to the stability; variety is important for long term survival. Our success on this planet has been due to an ability to adapt to different kinds of environment over thousands of years. Such ability is out of diversity. Thus language and cultural diversity maximizes chances of human success and adaptability' Baker (as cited in Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 2008).

Language diversity is entwined in the biological and cultural diversity of life. 'The diversity of life is made up not only of the diversity of plants and animal species, habitats, and ecosystems found on the planet, but also of the diversity of human culture and languages' ([www.terralingua.org](http://www.terralingua.org) accessed March 13, 2011). There are many languages used in the world today. With 7299 languages currently existing in the world (Harmon & Loh, 2010), some languages are strong and not at risk of extinction, while others are used by a token few. The strong languages most frequently used: Mandarin, Hindi, Spanish, English, Bengali, Portuguese, Arabic and Russian (Onofri, Nunes, Cenoz & Gorter accessed online March 13, 2011) are seeing people give up their mother tongue and switch to one of the before mentioned world languages. With this switch it seems evident that the linguistic and cultural diversity they represent will also diminish. Zent (2001) (as quoted in Maffi, 2002) states ...'evidence suggests that losing one's heritage language(s) often implies losing the knowledges, beliefs, values, and practices that the language(s) encode(s) and convey(s).'

Crystal (2000) states the following reasons to promote language diversity: ecological diversity; languages express identity; languages are repositories of history; languages contribute to the sum of human knowledge; languages are interesting themselves. He warns that in order to protect language diversity, people need facts and arguments to motivate change. People also need to believe that language is a valuable part of the human race.

From an ecological perspective, the display of languages in the LL can promote or limit the public's view of the value of bilingualism, multilingualism and linguistic diversity. Language ecology is closely linked to language policy and planning as found in the work of Backhaus (2009), Huang (2007), and Roller (2002). Languages that are more visible have a greater potential for vitality and therefore a greater probability of being maintained in an immigration context because they are used and viewed in public (Barni & Bagna, 2010). A conscientious role on language policy is necessary by the parties in power.

Maffi (2005) relates the lack of language richness to a lack of cultural richness. A lack of language diversity may limit the adaptability of people since they have less knowledge to draw from.

There is no direct relationship between the presence of a language in an area, and its vitality and its visibility. This relationship depends on numerous linguistic and contextual factors (Barni & Bagna, 2010). Cenoz & Gorter (2009) take an economic approach to the study of linguistic diversity and see the study of linguistic diversity as having market and non market value in the LL. They focus on the non market value of

the LL. The market value also needs to be considered, however, since it is sometimes necessary for people to abandon their native languages and adopt the language of the majority to be able to advance their economic situation.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Most research in LL has evaluated commercial zones in urban spaces. This is due to the immense signage available for examination. The framework used in these research projects supports the idea that the target audience of a given language consists largely of people who can read and understand the language. Studies such as Backhaus, (2006); Cenoz & Gorter, (2006); Curtin, (2009) have used quantitative research methods to juxtapose one language next to another.

Using a geosemiotic framework as proposed by Scollon and Scollon ( 2003), Leeman & Modan (2010), and Lou (2009) take a different approach that examines the various political and economic factors that form the development of urban spaces. They attempt to expand the research available on LL by considering the political and economic interests that led to the creation of a particular store or street sign in Washington DC's Chinatown. They propose the signs created in both English and Chinese are not to support or improve the self esteem of Chinese speaking residents, but as a way to sell Chinatown to tourists who are not Chinese speakers or readers. It is a political and economic endeavor of the city of Washington DC to reconfigure Chinatown as an exotic-yet safe ethnic tourist destination. These reconfigurations tend to offer the consumer a selective and conflict free image of place. It overlooks the interest of current residents and defines who has the power to write on the landscape.

Barker & Giles (2002) used vitality theory as a framework. This theory postulates that English-only policies are structured by the dominant Anglo-American group to maintain the status quo in language and social status. This theory, when used as a framework, attempts to study the socio-structural factors that affect the strength of language groups within diverse environments and the ability of these groups to maintain their language.

## **Methodology**

Linguistic Landscape methodology started as a need to address sociolinguistic questions about language vitality in multilingual settings (Leeman & Modan, 2009). Most studies of the LL have employed some form of quantitative analysis, counting and classifying all the public signs in a specific area of a city or urban landscape. These signs have been classified according to the language(s) used and the producer of the sign (usually government or private). Landry & Bourhis (1997), Ben-Rafael et al (2006), Cenoz & Gorter (2006) used empirical methods to analyze the degree of visibility of majority and minority languages. The majority of the studies were concerned with how the LL reflects or informs language policy which then relates to power, language status, economics and diversity. Barni and Bagna (2009) use a computer program, MapGeoLing software. Shohamy and Waksman use genre analysis. Barker & Giles (2002) used a telephone survey as a way to collect data to test if English only movement is related to perceptions of Spanish vitality and Spanish presence in the LL in California.



Qualitative approaches by Leeman & Modan (2009) and Lou (2009) describes the data and identifies connections and patterns across parts of the data. A qualitative form of methodology applied to the field of LL research is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was employed by Torkington (2009) who utilized mixed methods in order to examine the linguistic landscape in the Algarve, Portugal, with a view to show the sense of place being created by the predominance of English in LL texts as more than to accommodate tourists, but instead as an ideologically constructed place of luxury and privilege.

Other forms of qualitative research methods have been employed to study linguistic landscapes. Ethnography and discourse analysis were used by Curtin (2009). Methods such as interviews and questionnaires (Landry & Bourhis, 1997) have also been used in order to gather data on the experience of the LL by members of a language group in a Canadian context to suggest the LL plays an important role in the processes of language maintenance and language shift for ethnolinguistic groups. The LL was shown as a marker of the vitality of ethnolinguistic groups in multilingual contexts, and that it also contributes to this vitality.

### **Contexts.**

For the most part, the context of the reviewed literature is in urban settings as they “provide more interesting and significant sources for the reading and interpretation of linguistic dynamics” (Barni & Bagna, 2010, p.4). These urban settings have ranged across the continents. Ben-Rafael et al. (2006) used urban neighborhoods that reflected diversity and variation in communities in Israel. Backhaus (2006) examined areas of

urban Tokyo near train stops, as well as parks and residential areas. Cenoz & Gorter (2006) and Coluzzi (2009) contrasted the language used within the boundaries of one street in different European cities. A socio-political context is the basis for Huang (2007) and Roller's (2002) papers. Only two studies examined both rural and urban landscapes. The Free State, South Africa was the location for Kotze & du Plessis (2010) and included both residential and commercial areas. New Zealand was the focus of Macalister (2010) study.

### **Research questions.**

Many research questions evolved from empirical methodology and wanted to count the number of instances that a language was represented. What languages are displayed? And what are the characteristics of bilingual or multilingual signs (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006)?

### **Future Research**

The literature reviewed to date analyzed the LL of large urban spaces. Only two studies: Kotze & du Plessis (2010) and Macalister (2010) analyzed the LL from a rural perspective taking into account the language used in both commercial and residential contexts. Research is needed to provide insight into the complexities and amount of prior knowledge that would be required by residents and newcomers who reside and visit rural towns and communities that are homogeneous in nature to gain meaning from both text and symbols on signs and community venues. Future research is necessary to investigate the adaptability and attitudes of individuals that leave rural homogenous towns and relocate to an environment rich with culture and linguistic diversity. These

attitudes may focus on the willingness of groups of people to have specific languages in the LL to promote linguistic diversity.

Further research using more diverse LL objects is presented by Huebner (2009) who considers using artifacts based on nomenclature given to them by the neighborhoods they are found in. This has not been considered in the research. He also urges researchers to consider the immediate context of the sign or artifact as to where it is placed in the environment as this affects the language used on the sign and the target audience it is aiming for. The LL that takes control for brief periods of time such as signs that last two to ten seconds is also something to be considered. As well, there is limited research on the LL of cyber space and that of hybrid languages on display and the effects of LL on language learning.

## **Conclusion**

Six themes emerged from the literature available on LL. These themes link the LL to social groups and structures such as the power hierarchies that are created; comparing the visibility of one language(s) over another; the global spread of English and its implication on economics and ecosystems. The linguistic landscape provides information about the population and signals what languages are prominent and valued in public and private spaces and indexes the social positioning of people who identify with particular languages. This also relates to the survival of languages and biodiversity in human kind.

The themes discussed in the applications section, although separated into categories for the organizational purposes of this paper, are very much intertwined and

should not be viewed as separate themes, but rather as themes that influence the impact of one upon the other.

The LL, although often taken for granted, is part of our everyday lives. It is therefore important that linguistic landscapes as a form of social groups, practice, and processes be considered.

## CHAPTER 3

### **Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

The research methodology that was utilized to collect and analyze information in order to increase my understanding of the topic of linguistic landscapes was one of a qualitative nature. Qualitative research allowed me to explore the topic in a natural setting: the setting was not controlled or manipulated. Using broad research questions I expected to gain a deeper understanding of what the LL transmits to local and visiting travelers, and professional people. I used digital photography to gather my data and from there, developed a description of themes. I analyzed the pictures to describe the central phenomenon under study. The result was a description of the personality and community values of Carman, Manitoba.

The type of qualitative research I conducted was that of an ethnographic design. Ethnographies show "... communities differ significantly in ways of speaking, in patterns of repertoire and switching, in roles and meanings of speech. They indicate differences with regard to beliefs, values, reference groups, norms, and the like" (Hymes, 1972, p.42). Ethnographic designs are "qualitative research procedures for describing, analyzing, and interpreting a culture-sharing group's shared patterns of behavior, beliefs, and language that develop over time" (Creswell, 2008, p.473). The key word culture is further defined by Creswell as 'everything having to do with human behavior and belief'. To understand the LL of Carman, Manitoba I needed to spend time in the community to gather photographs to understand the culture-sharing language and

beliefs of the group. According to Creswell (2008), ethnography is conducted when there is a culture-sharing group to study that has been together for a time long enough to develop shared values, beliefs, and language. The homogenous (unilingual, Christian, similar skin tones) look and feel of Carman makes it an ideal setting.

McMillan (2004) describes three common methods for collecting data for ethnographic studies: observation, interviews, and analysis of documents. I adopted two of these three methods: observation, and [critical discourse] analysis of documents (digital photographs) to achieve an understanding of how the language and surroundings contribute to the social and cultural milieu of Carman. The specific approach I took to analyzing the language found on signs was modeled after Fairclough's (2001) critical language study (CLS). This method was adopted to show the relationship between linguistic elements and social interactions and relationships.

### **Data Collection**

A total of 94 photographs were taken with a Sony DSC H10 digital camera, transferred and then stored on my computer in a file titled Linguistic Landscapes. Within this file, there were 3 folders arranged chronologically by my photo taking sessions. By downloading them onto my computer, they were automatically recorded with the date the photograph was taken. Some photographs appear more than once. During my research I decided to go back and re-photograph some signs for picture clarity. The photos that were re-photographed had been taken earlier before my formal research began. The pictures that had been photographed prior to my formal research were stored within a Word document on the hard drive of my computer as well as on an

external storage stick. By re-photographing previous pictures, I was able to maintain a journal on the photos taken. It made me conscious of my perception of how I view signs. As a photographer, I wanted to be aware of what is visible to those viewing the signs as a motorist and those as a pedestrian. I also wanted to take in to account the broader frame in some cases, to capture an image of the community along with the language sign. I thought about how economic decisions may have influenced the construction of the message within the sign, the placement or location of the sign, the reasons someone might be interested in the producing or reading the sign, and how individuals might interpret the signs differently.

I printed the photographs from my computer to a copier to have a hard copy of each to organize and analyze. Since there were 94 to copy, this was reasonable. I found it more convenient to reference a hard copy than to bring the photo up on the computer screen. The photographs were first organized into groups depicting date and viewer access (Table 4.0).

All my photos are recent and reasonably representative of the research site. All photos were taken within town limits. The majority of the photos were taken along the main thoroughfares and downtown district. As well, I referred to the town's tourist brochure to capture photos that would be of interest to visitors and people travelling through Carman.

Most of my data were collected while biking around town. Bike transportation is not unusual for me and I found it more convenient than a motor vehicle due to the frequent stops I was making. I either wore a backpack that contained my camera and

field journal, or kept the camera and field journal in the bike stroller that was also used to transport my three year old son with me while collecting photographs.

I chose times of day that were convenient for me. Being a half time afternoon teacher, and having the responsibility of getting two elementary age school boys to school each day, I did most of my photographing after dropping my sons off at school. This time of day proved to be busy on the major highways as many parents were transporting their children by vehicle to school and the rush hour work traffic was still underway. Travelling by bike helped ease issues with congestion, and allowed me to park virtually anywhere to access the signs for study.

Living in the community I was studying gave me the advantage of being able to collect data during these convenient times. I would also think and take mental note of public signs in town during my daily runs, bike rides, or business transactions, as a resident rather than a researcher.

## **Theoretical Framework**

A theoretical framework is the rational or base for conducting research. It is a conceptual model of how one theorizes or makes logical sense of the relationship between several factors that have been identified as important to the research problem (Bogdan & Knopp Biklen, 2007).

The theoretical framework that I employed to analyze the digital photographs that I collected will stem from Huebner's (2009) suggestions that research in the LL should focus on selection, classification, and linguistic analysis. Along with Hymes' (1972) perspective of ethnography of communication, Scollon and Scollon's (2003)



geosemiotic framework, Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) grammar of design, and Fairclough's (2001) critical language study was applied.

The meaning of public texts like road signs, notices and brand logos can be interpreted by taking into account the physical and social world that they are found in. Geosemiotics is "the study of the social meaning of the material placement of signs and discourses and of our actions in the material world" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p.2). This framework helps to interpret the meaning of text found in public spaces, the LL, by considering the social and physical world where the texts are found. This framework takes into account not only where a sign is placed and what is imprinted on it, but what the sign is made of. A steel sign cemented into the ground may, without words, imply that the business is permanent, whereas a sign made from a piece of paper taped on the door may imply something that is temporary. Three systems showing how social semiotics are interconnected at a site of social action are proposed by these authors as studying the (1) interaction order – how humans form social relations; (2) visual semiotics – the way in which text, pictures, signs are produced for visual interpretation; (3) place semiotics – this includes architecture, highway engineering.

Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) work on visual representation uses a theoretical framework of social semiotics. They view representation as a process in which the makers of signs try to make a representation of some object or entity, while at the same time the signmakers' interest in making the sign is related to their cultural, social and psychological history. Focus is put on the motivation of signmakers to put together the form and the meaning of a sign.

Fairclough's (2001) critical language study (CLS) helps increase consciousness of language and power, and how language contributes to the domination of some people by others. He encourages people to acknowledge their own social experiences, background knowledge, values and political commitments to understand how they would perceive and interpret language and social matters. CLS is used to show connections which may be hidden from people, such as connections between language, power and ideology.

### **SPEAKING Mnemonic**

My research took the following acronym SPEAKING (S = situation; P = participants; E = ends or purpose; A = acts or sequences; K = key; I = instrumentalities; N = norms; G = genre) from sociolinguist Hymes (1972) as a model for analyzing communication. The work of Scollon and Scollon (2003), Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) and Fairclough (2001) was woven into Hymes' model. This provided a strong framework for LL analysis.

Hymes (1972; p.36) suggests criteria for gathering information on rules of speaking: "... the ways in which speakers associate particular modes of speaking, topics or message forms, with particular settings and activities". Hymes developed this model from sixteen components as a way of analyzing discourse within a cultural context. The sixteen components are summarized in Table 3.0. This model can be applied to different types of discourses. I chose it for its comprehensive, ethnographic approach. I used it to analyze the discourse found within the LL. Although the term linguistic landscape was not coined at the time of Hymes development of this model, it

is still appropriate (Huebner, 2009). The communication I analyzed were the photographs I collected from the LL of Carman. As Hymes suggests, at times, only two or three letters of the acronym may be emphasized.

Table 3.0 Sixteen Components of SPEAKING

S – Situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- setting</li> <li>- scene</li> </ul>
P- Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- speaker, or sender</li> <li>- addressor</li> <li>- hearer, or receiver, or audience</li> <li>- addressee</li> </ul>
E – Ends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- purposes – outcomes</li> <li>- purposes – goals</li> </ul>
A – Act Sequence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- message form</li> <li>- message content</li> </ul>
K – Key	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- key or tone</li> </ul>
I – Instrumentalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- channels</li> <li>- - forms of speech</li> </ul>
N- Norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- norms of interaction</li> <li>- norms of interpretation</li> </ul>
G – Genre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- genre – unit of analysis</li> </ul>

The following suggests how I used each of the SPEAKING model to describe the photographs used for analysis.

***Situation.***

Situation refers to the time and place and physical location. My study took place within the town limits of Carman, Manitoba. The town of Carman is located at the intersection of provincial highways #3 and #13, 65 kilometers southwest of Winnipeg, and 100 kilometers from the United States border.

The following description of Carman is based on Pink's (2008) visual ethnography research which supports the importance of creating "place" as a way of being in the world. This description will help expand the reader's knowledge of Carman. Upon entering Carman from the east on provincial highway 3, you will be greeted by Carman Collegiate on the north and by one of several Christian based churches on the south. Turning north at the junction of highways 3 and 13 will progress to the business district of town. Here is where the majority of restaurants, motel, commercial shops and businesses are located. Following the highway back to the intersection of 3 and 13 and turning west, will bring you to the main sporting venues in town; swimming pool, golf course, skate board park, playground, baseball diamonds, and arena; all accessible from the six kilometer community walking path. On the way there, you will also pass the Dufferin Historical Museum.

Having a provincial highway as the main thoroughfare, the town receives significant semi-truck traffic through the heart of the business section of town. Although not a highly ranked tourist destination, tours are offered from larger urban centers to

visit Carman Golf Club as well as Vanderveen Greenhouses, suppliers of plants to Western Canadian big box stores.

A camp ground is situated close to the public outdoor swimming pool, which is busy, especially during the annual Country Fair in July. The fact that a town still celebrates a country fair, shows its agricultural and traditional roots. Other attractions that have drawn visitors to Carman are sporting events such the Manitoba Summer Games (2008), rodeos, hockey, soccer, and baseball tournaments.

The location of Carman was chosen as the research site for a number of reasons. First, I have long term access to the environment that is under study. This is a necessary factor as ethnographic research requires the researcher to spend time in the community. Along with this convenience, the location was chosen as it is not physically connected to a larger center, as a suburb of an urban metropolis might be. This isolation provided the opportunity to get a true picture of just one community. I found it timely to conduct this research at this point and time since LL study is a relatively new and upcoming area of exploration. I also felt it was representative of a rural Manitoba town, however, at the same time I expected to depict unique aspects.

I planned on taking approximately 60 digital photographs of posters, billboards, road signs, portable roadside signs, signs on buildings and notices within the town limits of Carman. Digital photography provided a convenient way to collect and store numerous photos. Scollon & Scollon (2003) emphasize the placement of signs and their contexts of production contribute to their meaning. To provide a multi-layered picture of Carman, the majority of the photographs were taken within the business district;

downtown area of Carman. The remaining photographs were comprised of those from the highways that lead into the town as well as areas that host signage for government buildings that are on the perimeter of the town. Pink (2008) suggests looking to a town visitor guide, or postcards to determine what areas of the town are important to local people. I took this into consideration to capture signs in these prominent areas.

Although I had already taken some photographs prior to my thesis study, I re-took many in order to capture any details not previously noticed, and to be more systematic. This allowed me to record details of the immediate context of a sign and provided me with notes for deep, descriptive language

The placement of a sign in relation to its readers affects the nature and content of a sign (Huebner, 2009). Large billboards placed on the side of a highway may have little linguistic text as compared to a poster on the door leading into a shop. I recorded the placement of the sign (in a field journal) as not only the text may be affected by the placement, but also the images. Lock (2003) discovered this when studying the signage found in Hong Kong's Mass Transit Railway. Not only did he find discrepancies in the type of language and symbols used but he also noticed a new genre and distinguished between ads and notices. Photographs were, therefore, analyzed from previous photo sessions (May and June, 2010; January to April, 2011) and more current sessions (May, 2011 to August, 2011). These are regarded as prior to formal research and during formal research.

### ***Participants.***

The participants used in discourse analysis may differ in definition. The participants in the study of linguistic landscapes include agents (producers of signs) and audience (interpreters of signs). The agents have been classified as either government or private signs (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). Huebner (2009), states that the distinction between government and private signs are socially situated. The perspective by which it is viewed by the audience deems signs either government or private. This perspective is one I kept in mind when recording notes in my field journal.

The agents create signs for an intended audience. The language chosen, font, size, symbols will indicate for whom the sign is produced for. Ben Rafael et al. (2006) looks to sociological theories to analyze the actors participation in the formation of the LL. These theories range from:

1. Bourdieu (1983, 1993) – social reality that power is evident in the LL from the languages and symbols that dominate the scene creating social structures and indicate a power hierarchy.
2. Goffman (1963, 1993) – looked at social life and from the viewpoint of how actors aim at desired goals by presenting to “others” advantageous images of themselves. This is known as the “presentation of self” theory. Identity markers of communities will imprint themselves in the LL. The more fierce the competition for space within the LL, the stronger the actors tendency to chose unexpected ways to “speak” in the LL. Actors strive to be different. Ethnic communities may be encouraged to assert and imprint themselves on the public scene. The

presentation of self theory may imply that that behavior is determined by actors considerations and calculations.

3. Boudon (1990) – social action is accounted for by rational considerations of alternates (good reasons) by actors. Actors try to attract the interests of the public and influence them with their signage. Actors are mainly interested in their own tangible interests.

This perspective may help describe the symbolic structuring of a public space that is dominated by many actors who have various motives.

### ***Ends/purpose.***

“The purpose of an event from a community standpoint, of course, need not be identical to the purposes of those engaged in it’ (Hymes, 1972 p.61).The signs found in the LL serve a function. For a researcher, it is important to address what the function the signs analyzed serve. The function can help describe customary or culturally appropriate behavior. Landry and Bourhis (1997) used the informational and symbolic function to distinguish between sign functions. The informational function relays information, provides instruction or acts as a persuasive text. The symbolic function serves to declare ownership or to mark linguistic dominance. Kelly-Holmes (2005: 8 as referenced from Huebner, 2009) adds to the list functions signs serve to include: the expressive function – to express feelings; the directive function – to offer advice or try to persuade; the interactional function – to create, maintain, and finish contact between addresser and addressee (small talk); the poetic function – to communicate meaning through a code which could not otherwise be communicated. Hicks (2002) adds a



mythological or folklore function – to acknowledge a community’s history, culture and stories.

***Acts sequence/form.***

The act refers the placement of linguistic material in relation to other linguistic and non-linguistic material. Spatial organization reflects the elements of a sign that are more prominent than others. Readers rely on much more than the written text when they are deciphering a sign. Not all people have the capacity to focus solely on the text of a sign without referring to the graphics. Huebner (2009) quotes Goddard (2001, p.13) “...readers do not simply read images in isolation from the verbal text that accompanies them; nor do they read the verbal text without reference to accompanying images.”

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) assert that visual language is culturally specific. Western readers are used to reading and writing from left to right. Elements placed on the left of a sign are thought to be *Given* (something the viewer already knows; familiar or agreed upon). Elements placed on the right of a sign are presented as *New* (something that has not yet been agreed upon by the viewer, or something the viewer must pay attention to). *New* information may then be viewed as problematic, while the *Given*, is seen as self-evident. Information is presented in terms of its status or value for the reader. More status is given to the left side of a sign in Western cultures.

The font size, type, and colour all add to the visual clues. The sequencing of the text and images should be accounted for. The format of the sign provides clues as to what should be focused on. Bold print and point form signify importance. In multilingual

settings, all languages may be present in a specific order, or only specific languages may be represented.

### ***Key/tone.***

Key or tone is the manner in which an act is done and as a result will often override a language act (Hymes, 1972). This tone is recognized through the amount of text, explicitness of the message and choice of code. This is often found in advertising. Agents may choose between a soft sell or hard sell tactic. Hard sell ads use more direct statements about the product, while soft sell may require more interpretation to understand the advertisements.

Restaurants may wish to imply a certain tone or spirit to their establishment by incorporating ethnic language scripts e.g. Chinese characters on the sign for a Chinese restaurant. The characters may not make sense to person capable of reading Chinese characters, however, the image and a sense of identity may be conveyed.

### ***Instrumentalities.***

Hymes (1972) describes instrumentalities as channel (oral, written), code (language or dialect) and register (varieties). Code in this study will refer to the dialect of English found in the LL of Carman. Register is the cultural awareness of the language used; being aware of common acronyms, slang, abbreviations and other cultural nuances. For example: if your boss asks you if you would mind photocopying something for her, even though she asked, you are really not expected to say no. You are expected to do it. So in this sense, the cultural nuance is that this person is your boss, and even though she did ask, you do not have the option of answering no.

Along with register, analysis of LLs in multilingual settings is concerned with code selection. Huebner (2009) is concerned with the use of English in Bangkok and how it transforms the Thai language into something it is not (adding spaces between words and changing the syntactic and lexical arrangement and meaning).

### ***Norms.***

Norms refer to norms of interaction and norms of interpretation both of which have to do with the social rules that govern the community. Norms of interaction include “specific behaviors and properties that attach to speaking” (Hymes, 1972, p.63). Norms of interaction may vary across age groups, social class, ethnic groups. Much of the LL research has tried to identify what these norms are. Most of the norms have been related to language laws and policy (Backhaus, 2009).

Norms of interpretation often mimic the belief system of a community. Hymes (1972) gives the example of white middle class Americans using “uh” as a conversation filler when there is a pause in the conversation. By contrast, Black Americans will repeat the beginning of their utterance. This norm may be interpreted not as a different norm, but as a defect. By using myself as the research instrument, I am a resident of the community, and I should be able to contribute to the understanding of the norms of interpretation of the people who live here.

### ***Genre.***

The unit or category of analysis in LL research has varied among researchers. Lack of an agreed upon unit of analysis is problematic (Huebner, 2009). Without a clearly defined unit of analysis it is difficult to rate signs varying in physical size with

different amounts of text and graphics. It is also difficult to define the intended audience. Lastly, it makes comparing studies on LL difficult.

My unit of analysis or genre will consist of the following: public road signs, street signs, advertising billboards, portable roadside signs, portable sidewalk signs, public signs, notices, posters, commercial shop signs, signs on government buildings.

### **Methodological Summary**

The following steps were used in the analysis:

1. The area (streets, neighborhoods) for study were chosen.
2. Detailed pictures that capture a range of signs from the earlier defined genre were taken.
3. Details that related to the SPEAKING framework were recorded in a field journal to accompany the photos taken.
4. The signs were organized into categories (business, government, food/restaurant, etc.).
5. The photos taken were analyzed using the SPEAKING framework.

### **Conclusion**

I saw my role in the research process as not only the collector of data but also as the provider of interpretation. This interpretation related to my prior experiences and the way in which I understand the world. Fairclough (2001) refers to this as members' resources. There are certain cultural assumptions I brought to the research. Bearing this in mind, Bohnsack (2008) and Kouritzin (2002) reminded me to be careful of the words I

used in my descriptions of the LL of Carman. I needed to be aware that I use a western standard to analyze the LL.

I needed to reflect on my language choices and recognize my prejudices. The linguistic choices I make can structure an analysis. Similarly, the readers of this research will need to be able to make reference to the cultural assumptions that may appear in the text. The language that is displayed in the LL creates anticipation, and impressions are formed of what can be expected to be seen in the area.

I chose to use myself as the research instrument and not include human participants in the research. Participants' stories would change my text. 'When voices and experiences intersect, new meaning and new stories are created', (Kouritzin, Piquemal, & Norman, 2009, p.4). I wanted this to be my story – my interpretation. To position myself as the research instrument, I needed to recognize my history and the experiences I brought as not being a native resident of Carman and also as having lived and travelled abroad. I brought my knowledge to the analysis, therefore, on the one hand as being aware of my interests, motives and dispositions, while on the other, being aware of the sociocultural and sociopolitical structures that prevail over the way we act.

This is not to say that considerations for future research may not include human participants. In terms of photographs taken, they will be from my discretion, what Bohnsack (2008) refers to as the representing picture producer.

## CHAPTER 4

### Findings

#### Introduction

The current study shares many similarities with the growing body of research on linguistic landscapes. The units that were used for investigation were the many signs that surround the location and meet the public's eye on a daily basis. The gestalt premise was also taken into consideration; a necessary component when describing the personality and values that represent a town. Existing studies have examined the LL from various perspectives; as a multilingual phenomenon, language policy and planning, language attitudes, language ecology or to document the spread of English. This study mimics some of these topics but will differ from others in that its goal is not one of a quantitative analysis with a view of finding evidence of global issues, but rather to describe the personality and culture of a small monolingual rural town using a qualitative approach. In this chapter I will present findings from a CLS of the signs photographed in Carman, Manitoba.

My data analysis begins by describing the photographs I have gathered as data. I include reflections about myself as the researcher and data collector based on my notes from my field journal. From there, an explanation and table will show how the photos were categorized and then further grouped into types of signs for analysis. Each category will contain a detailed analysis of a group or groups of photos using the SPEAKING mnemonic and questions adapted from Fairclough (2001), Scollon and Scollon (2003), and Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). I will compare the situation,

participants, ends, act sequence, key, instrumentalities, norms, and genre across the categories to develop a well rounded, detailed description of the town of Carman. I argue that a CLS of the linguistic landscape of Carman will expose the influence of language which in turn contributes to beliefs about language, society, and shapes community values.

When I reflect back on my data collection, I am not sure how obvious I appeared as a researcher. During one data collection session on July 6, 2011, I was biking around town, focusing on the major routes and downtown district and I recorded feeling very obvious. This day was chosen for data collection since my husband was available to take care of our children and it was a hot summer day to be out biking. This, however, was also the opening day of the Carman Country Fair. There was an increased amount of vehicular traffic, and because Carman is not a major tourist town, I felt obvious as a researcher taking pictures of signs. I took ten photographs that day. I ended my photo session when I was asked for the second time by a passerby if I was going into the building that I was photographing. They also asked if they were in my way as they passed by. No one inquired as to why I was taking these photographs, but I felt awkward during this session. My other data collection sessions did not have me feeling obvious.

In keeping with Ben-Rafael's et al (2006) gestalt theory, photos were taken of streets, business districts and residential areas (Table 4.0). These photos help to portray the "larger picture" of Carman.

Table 4.0 Summary of Pictures Taken

	Building signs, shop signs, posters, seen from at least 5 meters	Other (gestalt): business district, residential areas, streets, highways, recreation areas	Posters, signs not visible from 5 meters
Pre-thesis May 2010 – March 2011	24	5	0
Data Collection May 2011 – August 2011	35	8	22
Total	59	13	22

Upon examining the photos, there were those that included the gestalt theory along with the language sign. Some photos took into account more than just the words or symbols found on a sign, but also included the architectural style of the building it was found on. In some photos, other realia passed a message along with the wording on the sign. Photos 4.0 and 4.1 below are examples. These photographs were recorded in Table 4.0 (above) as a sign and not as a gestalt example. Murals or symbols on signs without words were tabulated in the table above under their respective view for distance. The five meter distance was chosen to represent what could be viewed by a passerby in a car versus what is available to the pedestrian and those who are in closer physical proximity to the sign.





Photo 4.0



Photo 4.1

Over the four months of data collection and by reviewing the data collected informally prior to May 2011, determined that the photographs fell into six major categories: 1. Business; 2. Religion; 3. Government; 4. Recreation; 5. Food/Restaurants; 6. Gestalt. Initially I had seven categories which included education, but on further reflection, I combined education with government determining it to be a top down sign of a department regulated by the government, both local (school board) and provincial. Signs that related to warning notices or prohibitions were grouped under

the category the notice was regarding. For example, a photo taken of the skateboard park rules and regulations was grouped under the category of recreation. The same is true for information signs; for instance, a picture was taken of a poster stating hours of operation of the public pool. This sign was grouped with recreation signs. Table 4.1 summarizes the number of photos in each category.

Table 4.1 Categories of Photos

	Business	Religion	Recreation	Government	Food/Restaurant	Gestalt
Number of photos	19	8	19	26	9	13

My analysis starts in this chapter with investigating Carman's LL using Hymes (1972) SPEAKING framework. I applied the SPEAKING framework to the photographs within each category, but due to the volume of photos and the framework chosen for analysis, I wanted to be clear on my target. I chose to assess one group (type of sign, for example, billboard, poster, etc) within each category of signs. The category chosen will be discussed in the genre section of each category.

### **Business Orientated Signs**

All of the photographs in this category were taken in the downtown district (main shopping areas) and along the major transportation arteries; highways 3 and 13. The type and number of signs were photographed: Shop signs/store name plates (8); Portable roadside signs (6); Billboards (1); Posters (3); Portable sidewalk signs (1). The SPEAKING framework will be applied to portable roadside signs.

The LL can be viewed as competitive and influential. Businesses usually produce the majority of signs found in the LL. The LL that is produced from a culture of consumption can influence ideas about what individuals and groups of people believe is necessary to feel included as part of the society at large (Fairclough, 2001). With the evolution of capitalism over the past century, a relatively small number of multinational corporations dominate production in the capitalistic world (Fairclough, 2001). The goods, along with the capitalistic change, have expanded to include vacations, house insurance, and banking services, to name a few. Signs that depict advertising often want to sway beliefs about what is hip or necessary to belong to a status group as well as provide information on goods and services available.

The businesses in Carman cater mostly to its residents and those in nearby municipalities and smaller villages. All survival amenities and other services are available from grocery stores, pharmacies, personal care, and hobbies to farm machinery and maintenance, and household building and operation. With major cities such as Winnipeg being less than a one hour drive away, the town needs to remain competitive to keep business local.

S Situation – All signs were located on the main arteries through town; highways 3 and 13. The signs contain removable lettering; the wording on the signs is an ever changing dynamic process. All signs contained large print and concise text to be visible and legible to people moving by quickly in automobiles. The sign in photo 4.2 below is located near the entrance to the town on highway 3 east. The focus of this sign would

be on the text, rather than on the name of the company. This sign is situated on the



Photo 4.2

edge of the parking lot of the business it represents but projects onto the sidewalk which makes it difficult for pedestrians and motorists to ignore.

P Participants - According to Spolsky (2009), public linguistic space is a distinct domain with its own participants. Participants include the initiator of the sign, the owner of the sign, the sign maker, the reader and government, religious or ethnic authority that sets policy on language choice.

The participants in creating the LL consist of the actor, who most likely was the owner of the business being advertised, or could be a distant actor if the sign was dictated from a company or corporation. The actors chose to write the signs in a language that they knew, English, and since it was aimed at advertising to people who would pay for the goods or services, the writers wrote the sign in a language which can be read by the people they are expecting to read it (Spolsky, 2009). The indexical information provided by the actor(s) or producer(s) assists with describing the background content of a sign. From photo 4.2, it may be argued that the writer(s) is

English speaking, with a capitalistic motive appealing to people who want to travel to English speaking destinations, and maintain familiarity in regards to food and comfort.

The other participants consist of the readers. Within the category of advertising, the reader is assigned the role of consumer. Referring to Photo 4.2 it is evident that the reader would be one who reads and understands English. These reading participants would have cultural knowledge of the implied meaning of “want to feel like royalty” and that staying in a castle would be a “royal” experience. The target audience would also be those who have disposable income to afford the luxury of travel for tourism purposes.

E      Ends – The outcomes or goals of the business signs are twofold. One is to promote and sell products and services and the other is to provide consumers with information on the goods and services available. The symbolic purpose of this sign (Photo 4.2) emits a sense of power of language by being a monolingual sign showing those wanting to access the goods and travel services from this business will only be served in one language, English. Symbolically, its message of power is also shown through equity; those who are concerned with materialism and living a fine life may seek this through this company’s travel experience.

The actors appear to want to attract attention and produce association by using the word castle. This wording may appeal to the large number of residents with a European background in this community that could relate either through family history or fairy tales that have been passed down from generation to generation that a castle is something royal and staying in one would be like a fairy tale come true. The

community's visualization of a castle appears to be positive and associating it with a king and queen (royalty) has also been a positive experience for the actors and perceived audiences in this town. From a political standpoint, this community has not been oppressed by its rulers. This is known as the 'presentation of self' theory as proposed by Goffman (1963, 1981 as cited in Ben-Rafael et al, 2006). This sign may indicate that when these messages are produced in the LL, it is representative of what the local population values, agrees with, or deems important. This process of enhancement is crucial for commodities that are in competition for a particular market.

A second function of business signs is to provide information on products and services. This may be through providing location of the business and contact information. This information allows readers to follow-up the advertisement. Both are present on this sign, however, they are not the main focus.

A Act Sequence – The portable roadside signs used mainly text, with very few, if any graphics. With the absence, or minimal use of graphics, and using monolingual (English) text may imply that the target audience does not need to refer to graphics or any other contextual information in order to obtain meaning from the sign. The letters in the sign are white or in a bright colour which provide contrast to the black background. This makes the text highly visible. Referring to Photo 4.2, the other prominent feature is the telephone number of the producer of the sign (travel agency). Less obvious text include the name of the travel agency at the top of the sign and the bottom right corner advertises the portable roadside sign company. To motorists, these minor features may not be as noticeable and therefore ignored. The main elements of the text are displayed in the center of the sign, receiving the most attention.

K Key – The tone, manner, or spirit of the advertising signs is one that targets people’s emotions or sense of practicality. Three of the six portable roadside signs advertised sales or opportunities for people to save money or realize a good deal. These are hard sell advertisers that require little inferring on the part of the audience.

I Instrumentalities – The cultural awareness of the language being used is limited to those who are familiar with acronyms, slang and social practices. One portable roadside sign produced by a grocery store (Photo 4.3), promoted a sale with the price



Photo 4.3

listed of a brand name of soups. When I read this sign, I was aware that Campbells is a brand name and that 12PK \$6.98 means there are twelve cans of soup in a package and all twelve will cost six dollars and ninety eight cents. My linguistic knowledge tells me that “new flyer” refers to an insert in the newspaper, not that this is a deal only for new flyers. Culturally, I am cognizant that people do purchase food in such quantities and that households in Carman typically have storage space for such quantities of food. My cultural awareness would also have me know that this soup comes in a can and requires little preparation work in order for it to be consumed. This may be typical of the values of time, money and nutrition in this community.

N Norms - Photo 4.4 does not require inferencing from the target community, those who are familiar with “scratch and win” sales tactics, but to others it may be questionable as to what would be scratched and how does that relate to shopping. The acronym of the store, TBS (The Bargain Shop) is present on the sign, requiring the reader to be familiar with acronyms. The producers of sign (Photo 4.4) have determined that their audience is English speaking and aware of this community’s knowledge of what “scratch and win” means. The local, mainstream population will not struggle to interpret the meaning of this sign since they have a high cultural proficiency of the language. This is needed to interpret this sign.



Photo 4.4

G Genre – The genre of photographs taken for the category of Business were placed into groups as follows: shop signs/store name plates, portable roadside signs, portable sidewalk signs, posters, and billboards. Although all of the mentioned genres were analyzed, the group of portable roadside signs was discussed in detail in this section. All of the portable roadside signs were made of the same materials; metal framing with removable letters. The construction of these signs gives an impression of a



sign that will be visible for a long time; however, with the removable letters the message or text will be fairly dynamic. I analyzed portable roadside signs as they made up a large component of the category. They were rich with literary text. They were also viewable to both local and visiting people due to their position in the landscape.

### ***Summary.***

The people who construct the signs described in this category of business present themselves as prescribing how people should live by promoting activities, lifestyles, and values. The signs imply that experiencing a higher standard of living is desirable if not achievable, but at the same time the LL passes along messages that the community that these business signs represent is a community preoccupied with maintaining an uncomplicated life at the lowest possible price. The power in terms of language dominance that these signs emit say that this community is highly proficient in English, both verbally and culturally, and consumers will only be served in that language.

### **Religion Orientated Signs**

The type and number of signs photographed and placed into this category are: Building name plates (1); Portable roadside signs (1); Billboards (6). The SPEAKING framework will be applied to all the photos in this category.

A visitor to this community might interpret that this town has a firm religious standing. The vitality of the Christian faith is strongly represented, as will be confirmed in the discussion below. The religious identity, however, is limited to those who affiliate

themselves with the Christian faith. This may relate to the history of Carman and the first Europeans who incorporated it as a white, European settlement.

S Situation – All the photos for this category were taken within the town limits of Carman. The photos were chosen for analysis since all but one of the eight signs appears on either highway 3 that enters Carman from the east, or highway 13 that is the main artery through town. They are visible to many people; both locals and visitors. All of the signs, except for one, contain large font size lettering that would be visible to motorists to give them a quick glimpse as to what message the sign is conveying. Most of the billboards are found on the grounds of individual churches; however, two signs give the impression of having been purposefully placed on the main thoroughfare to attract attention, either because the church is off the main highway(s) or to promote the message of Christianity in this town.

P Participants – Seven out of eight of these signs would have had input as to the information and symbolism conveyed on the sign from the congregation or by local actors. The actual physical production, however, may have taken place outside the town of Carman. The actors are not necessarily members of the various congregations, however, it appears they have a high proficiency in English and are looking to inform a monolingual English speaking adult population. The audience is made up of the people who read English and are culturally and religiously proficient in interpreting the meaning of the passages printed on the signs. The audience consists of locals as well as those travelling through the town as motorists. In keeping with the spirit of Christians promoting their faith, the signs appear to be placed in a manner to reach as many viewers as possible.

E Ends - The signs placed on the respective church grounds and on the major highways, serve a dual function. One is as an informational sign; acquainting people with the name of the church and denomination, the hours of worship, and two signs included the name(s) of the officiators. These signs are trying to persuade or entice people to enter their institution. With the wide range of Christian churches available (eight), competition is alive. This is evident in Photo 4.5 The creator(s) of this sign have perhaps noticed or anticipate a decline in congregational numbers, so they have promoted their services to be available at a satellite location. This may not necessarily be in response to fear that their existing members will go to another church; however, it does act as a catering service to ensure their members maintain membership with the Carman Mennonite Church. Conversely, it may be argued that the church has seen a dramatic increase in numbers that members no longer physically fit into the church, or



Photo 4.5

that the church may have been asked to host a church service at the fairgrounds as part of the fair weekend.

A Acts Sequence – “The salience of the image has been taken to be one of the main characteristics of contemporary ‘postmodern’ culture” (Fairclough, 2001, p. 172).

The photo 4.6 shows the absence of text, but involves the reader through identifying with their background knowledge and experiences by relating to an image without textual clues. The message conveyed through Photo 4.6 indicates inclusion of people of the Christian faith. Some symbols are universal such as that shown in this photo; they are not dependent on written text to define them. Scollon and Scollon (2003) refer to this as decontextualized semiotics. “By decontextualized semiotics we mean to include all the forms of signs, pictures, and texts which may appear in multiple contexts but always in the same form” (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p.145).



Photo 4.6

K Key – The key or tone of the signs varies across the photos. Photo 4.7 conveys a message of threat or fear insinuating that only through belief in Christ is it possible to be “raised” to new life or levels. The wording of this sign requires some inferencing as to the power issues within this organization and the key or tone of the teaching or sermons of this church. Examining the name of this church: Canadian Reformed Church, it is interesting to consider what the leaders of this denomination found necessary to change from their existing religion.



Photo 4.7

The tone associated with other church signs, although being direct in their messages to attract members, is more subdued. They appear to be reaching out for members, both existing and new.

The font chosen for the signs does not imply any creativity other than to pass along the textual message.

I Instrumentalities – The creators of the signs in Photos 4.7 and 4.8 assume that the reader will be familiar with the source of the messages and the abbreviations given. For example, Photo 4.7 top line shows 1 COR 15. Without Biblical knowledge, the audience would not be aware that this is a quote from the Bible, and would not be able to reference it. If the audience had not read the Bible, especially this particular quote, they may not make much meaning from this sign. It is assumed by the writers that biblical knowledge is a given in this community. The writers have also assumed that 2:30 PM references the time of a sermon, presumably they know which day. This sign is clearly for members only.



Photo 4.8

N Norms – The Baptist Church sign, Photo 4.8 says everyone welcome. This requires a cultural knowledge that perhaps all are welcome under all circumstances. The times given are also representative of the culture that implies punctuality is important.



Photo 4.9

G Genre – All the photos taken and placed in the category of Religion were analyzed. The photos were grouped into portable roadside signs, and building name plates. All photos were applied to the SPEAKING framework due to the low number of photos in this category. The portable roadside signs are constructed as described

earlier. One of the billboards was constructed of a metal frame, with wooden panels inserted listing the churches present. This sign appears to be in need of repair as the paint is chipped and faded, and one panel appears to be missing.

### ***Summary.***

The religion orientated signs in Carman become interesting when they are contrasted with the religious signs in neighboring towns whose LL indicates a more vibrant Christian following. The signs indicate the community's desire to present itself as a Christian community. The sign in Photo 4.5 that has the church going to the masses and meeting them for convenience, and from the dilapidated state of the billboard promoting all the Christian churches in the town might indicate a fading of the faith.

Conclusions may also be drawn that religion has become a matter of inconvenience and the population will only attend when it suits them. The signs in this category want to accommodate peoples' lifestyles to have them remain or enter a religious community and become members. With a small number of newcomers to Carman, I wonder who the signs are for and the purpose of these signs.

The sign for the Dutch Reformed Church, Photo 4.7, is made of brick and mortar; a permanent construction. The reader may expect from the quality, durability and expense of these materials that the intentions of the producer(s) is to stay for a long period of time. It may also imply, to some extent, the wealth of the congregation, or the expectations placed on the congregation to donate substantial amounts of money, compared to other churches.

The LL in this category clearly states Christians are welcome in this town. The services will be presented in English. Familiarity with the Bible appears to be known by many in this community. This may also serve to imply that knowledge and acceptance of other religions is negligible.

### **Recreation Orientated Signs**

The following is a summary of the type and number of signs photographed and placed into this category: Signs on buildings (4); Posters (7); Public signs (2); Billboards (6). The SPEAKING framework will be applied to the photos in billboard group of this category.

Recreation includes many branches; sports and fitness, arts and culture, and nature and outdoors. Leisure activities are ways people chose to spend their leisure time to make their lives more interesting, more enjoyable and more personally satisfying. Leisure activities are culturally specific. From the term leisure, it is implied that people have time to partake in activities, that they are not focused on survival.

Benefits of recreation are to aid people in becoming more fit by being active, which in turn, contribute to many health benefits. Recreational activities provide ways to spend time with family, make friends, and feel connected with the community. Skill building and personal growth from these opportunities can enhance self esteem and help increase the quality of life.

S Situation – All the billboard photos in this category with the exception of one, are located in or near the park area; located in the center of town. This park and the recreational facilities in it are promoted in the tourist brochure for the town. The one



billboard that is not located in or near the park is shown in Photo 4.10. This billboard is located on the thoroughfares which provide three of the four entrances to Carman and is visible to residents, newcomers and visitors to Carman. This billboard is meant to be visible to motor vehicle passengers. It contains little linguistic text, though the text is incomprehensible to anyone unfamiliar with the NHL and/or the practice of towns claiming their residents who have made it into the National Hockey League, and has large, colourful, eye catching images.



Photo 4.10

The billboards located in or near the park are visible to motor vehicle passengers, however the linguistic text in 3 of them is dense with a small font scale and few, if any images. The venues that are promoted in the billboards are seasonal, as a result, these billboards may receive more attention in the non winter months.

P Participants – The actors or writers of these billboards appear to be local. The sign in Photo 4.10 with its bright colours stands out for motorists and looks as if it is of newer construction or well maintained. The readers of the signs are multi-aged, those individuals interested in gaining information regarding the services available, such as the campground, skateboard park, or museum. This is an area that is promoted in the

tourist brochure, however, the producers of the tourist brochure along with the billboard creators seem to assume that tourists would be able to read and communicate in English.

E Ends – The purpose of 5 of the 6 billboards is to provide information, an example is Photo 4.11. The information is either given in point form, or numbered in sequence.



Photo 4.11

Information is provided to readers of Photo 4.10 through images of the teams this athlete has played for, his accomplishments: Olympic gold medal, Stanley Cup wins, and his nickname. The billboard in Photo 4.10 would be classified as informational, though, it is highly symbolic of this town's pride and interest in the sport of hockey.

A Acts/Sequence – The information given on the sign in Photo 4.11 consists of rules and expectations of people who choose to use this facility. The expectations are those deemed customary or appropriate for people to follow. The numbered sequence is perhaps the most efficient, clearly illustrated way to get the message across to users.

Certain phrases are in red indicating they are important words the reader must heed. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), when westerns interpret text what is placed at the top of a sign is seen as Ideal and that at the bottom is Real. This sign (Photo 4.11) is divided in idealized and real information. The title of the sign is in a bolded in large font. It is the Ideal: the most salient part of the sign. The Real is what follows the title beneath; more specific information, giving details, or practical consequences and directions for action.

K Key – The tone of 3 of the billboards is authoritarian. They are used to convey information regarding the rules and expectations of people using the facilities. The message is direct and to the point. One of the billboards adds the pleasantries of *please* and *thank-you*.

I Instrumentalities – Knowledge of National Hockey League (NHL) hockey is necessary in order to make meaning from the sign Photo 4.10. The cultural knowledge of nicknames is necessary. Readers may question the meaning of “The Eagle” without this knowledge. They are also unlikely to be familiar with all of the hockey teams, even if they are hockey fans.

N Norms – The directness of the signs in this group assume a culture familiar with following rules, being organized, and having structure.

G Genre – The photos in this group were chosen since they contained large amounts of text to analyze. They also were an example of authoritarian text and were aimed at both local and visiting people. All signs were nailed to wooden posts that had

been embedded in the ground. The application of the signs to the posts may allow for alterations to the text or complete removal of the sign.

### ***Summary.***

This is a town that deems sports as important part of recreation. It is proud to claim a famous NHL goalie as one of their own. In fact, the street leading to the arena has been named Eddie Belfour Drive. This focus on fame may be to inspire youth to go after their dreams of playing in the NHL, or for a small town to reap some public acknowledgement or celebrity status from having this person grow up in the community.

The visibility of this sign and others promoting sporting activities is also a matter of economy. From living in Carman, it is known that Eddie Belfour has donated sums of money to the arena to assist with its maintenance and provide a sports foundation for children (within the town and neighboring communities) to access funds to play not only hockey, but to attend camps and purchase equipment. Additionally, his donations have provided the school with a computer lab.

The town may want to capitalize on this legend by attracting motorists who have an interest in the NHL. People with hockey knowledge, after seeing a sign such as Photo 4.10 may seek out a hockey hall of fame, usually located in the arena. By enticing people into the town, rather than just passing through, economic or reputational gain is increased.

Other sporting venues such as the campground, pool and golf course bring in money for the recreation commission. Businesses will often promote themselves next to sporting venues as this is a place where many locals, visitors, and participants will see

their signs. Sporting events attract outsiders to the area and those people are looking for places to sleep and eat. Arts and culture do not see the same financial returns, and therefore are not promoted to the same degree.

The type of recreational activities offered as evident in the linguistic landscape and the benefits of recreational activities that have been mentioned in the introduction to this category reveal information about Carman. Recreational activities can help families stay connected; this is evident in the large number of generational families that continue to live in Carman. Recreational activities also assist in making friends and getting to know the people in the community. This may be indicative of the low crime rate.

Posters, not formally analyzed in the SPEAKING framework in this category, advertised recreational activities that varied from a hunter safety course, to piano, guitar and fiddle lessons, to summer art camp offered to school aged children. Art and culture as a form of recreation do not receive the high profile sign status that the sporting signs do. The posters promoting the arts and culture activities available in the community were mainly visible in the window of the Arts Council building, located on a side street running perpendicular to one of the main business streets. This building does not receive much foot traffic and the posters are not visible from a vehicle. The signs themselves were constructed out of paper and taped to the windows or walls implying the producer's intentions were not long term. This is indicative of "performance" activities which are of short term duration, versus long term activities which involve being registered for an extended period of time.

Recreational signs contain authoritarian, direct, discourse. Leisure time then is still bound by rules and regulations despite the presumed assumption of “free time” and pleasantries.

### **Government Orientated Signs**

The type and number of signs photographed and placed into this category are: Posters (4); Road signs (8); Public notices (5); Billboards (3); Building Front Signs (6). The photos grouped as billboard signs will be analyzed. I chose this group since it was representative of three levels of government; municipal, provincial and federal.

S Situation – The billboards chosen for analysis in this category because they were representative, were located in three sections of town. The Carman Welcomes You sign (Photo 4.12) is situated at the entrance to town on highway 3 on the right hand side of the road to be noticed by motorists entering town. An identical sign is located on the south entrance into town. This sign is illuminated by a spotlight for 24 hour visibility. The front has a flower box for summer plants. The construction, brick and mortar implies work, and money have gone into this sign, deeming it important or prestigious.



Photo 4.12

The other signs in this group, the hospital sign (Photo 4.13) and post office sign (Photo 4.14) are made of wood affixed to wood poles.



Photo 4.13



Photo 4.14

**P Participants** – The producers of these signs reflect different levels of government. Photo 4.12 was produced by local actors, Photo 4.13 provincial actors, Photo 4.14 federal actors. The signs are intended for an English speaking, multi-aged audience.

**E Ends** – The purpose of all three signs from an audience standpoint is to provide information on location. This purpose differs from political and economic reasons. The town has erected brick signs at two of its entrances (Photo 4.12). These regal looking signs are aimed at impressing audiences and perhaps enticing visitors to stay in town for business purposes or to consider being part of its population. The webpage provided on this sign will lead the reader to more promotional information.

The purpose of the post office sign Photo 4.14 is not to promote Canada Post in competition with anyone or anything. Rather its purpose is solely informational. It does not need to give details to promote its business for financial gain.

A Acts/Sequence – The word Carman on Photo 4.12 is bold red, outlined to stand out on the black background. From the producer’s point of view there should be no confusion as to where you are. Clear information is provided. *Welcomes You* is written in a cursive font to perhaps add personality. The symbol of the leaf is perhaps added to imply the nature that surrounds rural living.

Photos 4.13 and 4.14 show the languages that are used for communication and the power they possess. This value and status can be regulated to some extent by top down policies. The top down signs shown here do display French in the same size font along side English, however, English is viewed as more dominant as it is placed strategically on the left side of the sign, the natural way a westerner would read text. The sign in Photo 4.13 does display some French, however, the crucial information appears only in English. The producers (not local actors) imply that when it comes to displaying French, it is for the benefit of non French speaking people.

K Key – The tone of Photo 4.12 is to create a mood to entice people to visit or move to Carman. This is achieved through not only the welcoming words, but through the font and expensive materials used to create the sign.

The tone of Photos 4.13 and 4.14 are straightforward. They are not selling a product or service, so the materials used, and fonts chosen create a utilitarian message.



I Instrumentalities – It is interesting to see where French is displayed on Photos 4.13 and 4.14. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), more status is given to the text on the left in our left to right reading system. Elements on the right are deemed New, not yet agreed upon. New information may be viewed as problematic. If we understand the information on the left, there is not any need to pay attention to that on the right. In Photos 4.13 and 4.14 the French is placed on the right or New side of the signs. This deliberate placement of text may imply the writers' views of the significance of the French language in the province of Manitoba.

N Norms – There is English only on the local government sign (Photo 4.12). This leads the reader to question if the local government only welcomes English speaking people. The expectations created from the language signs are that it is the norm to be unilingual in this town. Other languages appear not be recognized or are seen as unnecessary.

G Genre – The billboards were chosen as the unit of study in this category since they were from multi levels of government. They also contained bilingual language. This is rare in Carman, so I wanted to analyze the few that exist.

### ***Summary.***

The LL of Carman would indicate there is very little consideration given to the need to promote French in this community. English is definitely the predominant language. There appears to be a feeling confidence that the English language is and will remain dominant as demonstrated in the positioning and lack of French on the signs. French is denied any status in the bottom-up sector of the LL. The French that

appeared in other groups of signs within this category on top down signs was not grammatically correct. This leaves the interpreter wondering the purpose of the dual language. Dual language signs are only produced for forms of government when they are required. There is no acknowledgement of languages other than the official languages.

The need for another language though is dictated and defined by the population. It is interesting, however, that the elected MLA for the region is an Anglophone who represents the Progressive Conservative (PC) Party. The local newspaper takes a political stance by portraying the PC party overtly over other parties in its biased representation of news coverage. This is a form of ideology that, being part of the gestalt aspect of the LL may secretly be influencing peoples' political beliefs. From the homogeneous nature of this community it is unlikely that someone from a diverse background would be voted into power and therefore, the homogenous feel and look is unlikely to be challenged, or diversity encouraged.

In Carman, within the two public schools, French is not studied until grade 4 and is mandatory to grade 9. According to Tucker (1991), language majority children study a second language without ever developing any meaningful proficiency in their language of study. This reinforces the lack of bi or multilingualism growth and vivacity of the community. The message passed by the community and reinforced by the LL for the need for one to develop a second language is unnecessary in this part of a bilingual province. The message of importance, power, and significance of English is obvious while the irrelevance of other languages is a strong message as well.

With this view, perhaps the community will limit the potential of its learners and limit their views to the value of bilingual and multilingual abilities in a larger global context. In the town of Carman, the use of English is not one of ecological danger where the language is in dire need of saving, but completely the opposite where it is not encouraging other languages to enter the environment. Maffi (2005) relates the lack of language richness to a lack of cultural richness. The survival of the language is not an issue, but perhaps the future survival of Carman and its residents may be in jeopardy. A lack of language diversity may limit the adaptability of people since they have less knowledge to draw from (Maffi 2005). Tucker (1991) argues that participation in bilingual education programs is associated with positive cognitive development and positive cross-cultural attitudes. This may become visible in Carman where people may be looking at the world through the same lens, rather than being privy to a broader spectrum of knowledge.

### **Restaurant Orientated Signs**

Nine photos were taken of the eating establishments in Carman. The following is a summary of the type and number of signs photographed and placed into this category: Building Nameplate Signs (5); Posters (2); Billboards projecting from buildings – 2 (one photo also contained a portable roadside sign). Since the number of photographs total nine in this category, all the photos will be analyzed using the SPEAKING mnemonic.

The restaurants that prevail in a given locality often reflect the culture of the community. Local products and produce present themselves. The population that relies on its own food production does not have to import as many ingredients to incorporate into their recipes to match their tastes. Food items themselves have meaning attached to them. In western culture a box of chocolates is seen as an appropriate gift, whereas in other cultures the same may not hold true.

Foods considered edible in one part of the world may be seen as inedible or undesirable in others. The values or beliefs a society attaches to food items determines what families within a cultural group will eat. Although soybeans, horsemeat, chicken and dog meat are all sources of protein, the symbolism and attachment to these foods may make them unavailable in some societies. Even when these foods are available, members of the population may choose not to eat them because of an emotional response to the food item.

S Situation – All the photos are located on or a block off the main highway through town. The building nameplates and projecting billboards have limited linguistic text as compared to the posters that were photographed on the windows near the entrance leading into the restaurant. Three of the signs would have illumination to provide visual impact. These illuminated signs appear of sturdy construction are also affixed to their respective building, implying that these restaurants have either been in operation for awhile and intend to remain in business for awhile.

P Participants – The actors range from local to corporation. Three of the restaurants photographed belong to international and national chains, therefore, the

sign creation would be dictated from a corporate body. The sales and marketing sections of these corporations would have income as their main priority. These actors are far removed from the local scene (Photo 4.15). The other actors included are local.



Photo 4.15

They have created the signs for a local as well as visiting audience.

E Ends – The purpose of these signs is to advertise the goods and services available and entice consumers to enter eating establishments. The aesthetic value varies between signs in this category. For example, the lack of visual appeal of portable roadside signs is in contrast to the clean, modern font and image of Photo 4.17.

A Acts/Sequence – All of the signs have used bold letters and large distinctive font to draw attention to their business.

K Key – The tone of this category of signs is interesting to analyze. The actors show their knowledge of the market in Photo 4.16 by omitting Chinese characters and relying on English to sustain business. The font chosen creates a feeling or tone of authenticity. By creating the sign in English the actors have prevented the mainstream culture from feeling intimidated or uncomfortable. One may expect a more exotic or foreign experience inside this establishment than those of the chain restaurant variety.



Photo 4.16

I Instrumentalities – Photo 4.17 is found on the main highway that travels through town. It is a relatively new restaurant, about one year, and has used the name of the restaurant *Ciao Down* as a play on words. This assumes some linguistic knowledge on behalf of the audience. The flowers by the door imply a certain degree of formality.

The Subway sign relies on knowledge of a play on words that this is a restaurant that serves sandwiches, as it is not known from the building front sign. A smaller poster in the window provides pictures as context.



Photo 4.17

N Norms – The knowledge of food related etiquette is culturally specific. Western culture often uses the term “table manners” implying that food is eaten at a table. Rules regarding polite eating usually increases in formal settings. Formal settings may require the diner to choose the correct table wear in a predetermined sequence. Referring to Photo 4.18 this does not appear to be the case. Dining is thought to be “Lotsa Fun”. The casualness of the choice of words, and words that are associated with relaxed speech, would inform the reader that this eating establishment would not require formal etiquette. The name of the restaurant itself, Breakaway, may indicate that this is a chance for diners to break away from formality.



Photo 4.18

The term family restaurant may indicate that food plays an important role in the lives of families. Families in this community, due to the absence of any drive through signs, may believe that mealtime is a good time spend together to visit and get caught up in each others lives, rather than eat on the run. This value appears to be upheld.

G Genre – All signs were chosen for analysis in the category of restaurants.

### **Summary.**

The restaurant signs in the town of Carman imply that eating establishments cater to local and visiting clients; people familiar with convenience and westernized cuisine. The choice of food available is standard grill and deep fried food; food that is quick, convenient, and not challenging to the local palate. The food choices depict what is locally available and available under import regulations.

The variety of international foods available in this town is limited to Chinese and Italian; two cuisines that are the most widely accepted by the mainstream population. These seem to be the two varieties that appeal to the masses. Due to the limited exposure to foreign food, people of this town may be unwilling to become familiar with different foods and tastes. This leads to more fear and a lower acceptance of food that is unfamiliar.

### **Gestalt**

Although there was an attempt made to capture the gestalt in the same frame as language signs, I purposefully took pictures of residential and commercial areas to help broaden this concept. These photos will add necessary detail to the study.

Many of the language signs illustrated the amount of physical space that is available in this rural Manitoba town. By living in a low populated area, people become accustomed to a wider range of personal physical space. This space may be seen as power and residents may seek to control this power by clearly marking boundaries. These boundaries have implied rules as to how they are to be respected. This may help describe the relationships and culture of the people who live here.



As mentioned in Chapter 1, the residents of Carman appear to take personal and social pride in maintaining and caring for this physical environment. This sends a message to newcomers that this is the way things are done (Photo 4.19).



Photo 4.19

Physical space is not just observed in the residential sector of town. It is evident in the commercial district as well (Photo 4.20). This space implies the ability of the town to attract larger commercial businesses (large box stores) with ample room for parking. A freedom is implied and perhaps viewed as a necessity for individuals to have their own vehicles, which speaks to attitudes of environment and fuel consumption.

Personal freedom is perhaps taken for granted by some in this community, but reminders for others mark the landscape (Photo 4.0). Others may view this image as a sign of oppression and fear.

The building style and era of personal and commercial properties range from turn of the century through to present day. This suggests the economics of the town is not stagnant and is encouraging development.



Photo 4.20

With the attention paid to the maintenance of properties, the culture created is one of respect rather than one explained by Gladwell (2002); The Broken Windows Theory. This theory postulates that crime is the inevitable result of disorder. If a window is broken and left unrepaired, people will conclude no one cares. Further crime will perpetuate. This theory holds true in reverse for Carman.

Along with the maintenance there is a sense of organization and uniformity to the community. This may be typical of Mennonite towns that lack flair, but have utilitarian messages as its prime goal.

The promotion of recreation as defined by physical activity and sporting facilities is not only evident in the language signs, but also in the gestalt. The physical surrounds of a golf course, soccer pitches, baseball diamonds, and 400 meter paved track support the message that this town values this form of recreation.

## **Summary**

The data summary in this section has been the result of information gathered and filtered through the consciousness of one person – myself as a researcher. The reflections are a product of my prior experiences and knowledge. Another researcher

may have provided a different perspective. Looking at the linguistic landscape of Carman was twofold; on one hand it required a conscious effort on my part to view the signage from a newcomer's perspective, while on the other it required a resident's knowledge.

I grew up in a family and community that did not publically acknowledge or discuss religion. Overt public acknowledgment of religion in the form of posters, signs and symbols, either within a house or public space was viewed as insecurity. The idea that one had to "advertise" that they were Christian indicated their lack of confidence in their beliefs. Faith and religious beliefs were something that was within a person, rather than on display for public acknowledgement. Going to church did not make one Christian, and the number of churches within town did not make a community more safe or honest than one that lacked churches. It was actions displayed in daily living. Not to say that churches did not have signs on their property, but it appeared more subdued.

Moving to Carman nine years ago, I was overcome by the unconcealed public display of religion. The public signage boldly displayed indicated a Christian monopoly which could leave people of other faiths and non believers to feel excluded from the majority and unsure about their capacity to practice their beliefs. People with alternate beliefs may question their chances of employment, and social relationships and acceptance for themselves and their children. This is a powerful message.

My prior life experiences and connections to other rural Canadian communities had acknowledged First Nation representation through spoken language and symbols on signs. Elders would visit schools and share knowledge and culture. Carman is void

of any such language or symbols from First Nation people or other minority groups. Upon moving to Carman, I felt my children would not have the experience of appreciating this sort of ethnic diversity.

As an adult, I have worked and travelled in foreign countries. A one year long employment contract gave me the opportunity to experience life as both a visual and linguistic minority. I have since acknowledged how knowledge of the English language assisted me in these ventures, however, I do not know whether being unilingual English speakers will provide my children with the same conveniences.

### **Implications/Limitations**

The field of linguistic landscape research is growing. It is a dynamic subject, as it is always under construction. This paper was limited to the analysis and interpretations of the researcher. This study would benefit from an attitude survey to further verify the outcomes of this research.

It would be interesting to study the youth of this community: their views of language and diversity. The ability of their parents to fair well in the world as monolingual English speakers where English is viewed worldwide as symbols of elitism, and higher education, may not work the same for the youth of today. With the ongoing process of globalization, a white, English speaking, non diversified student may have more struggles in a larger more diverse setting in terms of their personal comfort level, and employment opportunities.

The study of linguistic landscapes would be worthwhile to incorporate into schools. In this community, as in any, it would be valuable to raise awareness in youth

about language and power relations that arise from language. As a teacher it is interesting to look at the signs and symbols in schools and how they may be interpreted by parents, students and staff.

Studies could also be expanded to look at the immigration rate to Carman in comparison with Manitoba's Action Strategy for Economic Growth. Immigrants who move to this town must be prepared for major changes (as with any immigrant experience), however, their language and culture may be lost forever. With lack of visibility and support to foster bi or multilingualism, pride in other languages and culture may eventually be abandoned, especially by those of second or third generation.

## Chapter 5

### Discussion

#### Introduction

The present study was conducted with the aim of answering the following research questions:

1. What does the linguistic landscape of Carman tell us about its societal, cultural, and community beliefs?
2. What are the interests of the writers and readers on government (top-down) and private (bottom-up) signs?

The influence of the visible language in the linguistic landscape of Carman can be summarized into four themes: the power of language; capitalism; values/lifestyle; inclusion/exclusion. These themes intertwine and connect to one another. Although these themes have surfaced in previous literature, they take on a unique perspective when studied in a monolingual, rural setting. This setting has shown that the local population values their personal freedoms: political, religious, and physical space. The following sections will look through the lenses of these four themes to describe the linguistic landscape study of the language used in the public space of Carman, Manitoba.

#### Power of Language

Fairclough (2001) sees language as important enough to merit the attention of all citizens since it contributes to the domination of some people by others and therefore

exerts power. The power of language is visible in the signage in Carman. The linguistic landscape serves as a visual index to bilingualism or linguistic oppression of minorities.

Within the context of Carman, power can be seen at all levels of signage; bottom-up and top-down. From a bottom-up perspective the language displayed reflects on Spolsky and Cooper's (1991 as cited in Spolsky, 2009) conditions for language choice. The first condition is write a sign in a language you know. This rule explains the language known by signs writers in and for Carman is English. It appears to be the only language known by bottom-up sign writers. The signs reflect a strong linguistic as well as cultural knowledge of English. This is evident in the acronyms, word spellings, and connotations. Although people in Carman may be able to read English, they may not be culturally aware of all the nuances. This knowledge is assumed on the part of the writer.

The second condition states write a sign in a language that intended readers are assumed to read. All signs in Carman are written in English. Some government (top-down) signs are given some French wording, more for acknowledgment than for actual meaning, as some signs were found to be grammatically incorrect (Manitoba government parking lot signs). This second condition may also blend with Ben-Rafael's et al. (2006) "good reasons" principle where sign writers aim to attract the interests of the public and influence them with their signage. The writers must know that the audience in this community is able to communicate in English and no other language is necessary. Through the position of the French text next to the English and grammatical errors these signs pass a message that a second language is not valued.

The third condition postulated accounts for language choice and is seen as the symbolic condition; write signs in a language with which you wish to be associated. The bottom-up sign writers in Carman are not being misleading to their readers. They have been exclusive in their language choice of English. Top-down signs, however, imply that services would be available in French. I am not sure that these establishments will be able to fulfill the perceived expectations.

Power in terms of domination of some people by others is evident in this landscape. I think it is unconscious power; something taken for granted from a community that has had a homogeneous makeup for many years.

## **Capitalism**

Capitalism surfaced as a theme within the data in terms of marketing goods to consumers for economic gain and in the role of prescribing what signs will be erected to promote this gain. The business sector of Carman as displayed in the LL has determined that the local population values immediacy and convenience; agrees with the hopes of achieving a higher standard of living; deems value for their dollar as important. The capitalism sector has honed in on the potential for revenue from sporting facilities.

The signs in Carman appear to have a persuasive tone by trying to prescribe how people should live and at the same time acknowledging the lifestyles at present. This town, in terms of capitalism perhaps does not vary that much from that of any rural Manitoba town.



## Values/Lifestyle

The linguistic landscape helps shape the character of an environment by informally relaying messages about what is culturally and socially acceptable and unacceptable by its members. The town of Carman presents itself as a community that values personal space and has a respect for that personal space. This physical space may be something that people become accustomed to; take for granted. Newcomers, however, may find this space overwhelming. Due to the amount of space, people will have to become accustomed to the lack of public transportation and the necessity of each family owning one or multiple vehicles.

From analysis of the LL, Carman would promote the family as an integral part of the community. Along with family, physical health and fitness are endorsed.

In terms of language, the non-existence or presence of French or any language other than English relates to the marginal place that minority languages have in education and the emphasis the government puts on promoting bi or multilingualism. It may also be a reflection of the tolerance of local community members and their frustration that may come from looking at another language. With this in mind, it may be plausible that the attitudes portrayed in the LL are deliberate in a province looking to increase immigration. Carman may want to maintain the homogenous look and feel and not want to be challenged or to be made to feel uncomfortable by changing food choices available and language shown on signs. The town may purposefully be looking at sustaining its current status quo.

The town of Carman has rendered itself as having a Christian stronghold. A sense of place appears to have been ideologically created – this is a Christian community, therefore, it is moral, honest, safe and true. The same homogeneous group of people have been living in Carman for many generations. Considering the enthusiasm, passion, indignation and outrage that public displays of religion can bring, this town may decide to continue the Christian monopoly in order to maintain harmony. The chance of introducing controversy or conflict by acknowledging other religions or beliefs is something Carman is perhaps avoiding or does not see the need due to low minority members.

Our culture demands immediacy and efficiency. The population seems to pride itself on being punctual. This may vary across cultural groups where time is not measured so precisely.

### **Inclusion/Exclusion**

The LL creates an impression relating to the cultural ideals and attitudes towards diversity that will be encountered in the community. Inclusion and exclusion surfaced as a theme when the linguistic landscape analysis clearly showed the language base, religious choice, and assumed cultural knowledge. Distinct language boundaries have been created.

The entrances to Carman support large signs stating “Carman Welcomes You”. Caucasian, middle class, English speaking, Christian people is what is implied from an analysis of the linguistic landscape.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusions

The majority of studies on linguistic landscapes have approached the subject from a multilingual position. I have approached it from a monolingual perspective within a bilingual province and have posed considerations relating to implications for limited linguistic diversity and linguistic ecology. This paper describes an investigation of the deliberate use of language on signs in the public space of a rural Manitoba town. The publically visible written language and symbols used within the LL of Carman correlates with the linguistic knowledge of the population.

The linguistic landscape can be seen as cultural text. The signs in Carman reflect the power and status English holds in this community. With the apparent emphasis on English and the cultural nuances associated with it, the landscape reveals who the participants, both actors and audiences, are in communication. By showcasing the predominant English landscape, this study has displayed images of how attitudes toward language and how language itself can have a dominating effect of some people by others (Fairclough, 2001). The residents of the town of Carman have their language (English) continually reinforced as the language of survival, communication, business, and self fulfillment. With this landscape, it does not relay the message that the residents of this community seek to learn or support a second language.

Thus, the emphasis on French or any other language other than English is almost non-existent. Not one sign in recreation promoted a language class. It is evident that it is not necessary to learn a second language. People will be able to function, access

goods and services without giving language a second thought. From this, language itself seems to be something taken for granted or unimportant.

This may bode well for the adult populations who have perhaps experienced a life of convenience being able to use the lingua franca of most of the industrialized world. However, questions arise from that of the youth population facing an increase in probability that they will face a world of diversity. The ability to gain a culturally rich, competent and socially sensitive society appears to be lost, resulting in a context of monolingualism.

I am concerned about my own children's attitudes about language and diversity as they are observant of visible minorities in the community. This is apparent since they ask questions and make generalizations they would not of the mainstream population. For example, "can she speak English"?

A critical look at the signage in the town of Carman reveals some of the connections between what is written and the economic and political reasons behind the messages conveyed through the LL. The capitalistic function of the town prescribes what signs will be erected to promote economic gain and what informational as well as symbolic messages they will display.

Carman does have limited potential to draw people to it based more on an entertainment zone than that of a historical or cultural one. Carman is not a tourist destination for international or even provincial travelers. Therefore, the linguistic landscape does not try to portray or copy iconic international cities with buildings or images that are not truly representative of its location. Carman, not being at this level of

tourism, shows its identity as true to itself as a community and reflective of the people who live there.

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