



**The Faculty of Arts and Education**

## **MASTERS THESIS**

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# Abstract

The present thesis is an empirical study of the linguistic landscape of selected streets in Stavanger, Norway. The aim of the study is to see how English is used in the linguistic landscape of Stavanger, one of Norway's largest municipal areas and also known as a relatively 'international' city. The study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. How commonly is English used in the linguistic landscape of Bergelandsgata, Pedersgata and Fargegata, compared to Norwegian?
2. How is English represented differently from Norwegian in the linguistic landscape?
3. What does this tell us about the functions of English in Norwegian urban life?

The material collected for this study consists of pictures of signs and writing in three selected streets of Stavanger. The signs were classified making use of two main sets of categories. First of all, they were classified on the basis of the languages used, into two primary categories, monolingual and multilingual; the languages were also identified. According to their content, they were further classified as top-down and bottom-up. They were then further classified in terms of domain: as signs relating to the beauty industry (e.g. hair salons, tattoo parlors), posters for cultural events and concerts and so on.

The findings showed that the majority of signs contain English and that English in many cases is represented in a different way from Norwegian. In the material English sometimes appears as a less personal, less inclusive mode of communication.

# Table of Content

Abstract	ii
Table of Content	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Structure of the thesis	3
2 Theory section	4
2.1 Multilingualism	4
2.1.2 Code-switching	6
2.1.3 Visual marking	7
2.1.4 Linguistic landscape	9
3 English in Norway	12
3.1 The status of English in Norway.	12
3.2 Språkrådet	13
3.3 Stavanger	15
4 Methodology section	17
4.1 The Material	17
4.3 Data Collection and Analysis	19
4.3.1 Categorization: monolingual and multilingual	21
4.3.2 Categorization: top-down and bottom-up	24
4.3.3 Categorization: Domains	26
4.3.4 Analysis of Visual Marking	32
4.3.5 Content Relationship	33
5 Presentation of the Findings	35
5.1 Overview of the Findings	35
5.2 Discussion of Findings	42
6 The representation and functions of English and Norwegian	47
7 Conclusion	60
8 References	63

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Mormor,  
eg klarte det, eg har levert masteren!  
Klem

This accomplishment would not have been possible without you. Thank you!

# 1 Introduction

The present thesis is an empirical study of the linguistic landscape of selected streets in Stavanger, Norway. The term *linguistic landscape* may be defined as:

the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings ... of a given territory or urban agglomeration

(Bourhis and Landry 1997:25).

In other words, most public writing found in a particular geographical area is part of that area's linguistic landscape.

The aim of the study is to see how English is used in the linguistic landscape of Stavanger, one of Norway's largest municipal areas and also known as a relatively 'international' city. For this purpose, three streets have been selected: Bergelandsgata, Pedersgata and Øvre Holmegate (also known as 'Fargegata'). Of these streets, Bergelandsgata might be considered a more or less ordinary city centre street, whereas Fargegata and Pedersgata are each of interest due to their 'alternative' style and multicultural influences, which might be expected to result in a relatively large number of multilingual or non-Norwegian signs.

The study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. How commonly is English used in the linguistic landscape of Bergelandsgata, Pedersgata and Fargegata, compared to Norwegian?
2. How is English represented differently from Norwegian in the linguistic landscape?
3. What does this tell us about the functions of English in Norwegian urban life?

The material used in this study are pictures of signs taken with the researcher's smartphone. All signs along the three streets that contained writing large enough to be intended to be viewed by the general public were photographed. This material is studied using both quantitative and

qualitative approaches. In the quantitative part of the study, the use of English and Norwegian will be compared, both in terms of frequency overall and in terms of code selection in specific categories. The qualitative part of the study consists of an analysis of selected signs, organized in terms of the same categories

The signs were classified making use of two main sets of categories. First of all, they were classified on the basis of the languages used, into two primary categories, monolingual and multilingual; the languages were also identified. According to their content, they were further classified as top-down and bottom-up. According to Gorter (2006: 3), top-down signs are official signs placed by the government, and bottom-up signs are non-official signs posted by commercial enterprises or private organizations, or persons. They were then further classified in terms of domain: as signs relating to the beauty industry (e.g. hair salons, tattoo parlors), business, posters for cultural events and concerts, and signs containing official information.

When analyzing the signs, the focus has been on visual marking and code-switching. Visual marking occurs when switching to another language is marked by changes in font size, type, position, or color (Schipor, 2018: 13-16). Such marking may contribute to the level of visual impact of signs. At the same time, code-switching itself may be used as a specific kind of marking. According to Johansson and Graedler (2002: 84), “English words are often placed so that they draw attention, for example, in headlines or on advertising signs”.

Another focus has been code-switching. According to Mahootian (2006: 511), code-switching refers to “the systematic use of two or more languages or varieties of the same language during oral or written discourse”. The main focus in this study is on the switching between English and Norwegian in written discourse, even though other languages are noted as well.

According to Gorter (2006: 81), the study of the linguistic landscape is a relatively new development. With new developments, there is always more work to do, theories and methods to be tested and developed. The areas in which the studies can be conducted are limitless. Considering that the public sphere is in constant change, there will arguably always be work for linguistic landscape researchers. Considering that a study of Stavanger's linguistic landscape has not been conducted before, this thesis will potentially be a relevant contribution to the field. Stavanger's reputation as an international city makes it of particular interest for a study of linguistic landscapes. The most important factor of internationalization has without doubt been

the oil industry's development, but there have also been cultural initiatives such as the Nuart festival, as well as growing tourism boosted by well-known points of interest such as the Pulpit rock. Apart from the generally growing presence of the English language in Norway, these are specific factors that may have motivated the use of English in the public sphere of Stavanger. The findings in this study might make it possible to evaluate the importance of these different factors, by looking at the different domains and functions in which English is.

## 1.1 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into eight chapters. Chapter 2 provides a theoretical background for the study, dealing with multilingualism, code-switching, visual marking and studies within the field of linguistic landscapes. Chapter 3 describes the status of the English language in Norway, discusses how Språkrådet works to preserve the Norwegian language, and provides an introduction of the city of Stavanger. Chapter 4 presents the streets included in the study, and the type of images found. It also describes the choice of methodology and the categorization of signs.

The findings are presented in Chapter 5. First an overview of the findings is given; second the findings related to the first research question are then discussed followed by a summary of the findings. Chapter 6 considers the question how English and Norwegian are represented differently in the linguistic landscape, and in what function they appear. This chapter aims to answer research question two and three. Finally, Chapter 7 summarizes the main conclusions found in the study, as well as giving suggestions for further study.

## 2 Theory section

### 2.1 Multilingualism

According to Edwards (2012) “Multilingualism is both a simple description of global linguistic diversity and, at the same time, a representation of the individual and group abilities that have developed because of that very diversity.” (Edwards 2012:25) The terms bilingualism and multilingualism are both often used to describe the use or knowledge of two or more languages; however, some scholars make a difference between them. Ivanova and Sidorova (2020) explain that the term bilingualism consists of two Latin words: “bi–double and lingua–language.” (2020:877) Thus, a bilingual person can be explained as someone who can use two languages. In terms of etymology, Schipor (2018) finds that multilingualism refers to: “the acquisition and use of many languages, often defined as three or more” (Schipor 2018:19). In their work Weber and Horner (2012) present multilingualism in terms of linguistic resources and repertoires. Due to this broad definition they subsume bilingualism, etc. under the term multilingualism. In the present study, the two main languages in focus are English and Norwegian, however the study does not exclude other languages and there might be findings that include more than two languages. The terms bilingualism and multilingualism will be used interchangeably.

There are various definitions of bilingualism and multilingualism. They range from knowing a couple of words, to being able to understand simple conversation, and even to being fluent in a language. According to Edwards (1994), everyone is bilingual. He does not claim that everyone is fluent in more than one language, however he assumes that all adults in the world know or understand a phrase or two in a different language (Edwards 1994:55). Arguably, this is not the competence most people associate with being bilingual. On the other end of the scale, Leonard Bloomfield (1935) defined a bilingual as someone who has “native-like control of two or more languages” (Bloomfield 1935:56). Finally, Haugen (1953) provides a definition that is between these two extreme definitions, defining a bilingual as someone who “can produce complete meaningful utterances in the other language” (Haugen 1953:7).



Skutnabb-Kangas distinguishes between bilingualism “as characteristics of an individual or as a phenomenon in a society.” (Skutnabb-Kangas 1981:81). The definitions provided above are all examples of definitions of individual bilingualism. A more detailed definition of what is meant by societal bilingualism and how it differs from individual bilingualism is given by Weber and Horner (2012: 46-47):

What is going on in a particular context is often more complex and in order to understand the whole picture, it is necessary to make a basic distinction between individual and societal multilingualism and to study the social issues linked to both of these aspects. Individual multilingualism is highly valued in many societies, though there is usually a clear hierarchy of languages (linked to the social hierarchy of the speakers of these languages), with standard, national or official languages at the top and immigrant minority languages at the bottom. Societal multilingualism and linguistic diversity, on the other hand, are frequently seen as a problem or challenge, and there are consequent attempts to manage and control it

One possible reason that societal multilingualism may be seen as a problem or challenge could be the fear of losing identity. Another language may influence one's first language so much that one might fear losing it. Edwards (1994: 5) explains why language is such an important part of identity, both on individual and group level:

This results from that identification with one's own language which has always been a marker of nationalism, and the perception (which is true, at least to some degree) that each language interprets and presents the world in a somewhat different way; the unique wellsprings of group consciousness, traditions, beliefs and values are thus seen as intimately entwined with language.

(Edwards 1994:5)

As English is becoming a global language, it may pose a potential threat to other languages. Calvet (1998:103) explains three different ways a language can disappear; by transformation, extinction, or replacement. If a language is transformed, its “linguistic form evolves” (1998:103).

Such evolution may be brought about by linguistic borrowing, as discussed in section 2.1.2., and may be considered typical of many present-day contact situations involving English as a second language. As Norway is getting more international and the spread of the global language English is increasing, there have been increasing worries about the influence of English on Norwegian, and there are people working on preserving the national language (see p. 13-14).

## 2.1.2 Code-switching

Code-switching can simply be described as switching between two or more languages within the same conversation. According to Mahootian, code-switching refers to “the systematic use of two or more languages or varieties of the same language during oral or written discourse” (2006:511). This means that someone who is bilingual could carry a conversation in Norwegian, and then use English words in between, either as a means of emphasis or simply as the choice of an English word that is commonly used in that context.

Myers-Scotton (1993) distinguishes between intra-sentential switching and inter-sentential switching. Switching within the same sentence is known as Intra-sentential switching: e.g. “Det er awesome!” In contrast, Inter-sentential switching refers to switching between different sentences, e.g. “Hei, kommer du? Let’s go!” In this example Norwegian is used in the first sentence, and English in the second.

The same may happen in written discourse. The study of code-switching in written discourse is relatively new compared to spoken discourse. One reason for this is that code-switching is likely to take place more frequently in spoken than written discourse. However, it is also fair to say that linguists have generally focussed on spoken language until fairly recently. According to Sebba, most researchers have used the theories drawn on spoken code-switching as there are no theories currently developed for written code-switching (Sebba 2013: 99).

In formal writing code-switching is arguably less likely to happen. This may be related to a tendency that Sebba refers to as “hegemonic monolingualism, an ideology that legitimizes only text that conforms to the norms of a single language” (2013:100). This norm of conforming to a single language is not always as strict when it comes to certain types of text, e.g., advertisements and posters. There is generally no expectation that translations should be provided for the

slogans used by global companies e.g. McDonalds “I’m lovin’ it” or Nike “just do it”, even when they appear as part of an advertisement in a different language.

It is often difficult to distinguish between code-switching and borrowing. Both terms have to do with the mixing of two (or more) languages. According to Matras (2009) “borrowing usually refers to the diachronic process by which languages enhance their vocabulary (...) while code switching is reserved for instances of spontaneous language mixing in the conversation of bilinguals” (2009:106). Borrowing may then be understood as a process whereby words become a natural part of another language. Such words may end up as specialized terminology or become a part of everyday vocabulary; in either case, they will be used by not only bilinguals but monolinguals as well. Borrowing is often used to fill a gap or to enhance a language, and is frequently seen as a phenomenon that develops and expands a language (see e.g., Mahootian 2006). Code-switching on the other hand, can be understood as something that happens if one has knowledge of two or more languages and combines or mixes elements of them.

Even though the definitions are fairly clear at the general level, it is still difficult to distinguish if an English word used in Norwegian conversation is borrowed or if it is an example of code-switching. According to Mahootian (2006:514), code-switching may involve an element of any length (word, phrase, sentence) but it consists of a complete shift into the other language. The speaker then uses “an English term with an English pronunciation.” In contrast, “borrowings tend to be short and phonologically and morphologically adapted to the host language.” For example, the pronunciation of the English term would follow the usual rules of Norwegian pronunciation.

### 2.1.3 Visual marking

To a greater or lesser extent, writing always has a visual dimension. According to Schipor (2018) meaning can be shown through “content, script style and size, font, punctuation and the organization of the text on the page” (Schipor 2018:13). In a text one rarely doubts what is the title or when a new paragraph starts.

Visual marking occurs when switching to another language is marked by changes in font size, type, position or color (Schipor 2018: 13-16). Such marking may contribute to the level of

visual impact of signs. At the same time, code-switching itself may be used as a specific kind of marking. The point of visual marking is to make something stand out visually, the goal is to grab the attention of bystanders and potential new customers.

To emphasize something in speech one may speak louder or more intensely, as Bezemer and Kress (2016) explain one might also emphasize lexically, e.g. by adding “very”. This can also be used in writing, however, loudness and intensity can also be indicated by “visual prominence, as in the use of a **bold font** or CAPITALIZATION” (Bezemer and Kress 2016:17).

The position of writing within a sign might say something of what is more important or where the sign-makers want to draw your attention to. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) distinguish between Ideal and Real. Elements positioned in the upper part are presented as Ideal, this is “the idealized or generalized essence of the information.” Whereas the Real “presents more specific information (e.g. details)” pictures, maps or “more practical information (e.g. practical consequences, directions for action” (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006:186-187).

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) point out the importance of color and that sign-makers select colors “according to their communicative needs and interests in a given context.” They distinguish between high saturation and low saturation. Colors that are highly saturated may be “positive, exuberant, adventurous, but also vulgar or garish,” whereas low saturation may be “subtle and tender, but also cold and repressed” (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006:233).

According to Graedler visual marking is a tool used to sell, and make something more interesting:

Switches in ads are also very often found in conspicuous positions – almost 90% occupy an initial position as heading, or a paragraph-final or text-final position in the text, or they are graphically separated from the text proper. Given the overall discourse function of advertising – to sell products – and the sales and snob- appeal associated with English world-wide, this is not surprising.

(Graedler 1999:337)

Despite the impact that visual marking has, not many studies have so far analysed multilingual texts with visual aspects such as advertisements, posters and so on (Sebba 2013:97). One can

argue that it would be impossible to fully analyze texts that have visual aspects without actually including the visual aspects in the analysis (Sebba 2013:103).

There are different types of language-content relationships. The purpose of these relationships is to look at how the different languages are presented in the text. Sebba (2013: 107) distinguishes between three Language - content relationships; *Equivalent* texts, *Disjoint* texts and *overlapping* content. Equivalent texts have the same content in the two or more languages that are presented in the text. In contrast, disjoint texts have different content in the different languages presented in the text. Overlapping language content could be described as a combination of the two mentioned above, some of the text might be repeated in the other language, whereas some of it might not. It would be interesting to see which content relationship is used in advertisement, and which language is given the most attention.

#### 2.1.4 Linguistic landscape

The study of linguistic landscapes is a relatively new field of study. One of the most commonly used definitions of linguistic landscape is the one defined by Bourhis and Landry (1997: 25):

the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings ... of a given territory or urban agglomeration

This definition embraces most public writing in an area to be part of that area's linguistic landscape. Bourhis and Landry here describe what linguistic landscape is. This definition is the one used in the present study. There are numerous ways to conduct studies of the linguistic landscape and several areas of focus. The area selected for the study might be a couple of streets, smaller areas of a city, or a whole country.

According to Bourhis and Landry (1997: 25-28), linguistic landscapes serve two basic functions: informational and symbolic. The informational function indicates which languages may be used in communication and services in the area where the sign is located. It also says something about the sociolinguistic composition of the languages. The symbolic function has to

do with the status and value of a language. The absence of a minority language, for example, may indicate attitudes towards the minority group speaking the respective language.

The signs constituting linguistic landscapes in cities around the world are often not given attention unless one specifically looks for information or certain features of the signs are designed to attract attention. The signs often say more than what meets the eye. Besides giving directions and providing information about the type of service-offered by a certain shop or salon, signs may also say something about the political and social situation in the respective country.

The use of language in the public sphere can also have roots in politics. An example of this is Janssen's study of the Brussels periphery in Belgium. The Brussels periphery in Belgium is what Janssens (2012) refers to as a "linguistic battlefield" between Dutch and French, the two main language groups in the country. In his study he examines the strategies and regulations the Flemish government tries to implement to impose Dutch, even though language use is free. Linguistic landscape as a "political arena is the representation of the concern the local community shows in relation to a growing internationalization and the multicultural reality of current society" (Janssens 2012:50-51). Another example is the study of the three major languages Israel-Hebrew, Arabic and English in Israel-Palestine, conducted by Ben-Rafael et al. (Ben-Rafael et al. 2006:7) they focus on the "degree of visibility" on top-down and bottom-up signs in mixed Israeli cities and East Jerusalem. They found that top-down signs in Jewish localities include mainly Hebrew and English, in Israeli-Palestinian localities on the other hand, "Arabic is nearly always included alongside Hebrew, or Hebrew and English" (Ben-Rafael et al. 2006:23). In East Jerusalem, a Non-Israeli Palestinian locality bottom-up signs are "either Arabic-only or bilingual Arabic-English" (Ben-Rafael et al. 2006:23). Considering the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict about territory, the visibility of the languages associated with the countries on signs in this geographic area might, therefore, have a more symbolic meaning than countries which do not face an equally demanding political situation.

Linguistic landscape might also be looked at from a didactic perspective. It may be interesting to look at how linguistic landscapes may be related to teaching English. In a study by Clemente et al. (2012), the focus is on how linguistic landscapes may contribute to teaching children to "read the world". The purpose of teaching students about the linguistic landscape would be "to discover, search, get to know and value endangered languages, their functions, and

meanings as well as how important they are to their speaker and all of us.” (Clemente et al. 2012:268)

The researcher in the field of linguistic landscape looks for signs or objects. To be able to sample signs or objects one must have a clear idea of what a sign or an object is. A city is constantly changing, which means that there might or might not be changes to the linguistic landscape as well. For example, the pandemic that started in 2020 may have resulted in stores, cafes and restaurants closing, while other businesses might have opened. Gorter (2006:3) also mentioned posters that are removed or added. Backhaus’ defines his unit as “Any piece of text within a spatially definable frame” (Backhaus 2006:55) this definition opens up to a broad variation of signs: everything from a tiny handwritten note, to a giant poster covering a whole wall.

Ben-Rafael et al. (2006:19), Huebner (2006:39-40), Backhaus (2006:56) and Cenoz and Gorter (2006:68) all distinguish between top-down and bottom-up signs. According to Gorter (2006: 3), top-down signs are official signs placed by the government and bottom-up signs are non-official signs posted by commercial enterprises, or by private organizations or persons. The top-down category includes signs with a public announcement or official buildings, bottom-up includes names of shops or concert posters.

According to Gorter (2006:1) linguistic landscape can also refer to languages spoken within an area. It may also include the history of languages and how languages might change over time. The analysis of top-down and bottom-up signs might reveal different attitudes between government and populations towards a minority language or the global language English. It implies the use of one or more languages either in spoken or written form. The present study focuses on the written language on signs in three different streets in Stavanger.

## 3 English in Norway

### 3.1 The status of English in Norway.

The relevance and presence of English in Norwegian society is increasing. In restaurants, pubs, hotels and shops chances one might be greeted in English. Norway ranks as number 5 in the EF English Proficiency Index out of 100 countries and is in the category of *very high proficiency* (EF EFI). This index may not be completely accurate due to test takers and availability of the test. However, it gives an idea of the competence in English for the population

According to Aalborg (2010: 98), it is difficult to define the status of English in Norway. Based on her study the impression is that English can neither be defined as a second language nor as a foreign language, but rather something in between. Lanza (2004: 77) argues that “English fulfills some of the functions that one would attribute to a second language, although English is still ‘foreign’ to the extent that it is not widely used in the government and has not become institutionalized.” The general impression is that there is a growing importance of English in Norway. English is becoming a more significant part of everyday life, not just for work and study purposes, but also in social settings. People are influenced by what surrounds them, while the linguistic landscape also reflects its inhabitants.

Aalborg (2010) argues that “Norwegian pupils experience the presence of English in their daily lives, and this affects their attitude towards English positively” (2010:94). From a very young age children are exposed to English. Television shows for children have normally been dubbed but according to Graedler (1998) this is changing: “As a result of the recent increase in available TV channels, this situation is now changing. Many quite small children today may choose between a variety of programs with English speech only” (1998: 25).

In the English curriculum for upper secondary education in Norway, the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training describes the goal for the pupils when they finish as follows:



English is a key subject for understanding culture, communication, education and development of identity. The course will provide students with a basis for communicating with others locally and globally, regardless of their cultural and linguistic background. English will help to develop the students' intercultural understanding of different lifestyles, mindsets and communication patterns. The course will prepare the students for an education and a social- and working life that requires English-language competence in reading, writing and oral communication.<sup>1</sup>

(English Subject Curriculum)

What can be understood from this excerpt is that learning English is something that will benefit the students not only in terms of social contexts but also later on in working life. It should also be noted that English has its very own curriculum, whereas the other foreign languages that are taught in Norwegian upper secondary schools, e.g., Spanish, German, French, share a subject curriculum for foreign languages.

Norwegian students are later encouraged to take one or more semesters abroad. Universities motivate this with improved linguistic skills, academic improvement, more career opportunities and personal growth. On the whole, bilingualism involving a good competence in English is generally viewed as an important, even essential, asset for virtually any career.

## 3.2 Språkrådet

A natural consequence of the increased use of English in the public sphere, as well as other areas, is that the use of Norwegian decreases. The Language Council of Norway, or *Språkrådet*, is a council working to strengthen the Norwegian language and language diversity in Norway. Their three main aims are defined as follows: to strengthen the status and use of the Norwegian

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<sup>1</sup> My translation. “Engelsk er et sentralt fag for kulturforståelse, kommunikasjon, danning og identitetsutvikling. Faget skal gi elevene et grunnlag for å kommunisere med andre lokalt og globalt, uavhengig av kulturell og språklig bakgrunn. Engelsk skal bidra til å utvikle elevenes interkulturelle forståelse av ulike levemåter, tenkesett og kommunikasjonsmønstre. Faget skal forberede elevene på en utdanning og et samfunns- og arbeidsliv som stiller krav om engelskspråklig kompetanse i lesing, skriving og muntlig kommunikasjon.”

language in areas of society where it is at risk; to promote Norwegian as a good and well-functioning language for cultural purposes and general use; and to safeguard linguistic diversity and the interests of language users. (språkrådet, n.d)

In 1990 The Language Council of Norway launched an “Action for linguistic environmentalism”. The campaign was a reaction to the increased admiration and use of English, in the public sphere: “This attitude is most apparent in all the English and partly English store names and cafénames that gaze towards you on signs in cities and villages across the country. Furthermore, the English words and phrases we import create (...) practical difficulties of various kinds” (Johansson and Graedler 2002: 20).<sup>2</sup> As a part of their campaign, they showed ways to find Norwegian words that can replace some of the commonly used English words, such as *brainstorming*, *hacker*, *feedback* etc.

In January 2019, one of the posts on their webpage was named “Norwegian when you can, English when you have to.”<sup>3</sup> The focus here was on the increased use of English words, especially within the field of technology. It is also mentioned that some English words are suitable, however, they encourage their audience to make a habit out of using Norwegian words where it is possible. (Språkrådet 2019) The field of technology is often targeting a broad audience and therefore uses a universal language that most can understand.

It is understandable that the global language English might pose a threat to Norwegian. If Norwegian is not maintained by Norwegians in Norway, it might slowly disappear. However, adding English to the public sphere does not mean that Norwegian has to be eliminated. Bigger cities should facilitate it so that it is easier for non-Norwegian speakers to be able to read the linguistic landscape. The influence of English in the linguistic landscape is not just typical for Norway, but rather an international phenomenon and can be seen in most cities and villages to a greater or lesser degree according to Johansson and Graedler (2002: 27).

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<sup>2</sup> My translation. “Denne haldninga kjem tydelegast til uttrykk gjennom alle dei engelske og halvengelske butikknamna og kafénamna som grin imot ein på skilt i byar og tettstadar over heile landet. Dessutan skaper dei engelske orda og uttrykka vi importerer (...) praktiske vanskar av ymse slag.”

<sup>3</sup> My translation. “Norsk når du kan, engelsk når du må.”

### 3.3 Stavanger

The research will be conducted in Stavanger, the fourth largest city in Norway. It is a city and a municipality located in the southwest of Norway. Stavanger has become an increasingly international city in recent years, with the development of the oil industry, cultural initiatives such as the Nuart festival and considerable tourism. These are factors that may have motivated the use of English in the public sphere of Stavanger.

Stavanger is known as the Oil Capital of Norway. The Ekofisk discovery in 1969 formed the starting point of the Norwegian oil industry. Foreign companies dominated the exploration in the beginning and were responsible for developing the country's first oil and gas fields (Regjeringen n.d.) The oil industry has brought numerous international workers and companies to the city from the start and continues to do so. It has arguably contributed to the increased use of English not only in the workplace but also in the public sphere of Stavanger.

There are two International schools located in Stavanger: The International School of Stavanger (henceforth ISS) and the British International School of Stavanger (henceforth BISS). ISS was founded in 1966, initially established for the family of oil pioneers leading the North Sea exploration at the time. It is one of the largest international schools in Scandinavia, nearly 50 countries are represented and 18% of the pupils hold Norwegian citizenship. BISS was founded in 1977, with a similar aim as ISS, to educate the children of the oil workers in the North Sea. Today more than 50 nationalities are represented in the school.

According to the official statistics about Norwegian society (henceforth SSB) there are approximately 33 785 immigrants or children of immigrants living in Stavanger. This equals approximately 23% of the 144 223 inhabitants living in Stavanger (Statistisk Sentralbyrå 2021).

Natural attractions such as the Pulpit Rock and Kjerag have for many years been tourist magnets. Throughout recent years there has been an increase in visitors to the Pulpit Rock, one reason for this could be increased focus and interest on social media. Cruise tourism is another factor that has contributed greatly to the increased internationalization of Stavanger. According to Stavangerhavn, "The port of Stavanger is one of Norway's largest cruise ports, welcoming many hundreds of thousands of visitors during the season."

Nuart Festival is an international contemporary street and urban art festival, it is held in Stavanger every year. The festival attracts both national and international artists who share their

art on the walls of the city as well as indoors. In addition to attracting international artists, it has also become an additional attraction for tourists visiting Stavanger.

The findings in this study might make it possible to evaluate whether Stavanger is as international as it is presented, and whether the government and general public have the same approach in as far as the choice of written language in public signs is concerned.

## 4 Methodology section

### 4.1 The Material

Collecting a sample of signs for the study of linguistic landscapes is in itself unproblematic, as it simply consists of photographing signs along a street. However, there are numerous different opinions concerning how the sampling should be organized, what should be included and how many signs should be included. This may be a consequence of the different definitions researchers choose to use, and it of course depends on what type of study the researcher wants to carry out. Huebner (2006) limits himself to different neighborhoods in Bangkok, and examines code mixing and language change. Other researchers use the field to survey the status of minority languages within a country. Gorter and Cenoz (2006) surveyed two streets in Friesland (Netherlands) and Basque Country (Spain) to see how the minority languages Frisian and Basque are used.

The material collected for this study consists of pictures of signs and writing in three selected streets of Stavanger. The reason for choosing three streets rather than the whole city or selected areas was that it would limit the area but at the same time give a good overall impression of the way English is used in the city as the streets serve such different purposes. Choosing three streets instead of limiting the area even more opens up for comparison of the language use between the streets as well.

The three streets selected for this study were Bergelandsgata, Pedersgata and Øvre Holmgata, also known as Fargegata or “Colour Street”. In Figure 1 Bergelandsgata is marked in blue, Pedersgata in green and Fargegata in red. The markings show the length of the streets and where they are located. The map is based on a screenshot from Google Maps.

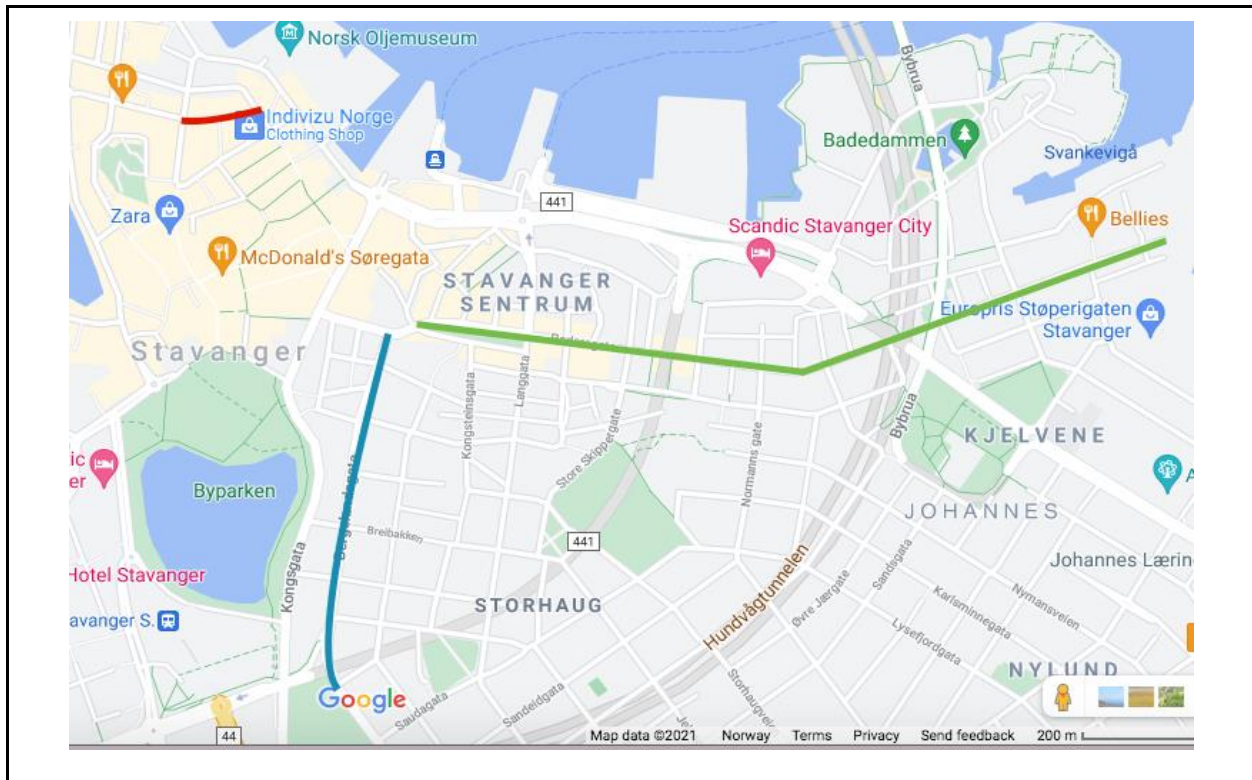


Figure 1 - A map of Stavanger showing the three selected streets.

Bergelandsgata might be considered a more or less ordinary city street. It was previously known for its many chapels, which might explain the large “Jesus, light of the world”<sup>4</sup> sign on top of one of the buildings. The sign is not visible from Bergelandsgata and is therefore not included in the present study.

Pedersgata is generally considered an international food street due to its many international restaurants and takeaway places. It stretches from the city center to a residential area. It is the longest street in this study and almost connects with Bergelandsgata, only divided by the Nytorget square.

Øvre Holmgata, or Fargegata, used to be an ordinary street at one of the ends of the city center. The idea of adding colors to the street, by painting the buildings in bright colours such as yellow, purple and green, came from the owner of Bob Stylist, Tom Kjørsvik. Since then, Fargegata has become a tourist attraction, and has filled with various pubs, handicraft stores and cafes. Fargegata is very short, by far the shortest of the streets included in the study, but very

<sup>4</sup> My translation: “Jesus verdens lys”

interesting to look at from a linguistic landscape perspective due its touristic status and varied audience.

### 4.3 Data Collection and Analysis

All data collected for this study were collected in July 2021. They were collected using a smartphone. The decision of which signs to include was inspired by Backhaus' definition of what a sign is "Any piece of text within a spatially definable frame" (2006:55) The reason for choosing such a broad range was to be able to include even the smallest stickers or posters. There was no set number of pictures that had to be taken, the goal was to collect all the visible signs in the selected streets.

Some items were omitted from the study. Omitted items include duplicates (within the same street), moving digital signs (see Figure 2), and text where it was not clear what was written or/and which language it was written in (see Figure 3). One of the main reasons for omitting duplicates was that it would give an incorrect representation of languages used e.g., if someone put the same sticker on every street corner. If recurring signs such as bus stops had text in the same language, only one was included. The reason for this is that it shows that bus signs are only in this one particular language in the selected areas, this may of course not be the case in other places. Signs with the same writing but different visual marking were included. Stickers or logos that were hard to interpret due to what was written or how it was written, had to be omitted because it would be impossible to distinguish which language was used. Items with just a name and no linguistic meaning (see Figure 4) were also omitted because a language can not be detected. This does not include names of bars etc. if the name does have a meaning in a language.

The starting and ending points of the streets were determined using google maps. The gathering of data took about half a day to finish. The pictures were uploaded to google photos then downloaded on a computer and put in folders according to their location. All the pictures were counted and named e.g., 170. Bergelandsgata. All the pictures were then processed in Excel. They were then classified into categories.

Figure 2: Omitted item, moving digital sign



Figure 3: Omitted item, unclear language/text





Figure 4: Omitted item, names only



### 4.3.1 Categorization: monolingual and multilingual

The first step of the categorization is to classify the signs into two primary categories: monolingual and multilingual. Signs where only one language is used are classified as monolingual, whereas signs where two or more languages are used are classified as multilingual. The languages were also identified, and signs with languages other than Norwegian and English only were put in the ‘other’ category:

- 1) Monolingual Norwegian
- 2) Monolingual English
- 3) Monolingual Other
- 4) Multilingual
- 5) N/A

In some cases it was difficult to distinguish if a sign was multilingual or monolingual. In some cases this was simply due to the languages used. If a sign had text in a language that the researcher did not have knowledge of, and where it was not possible to find out, they were marked N/A; not applicable. This was done to avoid putting a sign in the wrong category. Two languages might look the same, but might still be different, e.g., for people who do not have

knowledge of the Scandinavian languages, they might look exactly the same. A sign could therefore be wrongly marked monolingual when it is in fact multilingual.

When analysing the images, it was sometimes challenging to distinguish whether a sign was multilingual or monolingual. One particular problem concerned brand names: should a sign in Norwegian, but with an English brand name, be considered monolingual or multilingual? For example, Figure 5 shows a poster for a cultural event. The poster seems to be all in Norwegian and would therefore be classified as a monolingual Norwegian sign. However, in the bottom right corner there is a small 'ticketmaster' logo. This is a company where one normally buys tickets for cultural events and other happenings. The logo is clearly in English, and the sign should therefore be classified as a multilingual sign. What makes this problematic and not an obvious multilingual sign is that the event poster itself is not made multilingual, it is all in Norwegian, but what looks to be a sponsor of the event has a name in English. The English on the sign does not serve a purpose other than to present its sponsors.

Another example is shown in figure 6, the shop window of a sewing and repair shop. The shop itself does not have any writing in English in this particular window. However, they present a selection of the sewing machines they can repair. Some of these sewing machines have names that have a meaning in the English language e.g., 'Brother'. The use of English, and other languages, in this image is not placed there on purpose, the shop is simply presenting their services.

As noted in section 2.1, there have been very different definitions of bi- and multilingualism; with regard to individual bilingualism, Edwards (1994) held that everyone is bilingual. His thought was that everyone is bilingual because everyone knows a word or phrase in a different language. This is a very inclusive term, and while the definition was mainly intended for spoken bilingualism it can also be used in studying written bilingualism. In the present study the definition has been understood in a way that all signs containing any amount of English, even just one word or brand name, is multilingual.

Both of these images were, therefore, considered multilingual. Both contribute to multilingualism in the linguistic landscape; Figure 5. It also shows an example of how a sponsor or ticket service commonly used in Norway uses an English name.

Figure 5: Multilingual poster for cultural event



Figure 6: Multilingual shop window



In the two examples above there was no doubt that the words in question were in English, rather it was a question of whether or not to consider them multilingual signs. There were also cases where it was difficult to distinguish whether a word was English or Norwegian, and accordingly how the sign should be classified. Figure 7 shows a poster that offers courses in different musical instruments and includes the term ‘keyboard’. Keyboard is a word that has become so incorporated into the Norwegian language that it is not entirely self-evident whether it should be considered Norwegian or English. The word is extremely commonly used in Norwegian, and no instrument-related website or brochure would seem to use an alternative Norwegian word for this instrument. As Mahootian (2006) explains, borrowings are part of the expansion and

development of a language. One test for loanwords is whether they are “phonologically and morphologically adapted to the host language” (2006:514). The term ‘keyboard’ has of course kept its English spelling, but arguably its pronunciation already fits well into English and needs no adjustment; morphological adaptation is suggested by the term ‘keyboardist’ provided by Wikipedia as the Norwegian term for a keyboard player. It was here concluded that the word ‘keyboard’ is an English loanword in Norwegian, and the image was classified as monolingual Norwegian.

Figure 7: Keyboard; English loanword in Norwegian.



#### 4.3.2 Categorization: top-down and bottom-up

According to their content, the signs were further classified as top-down and bottom-up. The definitions of top-down and bottom-up signs were based on the categories provided by Ben-Rafael et al. (2006). Top-down signs are considered official signs placed by the government, whereas bottom-up signs are non-official signs placed by other instances (Gorter:2006). The categories are provided in Table 1:

Category	Type of item
Top-down	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Public institutions: religious, governmental, municipal- cultural and educational, medical.</li> <li>2. Public signs of general interest</li> <li>3. Public Announcements</li> <li>4. Signs of street names</li> </ol>
Bottom-up	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Shop signs: e.g., clothing, food jewelry</li> <li>2. Private business signs: offices, factories, agencies</li> <li>3. Private announcements: ‘wanted’ ads, sale or rentals of flats or cars.</li> </ol>
Table 1: Definitions of top-down and bottom-up signs	

(Ben-Rafael et.al 2006:14)

Some adjustments were done to this classification system. The first adjustment made was in regard to signs dealing with religion. In Table 1, religious signs are classified as top-down due to the church being a public institution. Considering the separation of state and church in Norway, it would be difficult for the researcher to define which religious institutions, if any, are public. To avoid conflict regarding classification, a third category has been added. The signs will therefore be classified in the following three categories:

- 1) Top-down
- 2) Bottom-up
- 3) Religious

In the Bottom-up category stickers are also included, and the ‘private announcements’ are not limited to wanted ads, sale or rentals of flats or cars, but may also include concert posters etc. It was sometimes challenging to distinguish whether or not a sign was added by a public institution or a private one. In some cases, it was necessary to carry out Internet searches of the signs in order to find out who had produced them.

Figure 8 shows an example of a multilingual top-down sign where the first or main language is English. The image was taken at the window of a bar in Fargegata. The text in the image asks its visitors to be quiet after 11 PM. At first it might be considered a bottom-up sign because it is a non-official sign that has most likely been placed by the bar owners. Despite the image checking off most of the requirements for a bottom-up sign, the sign is still considered a top-down sign in the present study. The reason for this is that the sign conveys a message that is stated by the National Police Directorate (Politidirektoratet, 2018, § 2-1) “Everyone who travels in or in the immediate vicinity of a public place is obliged to observe night rest between 11: 00 PM and 06: 00 AM.”<sup>5</sup>

Figure 8: Keep quiet please



### 4.3.3 Categorization: Domains

The signs were further classified into twelve different domains based on the content and location of the signs. Considering that the top-down and bottom-up categories are very broad ones, it was important to include a more specific classification to be able to say something about which providers use the different languages. For example, two domains may both have a majority of

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<sup>5</sup> My translation. “Enhver som ferdes på eller i umiddelbar nærhet av offentlig sted plikter å overholde nattero mellom kl. 23.00 og kl. 06.00.”

bottom-up signs, but the two might have a very different representation of Norwegian and English.

The following categories were included:

- 1) Beauty & Wellness
- 2) Business
- 3) Covid
- 4) Cultural
- 5) Food & Drink
- 6) Info
- 7) Money & Security
- 8) Religious
- 9) Shop
- 10) Stickers & Street Art
- 11) Tattoo Parlor
- 12) Other

The 'beauty & wellness' category includes signs from hair salons and massage services. It was first decided to have a category dealing with hair salons only. After looking at the findings, it was decided to expand the category to be more inclusive. One of the main reasons behind this decision was that some of the hair salons also included other services dealing with beauty and wellness. There would therefore be many signs falling on the outside of this category even though they deal with very similar services. This category therefore covers everything dealing with beauty and wellness. Apart from advertising, it also includes informative signs specifying the opening hours of the salons and information about booking (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Stopp vent ute



The business domain is a quite broad one. The category includes different types of businesses ranging from lawyer firms to construction work. It is important to clarify that signs informing about construction work belong in the 'Info' domain (see Figure 10) and that the business who provides the work is classified as 'Business' (see Figure 11) One could of course argue that a hair salon is also a business and should therefore be classified as such. However, the reason why the 'beauty & wellness' domain, including hair salons, is classified separately is that this category makes up a very large number of signs; however, it would not make sense to create one category for every line of business, as the result would be many categories containing only two to three images.

Figure 10: Fortau stengt





Figure 11: Ramudden



The 'Covid' domain covers all signs giving information about Covid or how to behave during the pandemic. One could argue that informational signs about Covid belong in the 'Info' domain, however, it was decided to make this a separate category considering the relevance of the ongoing pandemic; again, these signs appear in very large numbers.

The majority of signs found in the 'cultural' category are posters for musical events. The category also includes signs about workshops and cultural happenings such as art exhibitions (see Figure 12).

Figure 12: Art exhibition



The 'Food & Drink' category was first divided into three different domains; Restaurant, cafe and bar. However, it was found that this made classification unnecessarily complicated, and it was therefore decided to combine the three, as their functions (serving food and/or drink) are similar.

The 'Info' category is very broad, as it contains signs with any sort of relevant information to the public. It ranges from recommendations from travel advisors to information about parking and construction work (see Figure 10). Signs containing street names were also added to this domain. Information about surveillance could have been included in this category; however, it was decided that such signs belong in the 'Money & Security' category. In the 'Money & Security' domain signs containing information about alarms, banks and money changing services have been included.

The 'religious' domain includes the same signs that were classified as 'Religious' in the previous step of categorization. This domain includes all the signs that have something to do with religion. These signs might include excerpts from holy books, the names of religious institutions or information about events arranged by them (see Figure 13). This category does not exclude any type of religion.

Figure 13: Religious event



The shop category includes all shops that sell products (but that do not provide seating for consumption, like cafes or bars). The products range from clothing stores to groceries. Included in this category are signs belonging to the shop, such as advertisements for a product or sales posters (see Figure 14).

Figure 14: Sales poster



The 'Stickers & street art' category includes all signs containing street art, here defined as images or texts with a purely aesthetic, rather than informative, function. It also includes all stickers found, except if it is very clear that a sticker has relation to a cultural event, in which case it was added to the cultural domain. A good example here is shown in Figure 15, a sticker that advertises a street art festival. This image could very well belong in both 'Stickers & Street art' category, however, since it is advertising for a cultural event it belongs in the 'Cultural' category.

Figure 15: Sticker advertising street art festival



The category 'Tattoo parlor' is a very narrow category containing only signs related to tattoo shops. These signs could arguably have been added to the 'Beauty & Wellness' category or even 'Business,' however, it was decided to give them a separate category mainly because they stand

out as a service with a very distinctive image, quite different from other businesses. Finally, in cases where a sign could not be grouped together with other signs into any sensible category, or it was not clear to which category it might be placed, it was simply placed in the ‘other’ category.

#### 4.3.4 Analysis of Visual Marking

As part of the qualitative study of the signs, visual marking was considered with regard to the multilingual signs. The reason the monolingual signs were excluded from this part of the study was because the purpose was to see how English and Norwegian were presented differently in the linguistic landscape.

Most signs have some type of visual dimension, but it is not always prominent. This, however, does not necessarily mean that switches between languages are visually marked. Therefore, the multilingual signs will be divided into two main groups:

1. Visually marked
2. Not visually marked

Signs that are considered not visually marked might have a switch in language within a sentence without any visual marking. There might also be cases where English and Norwegian are in juxtaposition.

The next step of the analysis of the visually marked signs is to distinguish what type of visually marking is used. The four factors that will be taken into account in the present study is visual marking by change in:

1. Font size
2. Font type
3. Position of text
4. Color

The change of font size might sometimes be challenging to determine. In these cases the size was compared to the size of other text in the image. Were the differences so small that it was not possible to determine, it would not be included in this category. Change of font type includes, but is not limited to, use of *italics*, **bold** and underlining. In cases where position was used as a visual marking tool, the ideal and real position were detected (see p. 8). Color might be used as a tool to highlight something, either by change in color of the actual text or change of color behind a piece of text that functions as a highlighting tool.

Some of the images collected had one or more of these elements of visual marking, and were marked for all of these; consequently, the figures may add up to more elements of visual marking found, than there are visually marked images. This is further explained in Chapter 5.1.

### 4.3.5 Content Relationship

When analysing how a language is represented in comparison to another language it is also relevant to look at the language content relationship (see p. 9). An analysis of content relationship is important to examine if the same information is given, wholly or partly, in both languages, or if the text is different in the two languages. The images will therefore be divided into the following categories:

1. Equivalent
2. Disjoint
3. Overlapping
4. N/A

This categorization was carried out for all the multilingual signs, including the ones who did not have visual marking. This was done because the content relationship might be of high importance in determining the status of two languages within a sign. It is therefore more related to how the language is presented than it is to visual marking.

Some images were marked N/A; non applicable. This was the case where the language content relationship was not possible to determine. This could be the case if one or more of the

languages was unknown to the researcher. When distinguishing the language content relationship it is important to know all the languages included well to avoid misunderstandings.

## 5 Presentation of the Findings

### 5.1 Overview of the Findings

The total amount of signs collected is 420, distributed over the three streets in the study. 91 signs were found in Bergelandsgata, 219 were found in Pedersgata and 110 in Fargegata (see Table 2). Pedersgata is the longest street with the most signs collected. Fargegata is by far the shortest street, but with a higher density of signs compared to both Bergelandsgata and Pedersgata, see page 20 for map.

Table 2: Number of images

Street	Number of images	(%)
Bergelandsgata	91	21,7
Pedersgata	219	52,1
Fargegata	110	26,2
Total	420	100

Table 3 shows the amount of signs collected based on the language of the signs. The majority of images collected were monolingual Norwegian. In this category, 192 images were collected, which makes up 45,7% of the total images collected. The second-largest category was the one with monolingual English signs. This category represents 26,9% of the images with 113 images collected. 102 of the images collected were Multilingual, meaning that two or more languages were visible. Out of the multilingual signs 89 contained English as either first or second language. 98 of the images contained Norwegian, and finally 17 of the signs contained other languages.

The category with the fewest images was the ‘Monolingual Other’. Only 13 images were found containing text in a different language than Norwegian and English.

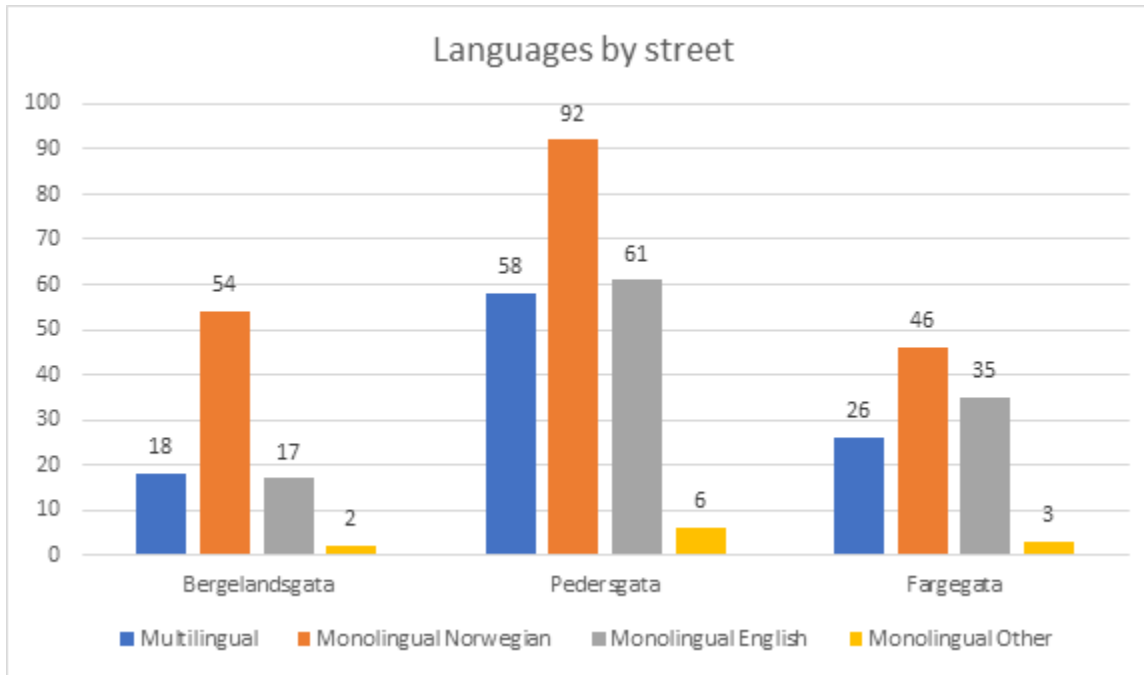
Table 3: signs collected based on the language of the signs

Language	Number of images	Containing. Eng	Containing. Nor	Containing. Other	(%)
Multilingual	102	89	98	17	24,3
Monolingual Norwegian	192				45,7
Monolingual English	113				26,9
Monolingual Other	13				3,1
Total	420				100

Figure 16 shows the number of monolingual and multilingual signs found in the different streets. In Bergelandsgata the majority of the images collected were monolingual Norwegian, while the number of monolingual English and multilingual signs were only differentiated by one sign. In Pedersgata the majority of signs were Monolingual Norwegian. This street has the majority of ‘Monolingual Other’ signs. Fargegata has the most even distribution of signs. As in the other two streets, monolingual Norwegian signs are in the majority, but here they are closely followed in frequency by monolingual English- and Multilingual signs.



Figure 16: Multilingual and monolingual signs sorted by street



As shown in Table 4, the majority of signs found were bottom-up signs. This category makes up 79,2 % of the total signs collected, in contrast, top-down signs make up 19,4 %. Three of the signs were not definable due to their content, and the total number is therefore smaller than that of the total number of signs of the study.

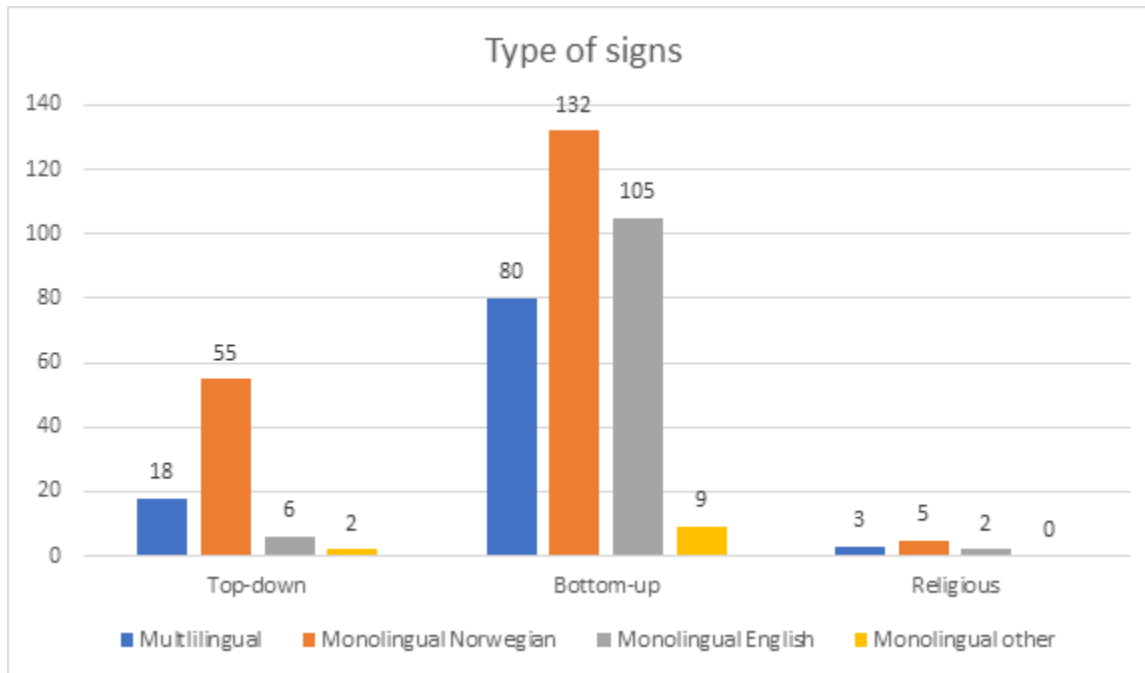
Table 4: top-down, bottom-up and religious signs

Type of sign	Number of images	(%)
Top-down	81	19,4
Bottom-up	326	78,2
Religious	10	2,4
Total	417	100

Figure 17 shows how the distribution of multilingual and monolingual signs were based on the type of sign. In all the three types of signs monolingual Norwegian made up the majority. In the

top-down category there were more multilingual signs than monolingual English. In contrast, the bottom-up category has more monolingual English signs than it has multilingual signs. The category including religious signs have a very even distribution of multilingual and monolingual English signs, and a slight dominance of monolingual Norwegian signs.

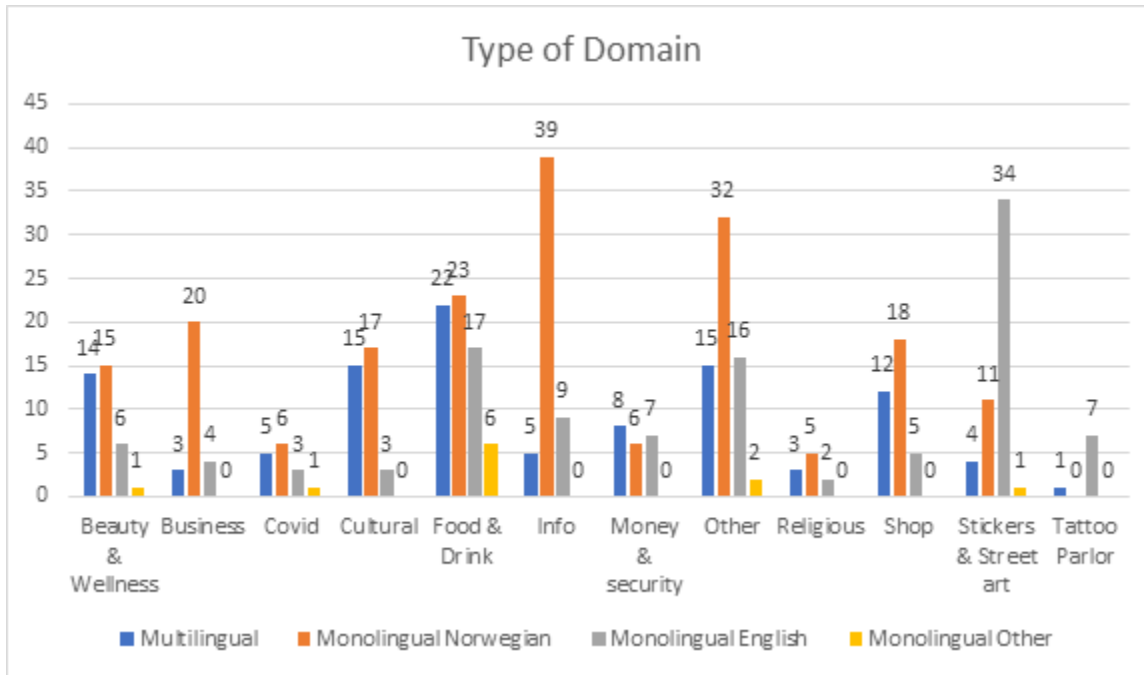
Figure 17: Type of signs and languages used.



As Figure 18 shows the different domains have a very different distribution of multilingual and monolingual signs. The domain with the most prominent monolingual Norwegian signs is the ‘info’ category, with 39 out of 53 signs being monolingual Norwegian. This category includes signs such as Street names, information about parking and recommendations from e.g. Byas and Tripadvisor. In this category there is a very low representation of monolingual English signs and multilingual signs. In contrast, the ‘Stickers and Street Art’ category has a very dominant representation of monolingual English signs. Out of the 50 signs in the category, 34 are monolingual English.

The category that stands out the most is ‘tattoo parlor’. There are only 8 signs in this category, 1 of them is multilingual, whereas the rest is monolingual English. This category is therefore the only category without monolingual Norwegian signs.

Figure 18: Domains and representation of languages



In the multilingual signs the content relationship was analyzed. As shown in Table 5, the majority of the signs, 71,6%, had a disjoint content relationship. The signs that have overlapping content relationships make up 13,7% of the total signs. Signs with equivalent content relationship represent 5,9% of the signs. There were 9 signs categorized as N/A. For these 9 signs it was not possible to distinguish one or more languages presented, it was therefore not possible to tell if the content relationship was equivalent, overlapping or disjoint.

Table 5: Language content relationship in multilingual signs

Content relationship	Number of images	(%)
Equivalent	6	5,9
Overlapping	14	13,7
Disjoint	73	71,6
N/A	9	8,8
Total	102	100

Out of the 102 multilingual signs visual marking was found on 48 of them (47.06%). 33 images had visually marked English, 10 images Norwegian and 5 images 'Other'. Figure 19 shows the type of visual marking that was used to mark English on multilingual signs. Visual marking by color is the most commonly used type of English marking, 60% of the signs had this type of marking. 48,5% of the signs had visual marking by style and size. Finally, the least used type of visual marking was marking by position with only 36,4%.

The results showing the type of visual marking used to mark Norwegian is shown in figure 20. These results are very different from the visual marking in English. Size is the most commonly used type of visual marking of Norwegian and is found in 80% of the signs. Color is the least used type and is found in only 10% of the signs. Position as type of visual marking is found in 40% of the images and style is found in 50% of the images.

Figure 19: Type of visual marking: English

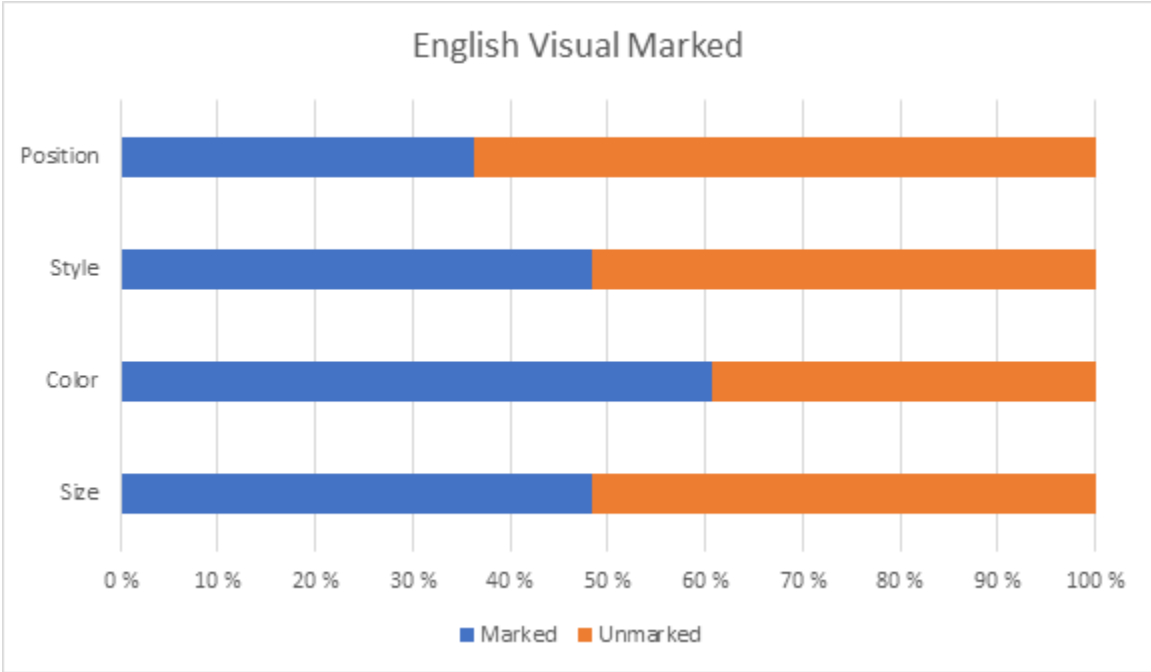
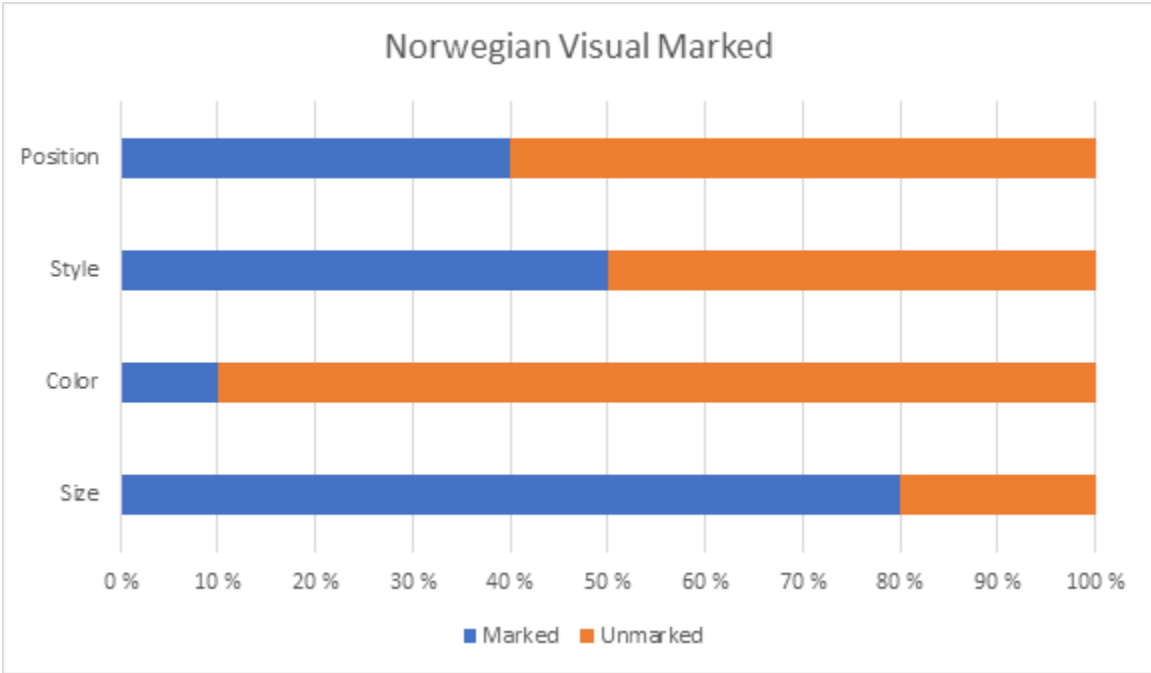


Figure 20: Type of visual marking: Norwegian



## 5.2 Discussion of Findings

The results of the analysis are clear but complex. There are more monolingual signs in Norwegian than there are monolingual signs in English. However, what is quite interesting to find is that there are more multilingual signs, signs in English and other languages combined (54,3%), than there are signs in Norwegian (45,7%), meaning that monolingual Norwegian signs are in fact in minority.

When comparing the different streets, Bergelandsgata is the only street that has a higher percentage of monolingual Norwegian signs than the other categories combined, the Norwegian signs make up 59,3%. These results are perhaps as expected since Bergelandsgata is a more 'ordinary' city street and does not share the international image of the other two streets. What was interesting to see was that all the ten signs of religious matter included in the study were found in Bergelandsgata.

Pedersgata and Fargegata both have more monolingual signs in Norwegian than English, 42% of the total in Pedersgata and 41,8% in Fargegata. However, the multilingual signs combined with the monolingual English and other signs constitute the majority in both streets.

Norwegian is represented more often than English in top-down signs. As Table 4 and Figure 17 imply, only 7,4 % of the top-down signs collected are in English and 22,2% are multilingual. In contrast, English signs represent 32,1% of the bottom-up signs, 24,5% of them are multilingual and the remaining are in Norwegian, which means that the majority of the signs in fact contains English. These results show that English and multilingualism are considerably more common in the bottom-up signs than they are in top-down signs. These findings support Lanza's (2004) argument that English is still considered 'foreign' since it is not widely used in the government. However, the results also show that there is interest in using English in the public sphere when the majority of the signs put up by shops and private businesses make at least some use of it. This gives a clear impression that it is considered useful and arguably necessary to use English to reach out to more people.

Fargegata has, in addition to being a very popular street for locals, become a very popular tourist attraction. If looked at as a tourist attraction it is only natural that the majority of signs found in the street were adapted to an international language. The languages on the signs are adapted to the audience, and in the case of Fargegata a big part of the audience is international.

While not a tourist street in the same sense, Pedersgata is known as an international street that hosts a variety of international shops and food spots. One can argue that a street known for being international is expected to have signs including other languages than Norwegian. Perhaps the surprise here is that the difference is not even larger.

The category of domains with the highest percentage of English monolingual signs, compared to monolingual and multilingual signs, was the domain 'Stickers and Street Art.' Images using English only represented 68% of the total signs in this category. This could possibly be connected with the international contemporary street and urban art festival, Nuart, held in Stavanger every year. Considering that international artists also share their art it is not very surprising that a part of the signs in this category are English. Several small tiles with text in English as the one shown in figure 21 were found in Pedersgata. The researcher did not succeed in finding out who made them and placed them in the street. There might be more than the ones found while conducting the study as some of them were quite hidden. What they all had in common was that the text was in English and they all had encouraging messages written on them, such as 'you are enough' and 'all power to the people'

The domain also includes stickers, which makes up the majority of the category. Stickers were found in all three streets. A total of 45 stickers were found, 19 in Fargegata, 17 in Pedersgata and 9 in Bergelandsgata. What is interesting about stickers is that they might not have a direct relation to the city they are found in. Figure 22 shows a sticker of a campervan which appears to be from Germany, and was probably placed on a trip to Stavanger. Therefore, stickers might be placed by visitors who want to spread a message or catch people's attention. There were found several duplicates of stickers which might imply that they are placed randomly throughout the city on several locations.

Figure 21: Tile with text



Figure 22: Die dicke Olga



The category that stood out as being the only category with no monolingual Norwegian signs was “tattoo parlor.” Eight images were found from this category, all found in Fargegata and Pedersgata, and seven of these are monolingual English. An example of a tattoo parlor found in Fargegata is shown in Figure 23. In this case the window frame is considered as the frame of the signs. The name of the tattoo studio, the location they refer to as ‘port of Stavanger’ and the date when it was established are all written in English. One of the signs is multilingual with the



majority of text written in Norwegian except from the name of the tattoo studio. Figure 24, found in Pedersgata, shows a sign that tells the customers when they will be back from vacation and how to request an appointment in the meantime. The fact that this information is all written in Norwegian can be understood as their customer group being mainly Norwegian speakers. If the main customer group is Norwegian, one might wonder why all the names of tattoo parlors are in English. According to Edwards (Edwards 1994:76) English is considered a trendy and international language that most people recognize; tattoo parlors might be seen as something exotic, which might explain the choice of language.

Figure 23: Solid Tattoo & Piercing



Figure 24: Multilingual tattoo parlor sign



The findings show that the majority of signs contain English. Monolingual English signs were less common than monolingual Norwegian signs, but the number of signs containing English was larger than the monolingual Norwegian signs.

In the category of top-down, bottom-up and religious signs the bottom-up category was the most dominant one. This is not very surprising since the two streets included in the study with the most signs collected (78,3%), Pedersgata and Fargegata, are arenas for private businesses and alternative factors such as street art. The top-down category had a larger number of Norwegian signs, whereas the bottom-up category had a higher number of signs containing English. Only ten religious signs were found, and they were all found in Bergelandsgata.

Two domain categories stand out when it comes to monolingual languages. The categories with the most signs in Norwegian were the 'info' and 'other'. On the other end of the scale was the 'stickers and street art' category where the majority of the signs were in English.

## 6 The representation and functions of English and Norwegian

This chapter presents the qualitative part of the study and discusses the second and third research questions: ‘How is English represented differently from Norwegian in the linguistic landscape?’ and ‘What does this tell us about the functions of English in Norwegian urban life?’ The main focus of this chapter is on visual marking and language content relationship.

In total, 48 out of the 102 multilingual signs, or 47%, had some kind of visual marking on them that corresponded with the language use. One discovery that was made is that English is often written in *italics* in multilingual signs. Figure 25 is a multilingual bottom-up sign put up by a hotel. The sign tells the audience when the doors are open and how to get in if one enters outside opening hours. The information given in English is equivalent to the information given in Norwegian. This is not very surprising because a hotel can expect visitors or tourists who do not speak Norwegian, and it is important that the information is received by everyone. The information in Norwegian is placed in the upper part of the signs, which Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) refers to as the ideal position. This means that the writer wants you to look there first, but if that information is not relevant to you, you can read it in English. The writing in English is visually marked by change in font style: because it is written in *italics* it highlights that it is written in a different language.

A similar example is shown in figure 26. This is a top-down sign placed by the municipality of Stavanger. The sign is placed on a bench where people can sit down and relax. It also encourages the ones sitting on the bench to make room for others and not to litter. The information in Norwegian is in this case also put in the ideal position, and the writing in English is in *italics*. The two examples are therefore somewhat similar, however there is an interesting difference. In contrast to figure 25, where the information was equivalent in both languages, figure 26 has overlapping information. The main information is equivalent, but the finishing sentence is different in the two languages. The information in Norwegian ends with a greeting from the municipality of Stavanger: “Greetings from the neighborhood and your municipality.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> My translation. “Hilsen nabolaget og kommunen din.”

In contrast, the information in English ends with “Thank you!” This is interesting because it gives the impression that the Norwegian speakers are expected to be part of the neighborhood and the municipality. The English greeting is more impersonal and gives the impression that the information in English is for ‘others,’ and that it is expected that you understand the writing in Norwegian in order to be part of the neighborhood and the municipality.

Figure 25: Kjære gjest/*Dear guest*



Figure 26: Her kan du hvile beina eller nyte en matbit/*Have a rest or a bite*



Figure 27 shows an example where English has been visually marked both in size and position. This image shows an advertisement for Lycamobile. Lycamobile is a mobile operator that works

across borders. They are known for both national and international plans. In this particular sign it might be difficult to distinguish which language is visually marked by color. The text “free sim” is written in white on a blue background, whereas the equivalent “gratis sim” is written in blue on a white background. It is therefore the visual marking by position that decides what is more important. In this case, the writing in English has the ideal position and is therefore considered to be standing out. Considering that this mobile operator offers plans for international use, it might be natural to consider that this advertisement is meant to reach out to people who speak other languages than Norwegian.

Figure 27: Lycamobile



Figure 28 shows an example of a multilingual sign where visual marking is not used. This sign was found on a bench in Fargegata. In this case the English text has the same size, style and color as the Norwegian text. One can of course, again, argue that the Norwegian writing is placed in the ideal position and the English in the real position. In this case it is concluded that the positioning is the way it is due to the shape and size of the sign, and that the wording sounded more natural this way.

Figure 28: Example of multilingual sign where visual marking is not used.



Visual marking by color is the type of marking used most frequently in English. Figure 29 is a multilingual cultural poster found in Fargegata with English that is visually marked by color. The main language used in the sign is English, and Norwegian is the second language used. The first and most visual impression is the large yellow text “Killer Queen”, however, since the posters main language is English, the Norwegian part is what is marked to stand out from the English text. A colored background is used to highlight the time and place of the event. What is interesting here is that the content relationship is disjoint, which means that none of the English and Norwegian text has the same content. In this image, English is used to present what the event is about, who has the leading role as well as some excerpts of reviews. Because of this, one can assume that the whole event will be in English. However, the time and place of the event, and where to get tickets is written in Norwegian. Considering that dates are quite universal in several languages, most English speakers would presumably understand when the event is happening. A possible reason why the content relationship is disjoint might be that the poster for this event is made by ‘Killer Queen’ and used for all their events possibly in several countries. If this is the case it is natural to assume that the time and place are added by the agency or venue hosting the event, which might explain the disjoint content relationship.

Figure 29: Disjoint content relationship and Norwegian visual marking



Figure 30 shows a multilingual bottom-up sign belonging to the business domain. The sign promotes Pedersgata Utvikling AS, a business that owns and develops properties in Pedersgata and the turnkey contractor 'Vision bygg AS'. What stands out most in this image is 'Vision' in green writing. This English word is visually marked in a highly saturated color. Kress and van Leeuwen point out that highly saturated colors are often associated with something positive. What is also interesting is Graedlers (2002) reference to English as a prestige language, a language that is used to promote something innovative. Companies working to strengthen and develop a part of the city would definitely want to approach the public as positive and innovative.

Figure 30: Vision bygg AS



The previous examples have shown how visual marking can be used to highlight information in a different language from the main language of a poster. However, it should be noted that visual marking is commonly used for other purposes than highlighting language choice. Figure 31 shows a monolingual English sign, belonging to the bottom-up category and classified as a ‘business’ sign. The majority of the text is in black writing, however, the word ‘boss’ is visually marked in blue. In this case it is not a switch of language that is marked, considering the sign is monolingual English. The word is marked to stand out because the word ‘boss’ has a double meaning, firstly as an English loanword in Norwegian which means someone who is in charge, and as a Norwegian word which means ‘garbage’. The catch here is that the company is one of the companies collecting garbage in the region. This means that even though the sign is in English, the catchy phrase is directed towards speakers of Norwegian, and would probably not make much sense to English speakers.

Figure 31:





Figure 32 shows a traffic sign found in Pedersgata. The sign is classified as top-down as it belongs to the municipality of Stavanger. This sign has a very dramatic visual layout with a neon yellow background. This type of color indicates that the sign is a temporary informational sign, and the color is used to catch the viewer's attention and to make them pay attention to whatever information is on the sign. In this case the sign informs pedestrians, cyclists and motorists that this street is part of the driving route for a self-driving bus. Surprisingly, this information which is relevant to everyone using this street is in Norwegian only. Since Pedersgata is a municipal street, the municipality of Stavanger is responsible for maintenance and traffic signs. The municipality is in charge of what is written on the signs, and could have put equivalent information in English, but chose not to. However, the visual layout makes it possible for non-Norwegian speakers to see that there is something to be aware of; however, unfortunately it is not clear exactly what.

Figure 32: Informational traffic sign



In signs where Norwegian is visually marked, the use of size is the most frequent type of visual marking. In Figure 33 one can see a bottom-up sign belonging to the Wellness & Beauty domain. The sign is multilingual, and both English and Norwegian are used. The English text here explains that an advance appointment is not necessary. The language content relationship is disjoint, which means that the sign does not actually tell in English where exactly it is that one can drop in. That information is given in Norwegian, and explains that it is at the hair salon that one can drop in. Size is used to visually mark this information in Norwegian. As the English term 'drop in' is a commonly used one in Norwegian contexts, while the single word 'Frisør'

would not necessarily make sense to a non-Norwegian, it seems clear that this sign is directed towards Norwegian speakers.

Figure 33: Drop in Paris Frisør



One discovery made was that no information in English was available on signs related to public transportation. Figure 34 shows a typical sign found on bus stops in Stavanger. The sign is a monolingual Norwegian top-down sign that gives information about timetable, how to get tickets, and how to get a refund in case of delays of more than 20 minutes. It also explains that the ticket costs more if you pay for it on board. All this information is relevant to all of Kolumbus' customers, including the non-Norwegian speakers. Kolumbus is responsible for public transport in the county and is owned by Rogaland county municipality. Much of this information can be found in English on their webpage, which makes it even more questionable why it is not shown in English in the public sphere, where visitors to the city are arguably more likely to look for it.

Figure 34: bus stop timetable



The food and drink category had a very even distribution between multilingual, monolingual English and monolingual Norwegian signs; in addition, it also had the highest representation of monolingual signs in other languages, here marked as ‘other’ (see figure 35). Figure 36 shows the window of a relatively new ice cream parlor, or gelato place in Pedersgata. Three different languages are presented in the window: Norwegian, Italian and English. The three languages are all presented with a different text style, differing both in font and size. It is arguably not accidental that the ‘Handmade in Stavanger’ is written in English, this could be a way to get the attention of tourists who want to get a ‘taste of Stavanger.’ What is really interesting is the clever use of Sidd’is, Siddis is actually a nickname for people from Stavanger and ‘is’ is the Norwegian word for ice cream, which might give associations to locals that this gelato place sells a local ice cream inspired by Italy. The content relationship between the languages is classified as overlapping. The type of product sold is presented in both Norwegian and Italian, the Italian term gelato adding a more exclusive association, suggesting that what is sold is something of superior quality (as might be expected of Italian ice cream) and not just an everyday brand. The drawing of an ice cream cone next to the logo also explains which product can be bought here. This sign has used a clever way to include most of its visitors, including catching the attention of the locals familiar with the term Siddis.

Figure 35: Monolingual ‘Other’ Casa Salitas



Figure 36: Sidd'is gelato



The fact that the study was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic also made its impact on the findings. Signs related to Covid in terms of information or recommendations were so common as to be included as a category of its own. For these signs, one may argue that it has been particularly important to make sure the information reaches everyone. As figure 18 (see p. 39) shows, there was an even distribution of the languages in the Covid domain. Figure 37 shows an informational top-down sign provided by the municipality of Stavanger. The sign reminds people to keep their distance. The information in this sign is overlapping: the information about keeping distance is the same; however, but the greeting from “your city” is in Norwegian only. This is the same type of distancing shown in figure 26 (see p. 48) where the text in Norwegian becomes more personal. It might also be noted that the Norwegian text is here marked as the most

important part of the sign by its larger size; rather than italics, the small-size font here indicates that English is the translation, not the main text.

Figure 38 shows another example of a Covid sign. The sign is monolingual Norwegian and explains that orders are only accepted at the table. Even though this sign is in Norwegian only, an effort has been made to make the sign more understandable to more people. By including a picture of a bar with a sign showing not to go there, the message can be understood by non-Norwegian speakers as well. While the use of visual symbols as an alternative to text has not generally been included in this study, this example clearly shows such a practice as a functional alternative, potentially reaching also those readers who know neither Norwegian or English.

Figure 37: keep distance please



Figure 38: Covid order information



Out of the total amount of signs collected only one sign had the equivalent information in Norwegian and English with absolutely no difference between how the two were represented. This was a multilingual bottom-up sign found in Pedersgata. The sign in Figure 39 shows a restaurant menu, where both headlines and the dishes are presented in both languages and there is no difference in how the two were presented. The same color, size and font is used for both English and Norwegian.

Figure 39: Restaurant menu with equivalent text



To summarize, the aim of this chapter was to answer research questions two and three: How is English represented differently from Norwegian in the linguistic landscape? and: What does this tell us about the functions of English in Norwegian urban life?

In many cases, English is represented in a different way from Norwegian. Visually, it is often marked as ‘the second choice’, given in italics as a translation of the unmarked Norwegian text. However, in a narrow majority of the cases (53%), the different languages were not marked visually at all: rather, visual means were used for highlighting other aspects of the signs, such as key words or concepts, irrespective of their language.

On the other hand, English and Norwegian are virtually never used in a truly parallel way with no marking or difference of function: only a single restaurant menu (Figure 39) shows the

two languages used in a completely equivalent way. English is commonly used in the form of set phrases or terms that are well known to Norwegian speakers (drop-in, my one and only, the boss in town), while both English and other languages are used for stylistic purposes, indicating a certain quality (vision, gelato). In informative signs, Norwegian is usually represented as the 'main' text in a regular font, while the English translation is provided below in italics or a small-size font.

Interestingly, in the material English sometimes appears as a less personal, less inclusive mode of communication. Signs by Stavanger municipality show overlapping content relationships, where the information in Norwegian is made more personal, giving the reader a sense of belonging, whereas the English is more distant. This particular difference is shown only in the top-down signs provided by the municipality, suggesting that this is the attitude of the authorities, not the urban life in general.

## 7 Conclusion

The present study has explored the use of English in the linguistic landscape of selected streets in Stavanger. Multilingual signs were analyzed to examine how visual marking might have an impact on how English is represented compared to Norwegian. The aim of the study was to answer the following research questions.

1. How commonly is English used in the linguistic landscape of Bergelandsgata, Pedersgata and Fargegata, compared to Norwegian?
2. How is English represented differently from Norwegian in the linguistic landscape?
3. What does this tell us about the functions of English in Norwegian urban life?

The study found that there were more monolingual Norwegian signs than monolingual English signs. However, signs containing at least some English were more common than monolingual Norwegian signs in the material surveyed. The streets with the most English signs were Pedersgata and Fargegata.

In both the top-down and bottom-up categories, Norwegian signs were more common than English ones. However, in two domains English dominated completely: ‘Stickers & Street Art’ and ‘Tattoo Parlors’. The dominance of English in these domains may reflect the impact of tourism and international festivals such as Nuart on the linguistic landscape, although in the case of tattoo parlors there may also be a question of a domain-specific convention or style. The study also found that the domains ‘business’ and ‘info’ had the least representation of English, which is perhaps surprising, considering that one of the arguably main sources of internationalization in Stavanger is the oil industry. One of the effects of the oil industry has been to bring a large number of international workers to Stavanger (whose presence is not least reflected in the large international schools, see p. 15) who would clearly benefit from information being available in English.

It was stated in the introduction that the analysis of top-down and bottom-up signs might reveal different attitudes of both authorities and populations towards minority languages or towards English as a global language. This study shows that signs can in fact indicate much



about attitudes. Perhaps the most worrying finding of the present study is the usage of Stavanger municipality, who seem to be using English to address ‘others’, while reserving the inclusive “greetings from the neighborhood and your municipality” and “greetings from your city” to Norwegian speakers only. This distinction seems to imply that only Norwegian speakers can truly be considered members of the community, and is worrying because it might be seen to contribute to a separation between ‘us’ and ‘them’.

The analysis of visual marking on multilingual signs showed a difference in the type of visual marking used to highlight English versus Norwegian. In top-down signs, Norwegian would commonly appear as the main language, with English being marked in italics or small-size font as a translation; However, it was found that visual marking is mainly used for other things than language choice, such as highlighting keywords.

What do these findings tell us about the functions of English in Norwegian urban life? The categorization of signs by domain, and the close study of examples from different domains, suggests that the languages are to some extent used for different purposes. On the whole, the functions of the signs collected, and of the languages used, varied enormously. Perhaps the most interesting finding here is that English and Norwegian only exceptionally appear as completely parallel and undifferentiated in a single sign: in most cases, each presents different content (disjoint relationship) or are clearly marked as ‘main text’ and ‘translation’. The signs differ greatly with regard to their implied expectations of the reader’s competence: while some seem to presuppose at least some knowledge of both languages, others complement the text-based information with images (see figure 39 and 38).

The material shows a considerable difference between the use of English in top-down signs compared to bottom-up signs. As well as the municipality addressing the reader in a more inclusive way in Norwegian, it is notable that important bus information does not appear in English, even though it would conceivably be equally important for non-Norwegian speakers. The findings could be interpreted as showing a difference in how the public uses English compared to the municipality, suggesting that the general public in Stavanger views the city as more international than its government does.

The study of Linguistic Landscapes is a relatively new field of study. To the researcher’s knowledge, this is the first study of this kind to be conducted in Stavanger. Considering that Stavanger is a relatively big city, the findings of this study only represents a small portion of the

whole picture. It would be very interesting to explore what other researchers might find in Stavanger if a similar study were to be conducted, possibly with a bigger scope or including areas with a larger representation of top-down signs. Also, considering that a city is in constant change, and the world is becoming more global, there will always be room for updated studies within the field.

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