The Role of English in Aruba's Linguistic Landscape

Representation of Aruba's four dominant languages in written form in the public sphere

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Date: 13 April 2016

Word count: 10.182

Universiteit Utrecht

Abstract

This study aims to investigate the presence of English in Aruban society nowadays, and more specifically, to gauge the position of the other dominant languages in a climate in which English, an unofficial language, seems to be on the rise. Recent developments and growing internationalisation appear to have an impact on Aruba's multilingual community. By means of linguistic landscaping, the written language in the public sphere in Aruba will be examined, as linguistic landscaping can help expose the underlying status of languages and linguistic communities (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006). The present study does this by examining photos of signs in three different areas of the island. Results show that on the whole, English is used most often in written language in the public sphere. Results also indicate that English appears to be the language that is preferred in the tourist sector, whereas Papiamento is truly the language of the locals. Dutch and Spanish are used less. Of these, Dutch is mainly used in top-down communication, whereas Spanish is almost exclusively used in bottom-up communication. The present study strongly suggests further research regarding multilingual signs.

Contents

1. Introduction

Aruba, the smallest of the three ABC islands in the Caribbean, lies just off the coast of Venezuela and is home to 103,441 people (World Bank, 2015). The island, which is part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, has had two official languages since 2003, Dutch and Papiamento (Leuverink, 2011). However, its inhabitants are generally multilingual and speak, in varying combinations, the dominant languages Papiamento, Dutch, Spanish and English (CBS Aruba, 2014). In a multilingual society, apart from hearing many languages being spoken in daily life, one also comes across a great variety in written languages that can be found in public domains. The present study will focus on the latter, and will examine written language in the public sphere by means of linguistic landscaping. This will be done by studying pictures of language on signs. Using linguistic landscaping to investigate different areas will help expose the dynamics behind language choice on the island (Kotze & Du Plessis, 2010). Specifically, this study will look at the status of English on the island, which seems to be used increasingly and has high prestige (Carroll, 2015) even though it is not an official language. There is reason to believe the role of English in Aruba might change in the future: the expansion of American tourism in Aruba plays an important part in this respect, and many islanders encourage their children to pursue higher education in the United States. If these trends continue at a steady rate, it might even be possible for English to eventually become an official language in Aruba. However, that is a bold assumption to make without conducting the necessary research. Therefore, this study aims to map the use of English across different neighbourhoods on the island, and will compare and contrast the findings. By doing so, it will become clear if, and if so, to what extent the other languages are influenced by the rise of English. In short, the present study will examine how Aruba's four dominant languages are represented in the linguistic landscape of its multilingual society, and what role English plays in Aruban society.

To fully understand the relevance of the present study, one must understand how Aruba came to be a multilingual island and why English plays a key role in the island's finances. Many languages, such as Mandarin, Portuguese and French creoles can be heard on the island nowadays, but Papiamento, Dutch, English and Spanish remain most used (Alofs, 2008). Of these four, Papiamento is spoken in the majority of people's homes (CBS Aruba, 2014). The exact origins of Papiamento are still under debate; Jacobs (2009) states that scholars are evenly divided where the Spanish versus Portuguese origins of Papiamento are concerned. On the

one hand, Papiamento is seen as a Spanish creole, while it is viewed as an Afro-Portuguese creole on the other. He therefore suggests calling Papiamento an Iberian-based creole language, developed from an Upper Guinea creole variety that was transported to Curacao in the days of slave trade (Jacobs, 2009). Whether Papiamento developed on the ABC islands or was imported in full form remains a controversial topic as well. However, scholars agree that Papiamento "established itself as a communication vehicle on Curaçao in the second half of the 17th century" (Jacobs & van der Wal, 2015, p. 44). Grant states that Papiamento was transported from Curacao to Aruba in the 18th century in full developed state (Grant, 2008). Nowadays, it is widely spoken and has been an official language since 2003, now known to have influences from Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, English and several African languages (Alofs, 2008). Before the Spanish came to Aruba, the island was inhabited by native tribes. The languages spoken by these tribes have little to no influence on Aruba's present-day linguistic situation, let alone on Aruban culture nowadays (Alofs & Merkies, 2001). Around 1499 the Spanish "discovered" Aruba, eradicating the natives and bringing the Spanish language to the island. They were in control of Aruba until 1636 and, even though Spanish presence varied in the ages to follow, the language survived on the island. One example of this is that, until today, many popular television channels are entirely in Spanish, which also has to do with recent migration from South America. Although the language itself is quite popular in Aruba, recent research has shown that Spanish mostly enjoys covert prestige among its speakers and that the Arubans' overall image of Spanish immigrants is rather negative (Carroll, 2015).

In 1636, the Dutch West India Company seized the island from the Spanish, and since then the island has played a role in Dutch history. Aruba became a part of a group of islands that together formed the Dutch Antilles. In 1845 this Dutch Caribbean colony consisted of Curacao, Aruba, Bonaire, Saba, Sint Eustatius and half of the island of Sint Maarten (Alofs, 2008). However, since the 1940s, Aruba aspired a direct relationship with the Netherlands, mainly due to tensions with Curacao. After a few decades Aruba was granted the *status aparte*, and obtained autonomy within the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1986 (Hoefte, 1996). English gained importance on the island in the early twentieth century, when the oil industry started and many immigrants, with varying linguistic backgrounds, came to Aruba for work. Over the years, migration within the Caribbean has contributed to the use of English as well. Nowadays English is the most important language in tourism on the island, as this business is tailored towards visitors from the US and Canada (Alofs, 2008).

The touristic appeal of the Caribbean has a major influence on the island's economic situation and is its main source of income. Until 1985, Aruba used to rely mainly on its oil refinery, LAGO, which opened in the 1920s. The oil business and tourist industry that developed from the 1950s onwards were the two major pillars which Aruban economy relied on. Yet since the refinery closed in 1985, the island has been mainly dependent on tourists coming to the island. Business is steady, even though tourism proves to be less reliable than the oil refinery used to be, as long-term contracts in tourism are rare in Aruba (Alofs & Merkies, 2001). Recent numbers indicate that tourists already bring in 68% of the island's income (Ridderstaat, 2014) and the expansion of tourism has been on the government's agenda continuously, especially since LAGO closed down (Alofs & Merkies, 2001). Most tourists coming to Aruba are native speakers of English, visiting from the United States of America. The number of visitors per year has climbed steadily over the past decades, and has reached over 1 million visitors per year since 2014, of which over 600,000 people are visiting from the USA (ATA, 2014), which could explain the Arubans' choice to use English to communicate with this group.

With this linguistic history in mind, it is striking that even though Dutch has been spoken on the island for centuries and is an official language, it is the L1 (first language) for only 6% of the population, whereas Papiamento is the mother tongue for 69%. Spanish is spoken at home by 13.5% of the population. English, on the other hand, has 7% of L1 speakers (CBS Aruba, 2010). Even though the numbers of Dutch and English L1 speakers are comparable, it seems that English has more overt prestige than Dutch, at least among highly educated Arubans. A study by Leuverink indicates that most highly educated Arubans believe that using English gives them a higher status. Moreover, participants in Leuverink's study said that proficiency in English makes it easier to find a job (2011), which could stem from the fact that English is the main language within the tourist industry. As this industry is continually expanding and the number of English speaking tourists increases every year (ATA, 2014), this gives reason to believe that the use of English could be increasing in Aruba. Leuverink's research was conducted within the Ministry of Education's project "Adviesgroep Taalraad" focusing on the development of a linguistic policy for Aruba, as the Ministry aims to establish a structure within multilingualism (Leuverink, 2011). A linguistic policy has not yet been introduced, however. Other recent research has indicated that the use of Dutch declines in education, tourism, business and in governmental institutions (Mijts, 2006). Research by Dijkhoff & Pereira (2010) suggests a problem regarding language in education in the entire Caribbean. Their study

indicates that in Aruba, Dutch is mainly used as instruction language in primary and secondary education, whereas both Papiamento and English are more common than Dutch in daily life (Dijkhoff & Pereira, 2010). However, use of English in higher education is increasing. For example, on their website, the University of Aruba states to offer classes in both English and Dutch (University of Aruba, 2016). This divergence could result in language problems among students. Aruba has quite recently realised that its rich linguistic history and its multilingual society are valuable and definitely worth studying. Many studies and projects are currently ongoing. A study concerning the linguistic landscape however, has not yet been performed. This study aims to fill this gap and will address suggestions for further research, as Aruba as a linguistic area offers great potential.

The present study consists of six chapters, of which this introductory chapter is the first. The second chapter will elaborate on recent developments within the study of linguistic landscaping and will illustrate how linguistic landscaping, as an instrument to investigate a speech community, can give insight into language status. Additionally, relevant research will be discussed and the research question will be formulated. In chapter three the chosen method will be explained. Materials will be elaborated on in detail and the procedure will be described. The fourth chapter describes this study's results, which will be discussed in chapter five. Chapter six will summarise the project and conclusions will be drawn. The conclusion will also provide suggestions for further research and will briefly touch upon the present study's limitations.

2. Literature review

2.1 Linguistic landscaping in theory

The method that was chosen for this study, linguistic landscaping, is a relatively new system of research in sociolinguistics and applied linguistics. The concept of linguistic landscaping is used in several ways. Occasionally, the term has been used to describe and analyse the language situation in specific areas. Other studies include the history of language or different levels of language knowledge in certain areas, and the term is even used to describe the linguistic system, spread and boundaries of a single language or dialect (Backhaus, 2007). In the present study linguistic landscaping refers to "visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region" (Landry & Bourhis, 1997, p. 23). The linguistic landscape will be analysed by means of a camera safari (Hancock, 2012). This use of linguistic

landscaping first arose in areas that require intense language planning, such as multilingual communities in Belgium and Québec (Canada). Landry & Bourhis state that it is to such cases that "we owe the origin of the concept of linguistic landscape as a marker of the geographical territory occupied by distinctive language communities within multilingual states" (1997, p. 24). Studying a linguistic landscape according to this concept signifies analysing all written language in the public sphere. Thus, in the present study the linguistic landscape of an area is believed to consist of "the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings" (Landry & Bourhis, 1997, p. 25). Studying the linguistic landscape of multilingual areas provides insight into the status of linguistic codes that are used in the community. It is commonly believed that an area's linguistic landscape "functions as an informational marker on the one hand, and as a symbolic marker communicating the relative power and status of linguistic communities in a given territory on the other" (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006, p. 8).

The focus in the present study will be on urban areas, on the one hand because rural areas provide less textual data, and on the other hand because urban areas attract immigrants, and the linguistic landscape can thus easily be linked with language presence and cultural diversity. On a side note, however, it should be noted that language presence does not guarantee that a language is also textually present in the linguistic landscape (Barni & Bagna, 2010). On the other hand, if a language is textually present, this does not always reflect the *de facto* language use of a community, either. For instance, old textual signs might not represent actual language use any longer, but could still be present on the street. Therefore, when specifically investigating language use, triangulation is necessary (Kotze & Du Plessis, 2010; Blackwood, 2015), for example by using interviews or ethnographic observations to map the use of linguistic codes. However, as the present study predominantly focuses on the presence of written English in the linguistic landscape in specific areas of Aruba, information about the *de facto* language use will be ignored. If this study yields notable results further research can provide more insight in this respect.

2.2 Linguistic landscaping in practice

Previous research has indicated the importance of understanding a particular country or city's linguistic landscape. A particular study that, like the present study, partly focuses on tourism as well, is Moriarty's analysis of the use of Irish in the touristic village of Dingle (Co. Kerry). In

that study it was suggested that, even though the town is presented as authentic Irish, less than half of the population speaks Irish in daily life, and most textual signs are in English. What is interesting here is that words like *slán* (goodbye) and a selection of phrases indicating authenticity are used in tourist encounters to strengthen the image of Dingle as the "Other". Additionally, some shop signs were written in Irish. There was a difference between tourist shops and local shops: the tourist shop signs use a Celtic font, whereas local shops use a neutral font (Moriarty, 2015). It is unclear whether or not any of Aruba's dominant languages are used to indicate authenticity, but if they are, it could be an indicator of how Aruba's linguistic landscape might shape itself in the future. According to Hornikx et al. commercial companies tend to adjust their output to their customers' culture and understanding (2010), but whether companies in Aruba will adjust to English speaking tourists, or use Papiamento instead to express authenticity remains to be seen.

Research regarding other multilingual communities in urban areas may also contribute to the present study. Barni & Bagna studied the factors that influence the visibility of certain languages in the cityscape of Rome, Italy, and observed a contradiction in language use: on the one hand, cities strive for monolingualism, as cities seem to be the centre "where unitary linguistic models are the strongest" (Barni & Bagna, 2010, p. 5), but on the other hand, cities are the places in which, partly due to immigration, cultures and thus languages come together and plurilingualism reigns (Barni & Bagna, 2010). How this theory manifests itself in urban areas in Aruba, which has not established an official language policy yet, is something that this study could shed light on.

Furthermore, the role of English as a global language should not be overlooked. English emerged when Aruba's oil industry began to flourish in the 1920s, and has most likely functioned as a *lingua franca* between employees of different cultural backgrounds (Alofs & Merkies, 2001). As tourists are Aruba's main source of income nowadays, and most tourists' main language is English, English may still be functioning as *lingua franca* on the island. If this is the case, English meets Kachru's criteria for the Expanding Circle of English. Kachru's famous theory divides the English speaking world in three segments: the Inner Circle, Outer Circle and Expanding Circle. The illustration below visualises how countries are divided across the spectrum.

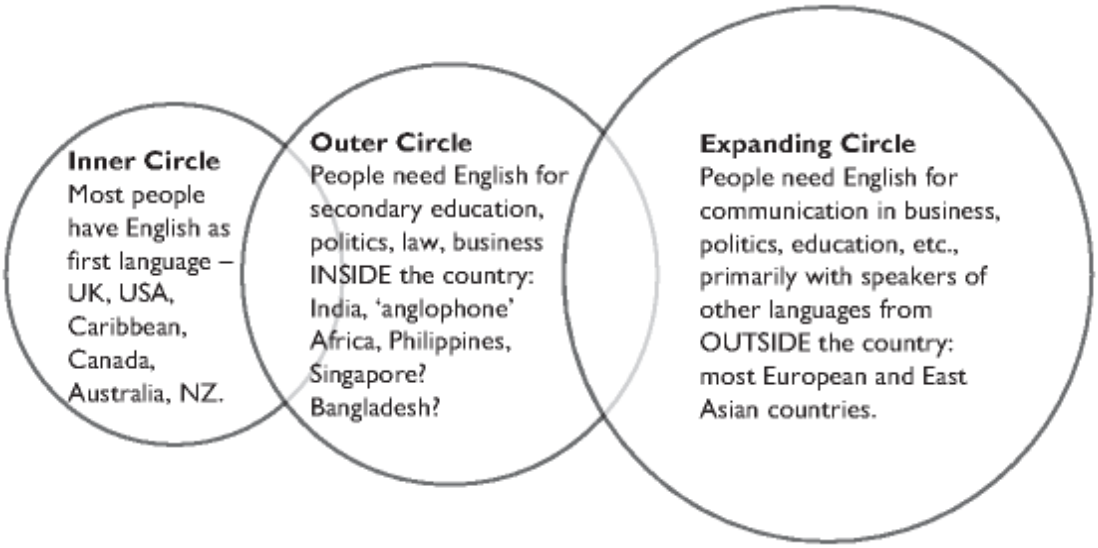

Figure 1. Kachru's Circle model (Melchers & Shaw, 2013, p. 8).

Kachru defines the circles as follows: in Inner Circle countries, the majority of people has English as their mother tongue, and English is used in all layers of society within the country. In Outer Circle countries, English is an official language and is a second language for the majority of people and is used in official functions as well as in daily life. Expanding Circle countries use English mainly to communicate with foreign language speakers from outside the country (Melchers & Shaw, 2013). This indicates that, if the Aruban government is now beginning to use English as a means of communication within the country, this might indicate that the country's status is shifting towards the Outer Circle. In a study highlighting the role of English as a global language by Huebner (2006) it was found that, even though Thailand does not meet all Outer Circle requirements, English seems to be taking over the role of major language for wider communication in Bangkok from Thai and Chinese. Something similar might be happening in Aruba. To investigate this, it is pivotal to look at the use of English across multiple areas of use. It is also important to note that, even though parts of the Caribbean may belong to the Inner Circle, the ABC islands do not, as these islands do not have English as an official language. Moreover, as stated before, English is only the L1 for a small percentage of inhabitants of Aruba.

Several studies investigating linguistic landscapes use specific categories to analyse written language across different areas. Ben-Rafael et al. (2006) compare the use of Israel-Hebrew, Arabic and English in Israeli cities to discover patterns in the LL of communities where Israeli Jews, Palestinian Israelis and non-Israeli Palestinians live. To this purpose, written language was categorised distinguishing between *Top-down* and *Bottom-up*. In this context,

Top-down stands for authoritarian communication from official institutions, whereas *Bottom-up* communication embodies communication from professional, commercial and private agencies or individuals (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006). Kotze & Du Plessis (2010) follow a similar approach in their study regarding language use in the Xhariep (South Africa), and both studies add further categorisation to distinguish language use per domain. For example, distinctions are made between governmental and political items in the *Top-down* category. In the *Bottom-down* category, shop signs and restaurant signs were placed in different categories. In both studies, adding categories helped to bring clarity to ways in which multilingual societies function. It appears that knowing what languages are preferred in each category helps to gain a better understanding of society. The present study will therefore be modelled on Ben-Rafael et al. (2006) and Kotze & Du Plessis' (2010) categorisation models.

2.3 Research question

This study aims to investigate the presence of English in Aruban society nowadays, and more specifically, to gauge the position of the other dominant languages in a climate in which English, an unofficial language, seems to be on the rise. Investigating the island's linguistic landscape could give answers to these questions, as a community's linguistic landscape functions as "an informational and symbolic marker, communicating the relative power and status of linguistic communities" (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006, p.9). In Aruba, written languages in the public sphere are not limited to the two official languages, Dutch and Papiamento, and a linguistic policy does not exist. More knowledge on the linguistic landscape of Aruba creates awareness on language use and could potentially be helpful in the process of constructing of a language policy. This study will help fill a gap, as little is known about the linguistic situation in Aruba in general. Linguistic landscaping has never been performed on the island, and it is therefore relevant to consider the current use of written languages in this multilingual community. Aruba is currently experiencing rapid changes, and is aiming for a modern image regarding sustainability and development. Well-organized communication is necessary to bring these goals across, and, in an age where globalisation and internationalisation is fast growing, more knowledge on multilingual situations is highly valuable. Contact with speakers of different languages is becoming more and more common worldwide, yet is even more common on this small, already multilingual island. Considering the above, the following main research question has been formulated:

How are Aruba's four dominant languages represented in the linguistic landscape of its multilingual society, and what is the role of English in Aruban society?

To be able to answer the main research question, the following sub questions will be used :

1. Does presence of the four dominant languages differ per area?

2. How are Aruba's four dominant languages represented in different categories?

3. Method

The present study will investigate the presence of English in Aruban society by means of linguistic landscaping and will be carried out using a quantitative method (Dörnyei, 2007). The sub questions will be answered by means of linguistic landscaping, which in this case means that all written language in specific areas of the public sphere will be photographed and analysed. The data will be categorized based on models used by Ben-Rafael et al. (2006), and Kotze & Du Plessis (2010), where all items are first divided into either top-down or bottom-up messages. Subsequently, the items will be divided into categories. As the present study is small-scaled and will therefore cover fewer and smaller areas than Ben-Rafael et al. or Kotze & Du Plessis, their models will be simplified to fit the scope of this study.

3.1 Materials

3.1.1 Locations

Because of the size of the island and the relatively short time-span that is available for this study, three urban areas were chosen. In Aruba, the distinction between cities, towns and *barios* (neighbourhoods) is not entirely clear. Within Aruban society these terms are synonyms. Therefore this study will simply refer to different locations as areas, to stay as neutral as possible. The linguistic landscapes of Oranjestad (the capital, in the north-west of Aruba), Noord (an area situated in the northern part of the island) and San Nicolas (an area in the south-east of Aruba) will be compared to one another. Oranjestad has 28.294 inhabitants, whereas Noord and San Nicolas have 21.495 and 15.283 inhabitants, respectively (Censo Aruba, 2010). Each of the areas has both authentic as well as tourist streets, and as the areas are distributed evenly across the densely populated parts of the island, they are an accurate representation of Aruban society. The areas are illustrated in Figure 2 below. The eastern part of Aruba will not be included in this study, as that side of the island does not have urban areas. Rural areas will not be included in this study, as written language occurs less outside of towns and will therefore not provide enough data to draw reliable conclusions.

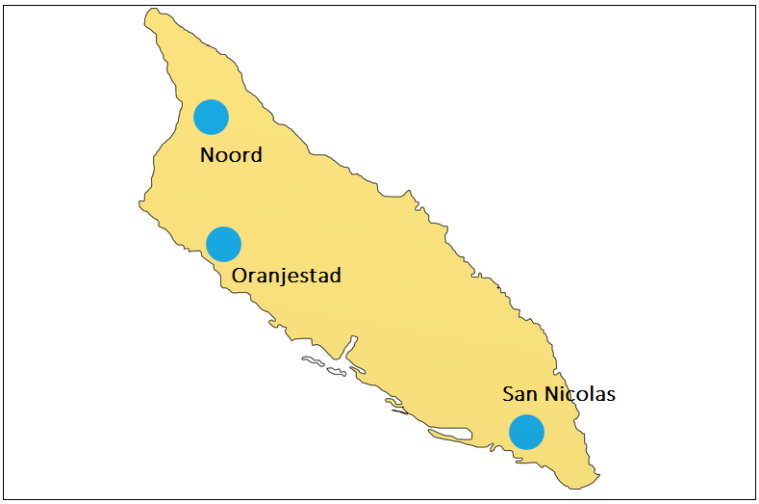

Figure 2. Locations of chosen areas.

From each of these three areas two streets will be covered. One of the streets will be a street close to a touristic landmark or hotel strip, and the other will be in a more authentic and local part of the area. Specific details concerning the streets can be found in Table 1 below. Maps of the specific areas can be found in appendix A. A good indicator of an authentic area is public transport; public transport for locals differs fundamentally from transport for tourists in Aruba. According to local knowledge, tourists tend to travel with big coaches that depart on set times, whereas locals use small vans that depart as soon as enough passengers have entered the vehicle. All signs or posters for a length of approximately 600 meters from the starting point will be photographed to ensure a valid comparison. The number of items per street may vary. However, a difference in sign density could point to interesting conclusions as well. Excel sheets will be used for coding.

	Authentic street	Touristic street
Oranjestad (OS)	Wilhelminastraat – Bus stop Doña Clara	Caya G. F. Betico Croes – Main shopping street
San Nicolas (SN)	Bernhardstraat – Bus stop main square	Bernard Van de Veen Zeppefeldstraat – (former) Main street
Noord (NO)	Caya Frans Figaroa – Bus stop	Route 3, Hotel strip Palm Village

Table 1. Specification of analysed streets.

3.1.2 Items

To analyse written language in the public sphere a number of conditions needs to be set to eliminate invalid or impracticable data. Items will need to meet several criteria before they can be analysed. For this study, items will only be included for categorisation if they are legible from street level; thus everything on, slightly above or under eye level. Damaged items (i.e. heavily weathered signs, damaged posters) will be eliminated from selection. In the case of

shop windows, items that are placed directly on the glass will be included, but items that are merely visible from the outside will be deemed invalid. Additionally, the items need to be stationary.

In cases where there are several items on one building or window, all items will be categorised separately. This means that if a distinction is clear (different material, separate sheet of paper), items will be split. Multiple identical contiguous posters on one wall will be counted as one item, because it is unlikely for people to read the same poster more than once when these items are adjacent. Multiple identical posters in one street, but separated by other posters or a blank space, will be counted as independent items, as people would be able to notice, and read, these posters multiple times. Contiguous stickers (mostly Visa and MasterCard signs) on shop windows will be counted as one item, as they never appear separately and appear to be printed on one sticker sheet.

3.2 Procedure

Top-down messages will be subdivided into three domains: *Cultural*, *Educational*, and *Governmental*. These three domains are based on a more extensive list of domains as used in the source studies by Ben-Rafael et al. (2006) and Kotze & Du Plessis (2010). Each of these domains had subdomains and divisions. For example, Kotze & Du Plessis (2010) divided the domain *Government* into *Local* and *National*. The distinction between these two domains was deemed redundant in the present study, as Aruba's limited size does not allow for clear differentiation between national and local governmental action. As the present study does not focus on any categorisation beyond the initial domains, the subdomains and divisions were deemed redundant for the final analysis. However, several subdomains and divisions were used in the categorisation and coding process, as they helped to ensure that items were placed in the correct domains. For instance, a sign stating opening times of a post office was placed in the *Governmental* domain after analysing it as belong to the division *Post office*, which directs to subdomain *Governmental agencies*. An adjusted list of domains, their respective subdomains and divisions can be found in Table 2.

Domain	Subdomain	Division
Cultural	Museums	
	National monuments	
Educational	Schools	
Governmental	Government agencies	Police station
		Post office
	General government	Road signage
		Warning

Table 2. Top-down categorisation.

The bottom-up items will be categorised in a similar manner. First, they will be subdivided into three domains: *Commercial*, *Private* and *Religious*. Again, each of these domains have subdomains and divisions, which can be found in Table 3 below). For example, a sign saying "Beware of the dog" will be categorized as follows: *Private – Warning*. As happens in the *Top-down* section, subdomains and division will only be used to provide clarity during the categorisation and coding phase, and not in the final analysis. Kotze & Du Plessis' model (2010) makes a further distinction between *Private announcements* and *Private homes*. To fit the present study's small scale these categories have been combined as *Private*, and for the same reason a category named *Public demarcation* has been eliminated completely. The category *Banks* had to be eliminated from the analysis, as photographing banks, at least up close, would go against most banks' security policies.

Domain	Subdomain	Division
Commercial	Goods for sale	
	Posters for events	
	Hotels/guesthouses	
	Services	Real estate
		Security
		Banks
	Shops	Shop name
		Shop offers
	Restaurants/food shops	Restaurant name
		Restaurant offers
Private	Community news	
	Graffiti	
	Ownership/decoration	
	Warning	
	Affiliation	Political
		Religious
		Sports
Religious	Churches	

Table 3. Bottom-up categorisation.

After categorising the items into domains, they will be analysed for language use. Apart from the four dominant language categories *English*, *Dutch*, *Papiamento* and *Spanish*, a fifth

category, *Neutral*, will be used during the categorisation phase to filter out empty items. For instance, company names or shop names will be coded as neutral, as they are likely to be the same in every language. Additionally, words that are the same in two or more languages, such as *open* (which is the same in English and Dutch) will be coded as *Neutral*. To ensure correct categorisation, a native speaker of Papiamento will be consulted to distinguish between Papiamento and Spanish. Multilingual signs, i.e. signs in two or more languages, will be coded as separate items. The present study does not focus on different combinations of languages that can be found in the linguistic landscape, as the categorisation design did not guarantee reliable results for multilingual signs. However, this study does strongly recommend further research into the matter in chapter 6.

4. Results

This chapter will present the results of the categorised items. By including the data in tables, the chapter will give a clear overview of the results that will provide answers to the present study's two sub-questions. These data will provide information that can give insight into the linguistic landscape of Aruba and the position of English in society, and thus answer the main research question. The chapter consists of two parts. In the first part (4.1), the overall use of the four dominant languages in the different areas will be described, regardless of the categories the items belong to. Secondly, data will be introduced that show in what categories the four languages are represented (4.2). Sample pictures will be provided in this chapter. A more extensive selection of items can be found in appendices B, C and D. Throughout the results section, abbreviations will be used to indicate different areas, languages and categories. Table 4 below provides an overview of all abbreviations that will be used throughout the chapter.

OS	Oranjestad	**EN**	English	**Top**	Top-down	**Com**	Commercial
SN	San Nicolas	**NL**	Dutch	**Gov**	Governmental	**Pri**	Private
NO	Noord	**PA**	Papiamento	**Cul**	Cultural	**Rel**	Religious
AT	Authentic	**SP**	Spanish	**Med**	Medical		
TR	Tourist	**NN**	Neutral	**Bot**	Bottom-up		

Table 4. Abbreviations as used in Results chapter.

It should be noted that due to limited numbers of items in some of the categories, the outcomes may not be generalisable. For a clear overview and a first impression of Aruba's linguistic landscape, the overall outcomes concerning the presence of written language are shown in Table 5 below.

Language	Average (%)
EN	65.7
NL	8
PA	13.6
SP	4.3
NN	8.5
	100

Table 5. Average language use in the linguistic landscape of Aruba.

Table 5 shows the average distribution of Aruba's dominant languages as used in written form in the public sphere. English is used in the majority of cases; 65.7% of all items were in English. On the contrary, Dutch, Papiamento and Spanish together only make up 25% of all written language.

4.1 Sub question 1: Does presence of the four dominant languages differ per area?

Below, Table 6 summarises the number of items in the four dominant languages of Aruba per investigated area. In total, 922 items were analysed. The vertical axis on the left shows the languages included in the study. The horizontal axis at the top indicates in what area and which street the languages were found. The numbers are item percentages, followed by the total number of items (n) in brackets.

	OS		SN		NO	
	AT % (n)	TR % (n)	AT % (n)	TR % (n)	AT % (n)	TR % (n)
EN	52.2 (118)	76.1 (150)	66.5 (109)	66.3 (126)	60.7 (88)	72.5 (124)
NL	8.8 (20)	3.6 (7)	6.7 (11)	11.6 (22)	13.8 (20)	3.5 (6)
PA	19.9 (45)	7.6 (15)	12.8 (21)	11.6 (22)	17.2 (25)	12.3 (21)
SP	9.3 (21)	6.6 (13)	6.7 (11)	0.5 (1)	0.7 (1)	1.8 (3)
NN	10.2 (23)	6.1 (12)	7.3 (12)	10.0 (19)	7.6 (11)	9.9 (17)
Total	100 (226)	100 (197)	100 (164)	100 (190)	100 (145)	100 (171)

Table 6. Total of language use (percentage and total number).

As can be seen in the top row of Table 6, English makes up the majority of all written items in the public sphere. This is the same for all areas. On average, 65.7% of all items were written in English. Interestingly, in each area, it can be seen that the percentage of English used is similar or higher in the tourist area than in the authentic area.

Oranjestad in general appears to be more multilingual than the other areas. Multiple items in all dominant languages have been found here, but none of the other three languages is used as much as English. Figure 3 below gives an example of a multilingual sign in Oranjestad.

The highest percentage of English can be found in Oranjestad's tourist street, which also lies in the western, most touristic part of the island. It is noteworthy that even though this is the case, the use of English in Oranjestad's authentic street has the lowest percentage of English of all streets, and Papiamento plays a bigger role here than it does elsewhere. In line with the observation that Oranjestad is more multilingual than the other areas, Spanish appears to be most popular in Oranjestad's authentic area than anywhere else.

San Nicolas shows a slightly different pattern. The percentages of English use are still high, but interestingly, Papiamento appears to be used less here. Spanish is also used in San Nicolas' authentic area, but seems to disappear in the tourist street. San Nicolas appears to be the only area that has more Dutch in its touristic street than in its authentic street. However, since San Nicolas has not attracted many tourists since LAGO closed in 1985, its touristic street may not have adapted to the increasing number of American tourists yet. Apart from San Nicolas, Dutch appears more in authentic streets than in tourist streets. However, it must be noted that the touristic street included one bar that had many signs in Dutch, which, on the one hand, might have distorted the results somewhat. On the other hand, as the tourist value of San Nicolas has decreased since LAGO closed, the high amount of Dutch could be a remnant of another time, in which Dutch was more popular in general.

Noord shows more or less the same pattern: English is most present and Papiamento follows at a distance. Papiamento scores are more similar than in other areas, when comparing the tourist area to the authentic area. Like in San Nicolas, Dutch is used more in written language than Spanish. In fact, Spanish seems to be almost non-existent in this area, with only four items in total.

In conclusion, all areas roughly exhibit the same pattern as Table 5. English is dominant in all investigated areas and Papiamento comes second, regardless of whether the streets are authentic or touristic. Authentic streets and tourist streets do tend to vary when it comes to Spanish and Dutch. However, due to limited numbers of items, no clear conclusions can be drawn concerning Spanish and Dutch in this section of the paper.

Figure 3: Item from Oranjestad's tourist area showing all four dominant languages.

4.2 Sub question 2: How are Aruba's four dominant languages distributed across different categories?

As stated above, English turned out to be the most used written language in the public sphere in Aruba in general. However, before any conclusions concerning language use in Aruba can be drawn, the use of language per category needs to be specified. Therefore, a closer look will be taken at language choice per category. First of all, the distribution of English will be discussed, followed by Dutch, Papiamento and Spanish. Table 7 shows how the English items are divided across categories in percentages. The original number of items is shown in brackets.

English	OS		SN		NO		
	AT % (n)	TR % (n)	AT % (n)	TR % (n)	AT % (n)	TR % (n)	Total % (n)
TopGov	7.6 (9)	2.0 (3)	4.6 (5)	10.3 (13)	2.3 (2)	2.4 (3)	4.9 (35)
TopCul	1.7 (2)	1.3 (2)	0.9 (1)	0.8 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.8 (6)
TopMed	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	14.7 (13)	0.0 (0)	1.8 (13)
BotCom	84.7 (100)	96.0 (144)	92.6 (101)	86.5 (109)	79.5 (70)	96.0 (119)	89.9 (643)
BotPri	5.1 (6)	0.6 (1)	1.8 (2)	2.4 (3)	3.4 (3)	1.6 (2)	2.4 (17)
BotRel	0.8 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.1 (1)
	100 (118)	100 (150)	100 (109)	100 (126)	100 (88)	100 (124)	100 (715)

Table 7. Division of English items across different categories in specific areas in percentages and item numbers.

It becomes immediately clear that most written items fall into the category *Bottom up – Commercial*. Within that category, the tourist streets in Oranjestad and Noord have most of its bottom-up commercial messages in English, compared to the other streets. Nevertheless, the percentages of English in *Bottom-up – Commercial* are all over 75%. Even though English is represented less in the other categories, it is revealing that English is present in *Top-down – Government*, even if this category only makes up for 4.9% of all English items. As mentioned

before, English is not an official language in Aruba, which would make its use by governmental institutions less likely. Another *Top-down* category that English is represented in is *Medical*. For this study, medical items were only found in Noord, but the fact that items appear in English in this particular street might indicate that English is generally used in the *Medical* domain in Aruba. English is used less in the other categories. Even though English is not present in every category in every area, it is interesting that English is represented in every category when looking at Aruba as whole, which might indicate that English is present at most levels of daily life in Aruba in general. Figure 4 shows an example of an English item in San Nicolas.

Figure 4. Example of an English Bottom-up – Commercial item from San Nicolas' tourist street.

Secondly, the use of Dutch items within categories will be analysed. Table 8 below illustrates the use of Dutch in Aruban society. The table shows percentages and the original number of items in brackets.

Dutch	OS		SN		NO		
	AT % (n)	TR % (n)	AT % (n)	TR % (n)	AT % (n)	TR % (n)	Total % (n)
TopGov	80.0 (16)	42.8 (3)	45.5 (5)	31.8 (7)	20.0 (4)	33.3 (2)	43.0 (37)
TopCul	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
TopMed	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	15.0 (3)	0.0 (0)	3.5 (3)
BotCom	10.0 (2)	42.9 (3)	54.5 (6)	63.3 (14)	65.0 (13)	66.7 (4)	48.8 (42)
BotPri	5.0 (1)	14.3 (1)	0.0 (0)	4.6 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	3.5 (3)
BotRel	5.0 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	1.2 (1)
	100 (20)	100 (7)	100 (11)	100 (22)	100 (20)	100 (6)	100.0 (86)

Table 8. Division of Dutch items across different categories in specific areas in percentages and item numbers.

It is obvious that Dutch is used most in two categories: *Top-down – Government* and *Bottom-up – Commercial*. The use of Dutch as a top-down language is relatively constant, with one peak in the authentic street of Oranjestad and lower numbers in touristic streets in Noord and Oranjestad. The peak could be explained by the fact that Oranjestad is the capital of Aruba,

and naturally most government buildings can be found in this area. Overall, the high number of Dutch in the commercial sector stems from items in San Nicolas' tourist street and Noord's authentic street. Dutch peaks in these two streets and is lower in Oranjestad's authentic street. It must be noted that the peaks in the data sets from San Nicolas and Noord originate from two bars (one per area) with an abundance of Dutch wall decoration, which has not been found in Oranjestad. As Dutch was barely present in other commercial items, it seems likely that the peaks do not represent the entire island and the data have been distorted by these bars. Moreover, strikingly, Dutch is present in none of the cultural items. This may have to do with museums focusing on tourists and therefore choosing English. However, the items included a number of memorial statues as well, which did not feature Dutch either. This may have had to do with the fact that the people featured in the statues were not Dutch. In the private domain Dutch scores low overall, with only single, or even zero items per street. When it comes to the religious domain, Dutch is only present once in the authentic part of Oranjestad. An example of an item in Dutch can be seen in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5. Example of Dutch *Bottom-up – Commercia*l item in Noord's authentic area.

Thirdly, Papiamento will be examined. Table 9 below shows the presence of Papiamento in different categories in percentages. Original numbers are shown in brackets.

Papiamento	OS		SN		NO		
	AT % (n)	TR % (n)	AT % (n)	TR % (n)	AT % (n)	TR % (n)	Total % (n)
TopGov	20.0 (9)	20.0 (3)	9.5 (2)	13.6 (3)	12.0 (3)	9.5 (2)	14.8 (22)
TopCul	0.0 (0)	20.0 (3)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	2.0 (3)
TopMed	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	4.0 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.7 (1)
BotCom	57.7 (26)	53.3 (8)	81.0 (17)	86.4 (19)	84.0 (21)	90.5 (19)	73.8 (110)
BotPri	15.5 (7)	6.7 (1)	4.7 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	6.0 (9)
BotRel	6.7 (3)	0.0 (0)	4.7 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	2.7 (4)
	100 (45)	100 (15)	100 (21)	100 (22)	100 (25)	100 (21)	100.0 (149)

Table 9. Division of Papiamento items across different categories in specific areas.

Once again, numbers for *Bottom-up – Commercial* are high, especially in San Nicolas and Noord. However, the lower percentages are relevant too. *Top-down – Governmental* comes in second place, as nearly 15% of all Papiamento items belong to this category. Most of these items can be found in Oranjestad's authentic neighbourhood. Papiamento is rare in the cultural domain, however; it was only found in the touristic area of Oranjestad. The only medical item in Papiamento was found in Noord's authentic area. Commercial items can be found quite often in all categories, except for Oranjestad's tourist street, which is close to the main entrance port for tourists from cruise ships. This could indicate that Papiamento is not used to communicate with tourists. However, in souvenir shops, the word *dushi* (meaning sweet or nice) is used as a brand name or shirt print occasionally. Private messages in Papiamento occurred most in the authentic street in Oranjestad. Overall, Papiamento is a top-down as well as a bottom-up language. Figure 6 below shows a Papiamento item in the commercial domain.

Figure 6. Example of a *Bottom-up – Commercial* message in Papiamento in Oranjestad's authentic street

Table 10 below shows the distribution of Spanish items over the different categories. Again, the table shows percentages and the original item number is shown in brackets.

Spanish	OS		SN		NO		
	AT % (n)	TR % (n)	AT % (n)	TR % (n)	AT % (n)	TR % (n)	Total % (n)
TopGov	0.0 (0)	8.3 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	33.3 (1)	4.1 (2)
TopCul	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
TopMed	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
BotCom	100.0 (21)	91.6 (11)	100.0 (11)	100.0 (1)	0.0 (0)	66.7 (2)	93.9 (46)
BotPri	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (1)	0.0 (0)	2.0 (1)
BotRel	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
	100 (21)	100 (12)	100 (11)	100 (1)	100 (1)	100 (3)	100.0 (49)

Table 10. Division of Spanish items across different categories in specific areas.

Clearly, Spanish is less visible in Aruba's linguistic landscape than the other three languages. The only top-down messages in Spanish that occur in this study were found in touristic areas in Noord and Oranjestad. These messages were found in the *Governmental* category. No Spanish was found in either cultural or medical domains. Spanish is most present in bottom-up messages, and specifically in *Bottom-up – Commercial.* Within this category most of the items can be found in Oranjestad and San Nicolas. One Spanish item was found in *Bottom-up – Private*, in Noord. There were no Spanish items in the *Religious* category. An example of Spanish in San Nicolas can be seen in Figure 7 below.

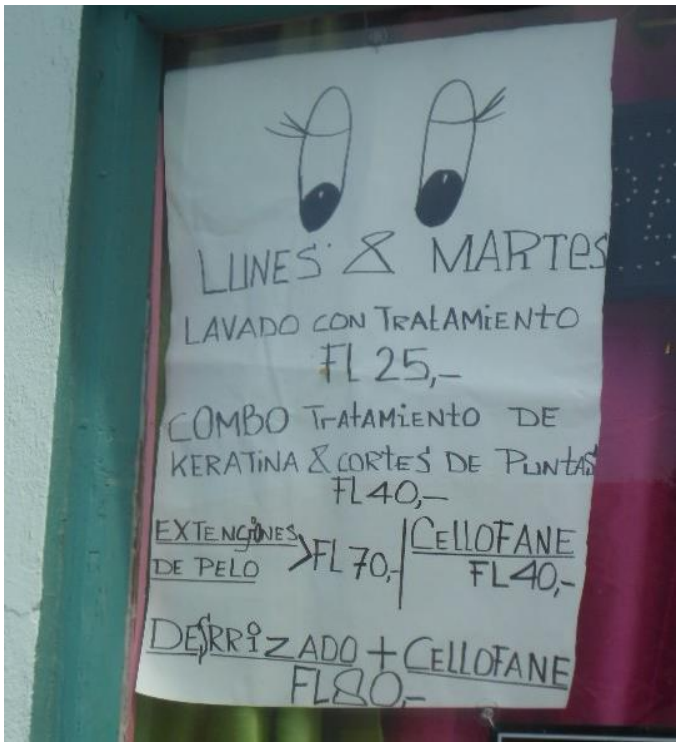

Figure 7. Example of a Spanish *Bottom-up – Commercial* item in San Nicolas' authentic area.

To answer the second sub question correctly, it is important to realise that, in general, most of Aruba's linguistic landscape consists of commercial messages. Within this category, English is the most popular choice. In short, English can be found in all categories, but is mostly used for commercial messages. This can partly be explained by the fact that tourists speak English and they are, in general, expected to spend money while on vacation. Another explanation could be that, with such a variety of languages being spoken on the island, English is chosen as a *lingua franca* for the commercial sector, as everyone needs to be able to find their way around shops for the shops to be successful. After analysing results for Dutch items, it becomes clear that Dutch is used mainly for governmental messages and commercial messages. Numbers for these two categories are similar. Dutch is represented in all categories, except culture. This implies that Dutch is mainly used for official, governmental messages, and that Arubans prefer Papiamento, or even English, in museums and on monuments. Papiamento, like English, is represented in all categories. Most Papiamento items occur in the commercial domain, followed by governmental. Papiamento and Dutch are the only two languages that appear regularly in *Top-down* and *Bottom-up* categories. Spanish is barely visible in the linguistic landscape. Spanish items almost exclusively appear in the *Bottom up - Commercial* domain.

5. Discussion

This section will connect literature discussed in chapters 1 and 2 with the findings from chapter 4. It will indicate whether or not the results are in line with earlier research, and will attempt to explain differences. The present study fills a gap, as linguistic landscaping has not yet been done in the Caribbean area. Therefore, comparisons with earlier literature must be treated with caution, as previous research was conducted in completely different parts of the world. Additionally, as this study does not work with significance calculation, it should be noted that results are a reflection of the available sample and could vary if the present study were to be repeated elsewhere. In 5.1, the results regarding the first sub question concerning language per area will be discussed. The results for the second sub question, concerning language use across categories, will be elaborated on in section 5.2.

5.1 Aruba's linguistic landscape per area

As it turns out, the linguistic landscape in all areas mainly consists of English items, followed by Papiamento. The position of Dutch and Spanish tends to vary. Thus, remarkably, English is the language that is most used in all areas, with minor differences, even while it is not an official

language. This outcome does not come as a surprise. Even though English is the mother tongue for a mere 7% of inhabitants (CBS Aruba, 2010), the economic structure of the island makes it quite logical for English to be a main language of communication. In the past century, the Aruban economy thrived on both tourism and the oil refineries. As was indicated in chapter 1, English is the main language of communication tourism, which is why it is not surprising that English is the dominant language in tourist areas. However, English is also dominant in authentic areas. This can be explained by looking at the history of the oil industry. Even though the oil refineries now account for a much smaller percentage of the island's income (Alofs & Merkies, 2001), the influence on the linguistic landscape is still visible. English was used as a *lingua franca* among immigrants who came to Aruba to work in the oil industry in the 20th century, and although the industry has decreased, its influence can be found in Aruba's linguistic situation. The position of English is strengthened by the fact that English is used in higher education (University of Aruba, 2016). Moreover, highly educated Arubans believe that using English is beneficial when looking for employment (Leuverink, 2011); thus English does indeed appear to have overt prestige on the island (Carroll, 2015). This suggests that English is prominent on the entire island and not just in tourist areas, which was indeed confirmed by the present study; English is dominant in authentic areas as well as in tourist areas.

In light of Ben-Rafael et al. (2006), it is interesting to speculate about what the present study's results mean for Aruba's linguistic landscape. As mentioned in chapter 2, the linguistic landscape gives insight into the status of linguistic codes and communities in a certain environment (Landry, 1997, in Ben-Rafael et al., 2006). As English has a relatively high status in Aruba (Leuverink, 2011) it is not surprising that the language is most visible in Aruba's linguistic landscape. Due to its status as a *lingua franca* in the oil business as well as in tourism, English can be marked as a powerful language: English appears to be the dominant language in Aruba's working life. The two official languages hold power as well, although Dutch is not as present as Papiamento. According to the present study's results, Papiamento has a stable position across the island when it comes to written language in the public sphere, whereas Dutch is represented less. Spanish is barely visible in Aruba's linguistic landscape. This suggests, according to Landry (1997), that Spanish is a less powerful language, at least in written form. However, absence in the linguistic landscape does not mean that Spanish is not spoken. Spanish has a higher percentage of speakers in the home environment (13.5%) than Dutch (6%) or English (7%), which proves that Spanish is definitely present, but is mainly spoken with family

or friend groups. This is in line with the observation that Spanish has low prestige (Carroll, 2015).

Equally relevant are Barni and Bagna's contradictory observations regarding urban areas. They state that urban areas strive to be monolingual centres of a country, but also turn out to be more multilingual due to immigration (2010). This contrast is neatly illustrated in the present study. Oranjestad is the island's capital, and has the most inhabitants of the three investigated areas. The results clearly show that on the one hand, Oranjestad's authentic street is the most multilingual area. On the other hand, in the touristic street, it appears to be the most monolingual. Again, and certainly where the capital is concerned, it is interesting to note that most of the written language is a non-official language. Then again, the governmental messages, even if they do not appear often, mainly do so in Dutch and Papiamento. This will be elaborated on further in 5.2.

5.2 Aruba's linguistic landscape per category

The previous section made clear to what extent languages are present in different areas. This paragraph will focus on the distribution of the languages over the categories. In the paragraphs below, the languages will be discussed one by one.

First of all, in the previous chapter it was found that English is used in all six categories, indicating that English can be found at all levels of daily life in Aruba. Thus, English is used as a top-down language as well as a bottom-up language. This is similar to Huebner's study about Bangkok, where English is mostly used as a means of international communication (2006). The situation in Aruba is different, however, and the present study does not specifically focus on international communication. Nevertheless, the use of English as a top-down language does indicate that Aruba might be moving from Kachru's Expanding Circle to the Outer Circle (Melchers & Shaw, 2013), as English has high prestige (Carroll, 2015), and the government has started using English in written communication, such as warning signs, as well. Naturally, more research into the role of English in Aruba needs to be done before conclusions like this can be drawn effectively.

Dutch, one of the official languages of Aruba, mainly seems to be a top-down language. It is mostly present in the governmental domain, and, except for a peak in bar decoration, is barely present in the other categories. This seems to be in line with Mijts' research, which indicated that Dutch is losing ground in education, tourism, business, but also in governmental

communication (2006). Evidence from the present study, showing that English is now used by the government as well, might be connected to this decline. Whether or not there is a causal relationship to be found between the emergence of English and the decline of Dutch is still unclear. Further research into the matter is essential to find out if English is slowly pushing Dutch out of the only domain, *Commercial*, it is regularly used in nowadays.

Papiamento, like English, is used in both top-down and bottom-up domains. It is used less in tourist areas, which shows in its low representation in the commercial sector. Unlike Irish, which is regularly used to convey authenticity in the tourist sector, (Moriarty, 2015), Papiamento is barely used to communicate with tourists. It seems that Arubans rather adapt to tourists than use their own language to show authenticity. As mentioned before, only the word *dushi* is used in this situation, as a brand name, shop name or as print on shirts. In contrast, Moriarty's (2010) study showed that apart from using words and phrases, some shop signs were written in Irish as well. Although the present study only investigated written language, the lack of Papiamento in touristic areas may indicate that Papiamento is the language for the locals. It is used at all levels throughout the Aruban community, but it is not used much in communication with tourists. This does not seem necessary, as both locals and tourists speak English well enough to understand each other.

Spanish is, of all four languages, least present in the linguistic landscape. When it is textually present, it is mainly used in the commercial domain. This does not mean that Spanish is absent completely in the other domains, even if it is absent in written form. As Barni & Bagna state, language presence does not guarantee textual presence (2010), which explains why Spanish can both be textually absent, but play a role in society nevertheless. The low visibility of Spanish in Aruba is in line with recent findings suggesting that Spanish has low prestige (Carroll, 2015). Spanish can thus be identified as being mainly a bottom-up language. It will be interesting to see how Spanish develops in Aruba, as recent migration from South America (Alofs, 2008) is bound to influence the role of Spanish within society.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Summary

This study investigated how Aruba's four dominant languages are represented in the linguistic landscape of its multilingual society, and focuses more specifically on the role of English in Aruban society. By analysing how Papiamento, Dutch, English and Spanish are used in different

areas, and by looking at how these languages are represented in different domains, the present study interprets the role and use of each language. In light of the expanding tourism industry and Aruba's linguistic history, the role of the English language is addressed specifically. Linguistic landscaping was used to learn about Aruba's multilingual society. By means of a camera safari (Hancock, 2012), three areas of Aruba were analysed. In each area, two streets were chosen for analysis. A total of 922 photos was taken. Previous research by Ben-Rafael et al. (2006) and Kotze & Du Plessis (2010) inspired the present study's categorisation of the photos. The data were divided into six categories, and were coded accordingly to find results regarding Aruba's linguistic landscape.

It was found that most of the written language in Aruba's public sphere is in English; an average of 65.7% of all items were written in, or contained English, although this is not one of the island's official languages. English is dominant in all six investigated streets, and thus in all areas. After English, Papiamento is most present. It appears that Papiamento, which is an official language, is the preferred language among locals, whereas English is the preferred language for communication with tourists. Dutch, Aruba's second official language is used most in Oranjestad, which is the capital, housing most of the island's governmental buildings. Dutch is used less in the other areas, indicating that this language is mostly used in the most urban and governmental area of the island. Spanish is used least of all languages in every area of Aruba. This finding is in line with other recent findings, and suggests that Spanish has low prestige, and is particularly used within homes and friend groups. Of all items that were analysed for the present study, the majority was found in the commercial domain. In this domain, English was used in all categories; it was found in both top-down and bottom up categories. Thus, English plays a role in daily life in Aruba, which could be a sign that Aruba is moving to Kachru's Outer Circle (Melchers & Shaw, 2013). Similarly, Papiamento was used in all categories, strengthening the point that Papiamento indeed is the language of the Aruban people. Like English, Papiamento is used in both bottom-up and top-down categories. Dutch, however, is a typical top-down language. It is mostly used in governmental messages, and, as mentioned in the paragraph above, mostly in the capital as well. Dutch was rarely found in the other categories, which was also emerged from earlier research (Mijts, 2006). In contrast, Spanish turns out to be a bottom-up language, as it was only found in the commercial sector.

6.2 Limitations and suggestions for further research

To place the findings of the present study into perspective, several limitations need to be discussed. In addition to this, the following paragraph will make suggestions for further research. First of all, it is important to keep in mind that this study does not take the age of the items into account. Therefore, brand new as well as outdated signs have been analysed without distinction. Even though this might seem to undermine the validity of the present study, it could be argued that although the signs differ in age, they do contribute to Aruba's linguistic landscape by merely being present. After all, what this study intends to do is to give an accurate representation of the linguistic landscape as it is. It might be interesting to focus specifically on the age of items in further research. If older signs use different languages than new signs, this might indicate language change. Moreover, the speed with which the Aruban community aims to renew and replace signs might make for interesting observations as well.

Additionally, due to limited time available for this study, a limited number of streets has been analysed. It is possible that this selection has somewhat distorted results, as naturally, not all streets look the same. This study should therefore not be used to draw conclusions about the linguistic landscape of Aruba as a whole. However, the relatively high number of items per street ensures a certain kind of validity that asks for further testing.

Last, but not least, the case of multilingual signs must be considered. As mentioned in chapter 3, this study did not focus on multilingual signs, and therefore did not categorise these items. Approximately 10% of the total amount of items were found to be multilingual, using varying combinations of languages. However, in the categorisation and analysing process, it turned out that few signs use Dutch only. Instead, Dutch is often accompanied by another language. An example can be found in Figure 8 below. This study revealed that Dutch is mainly used by the government itself and other governmental institutions, but multilingual signs indicate that, in most cases, translations in other languages were added to the signs. The fact that Dutch is often accompanied by another language could indicate that people in Aruba, locals or tourists, are not expected to understand Dutch well-enough without translations. Unfortunately, the present study does not include enough data to draw reliable conclusions concerning this matter. Therefore, further research is recommended, as this observation might invite a review of the status of the Dutch language.

Figure 8. An example of a Dutch item with an English translation added to the sign.

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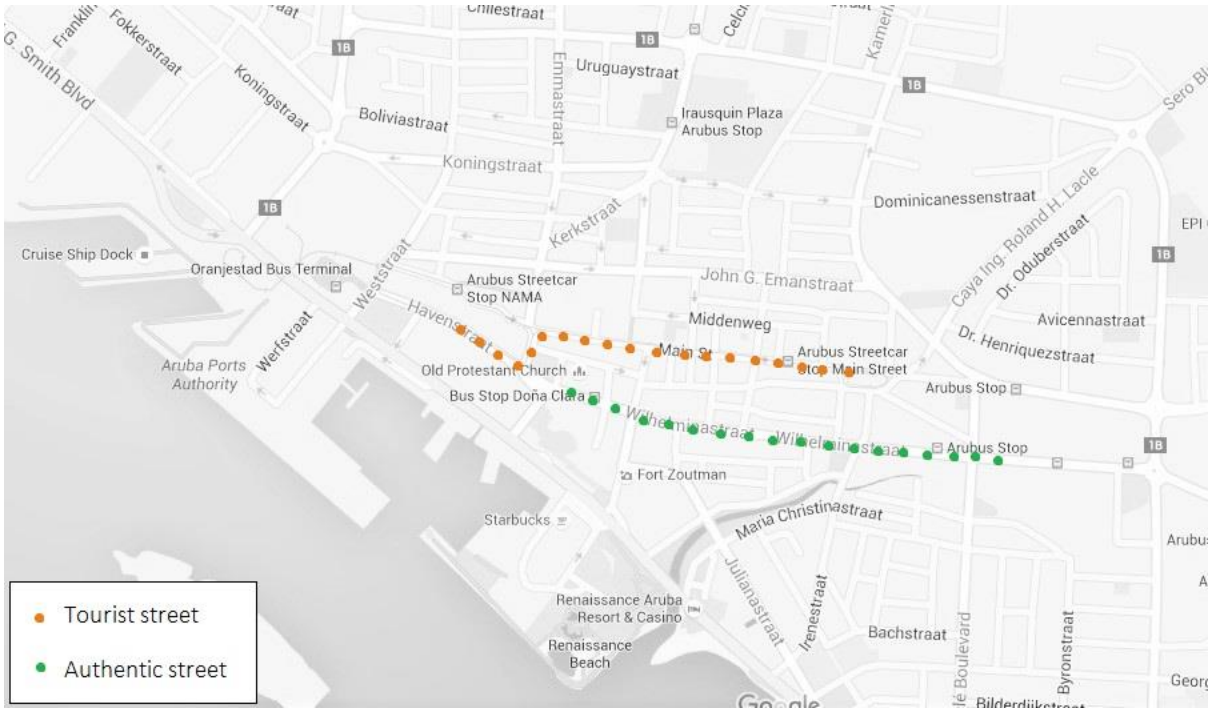
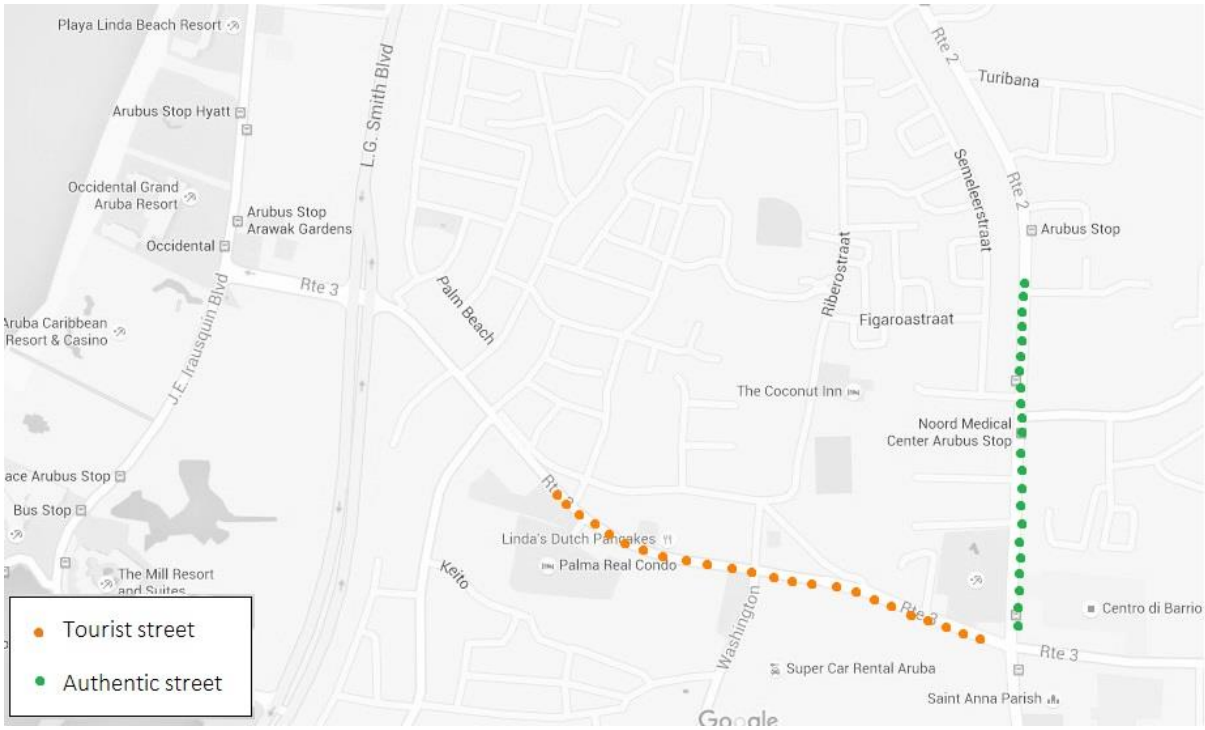
8. Appendix A: Area maps

Map of selected streets in Oranjestad:

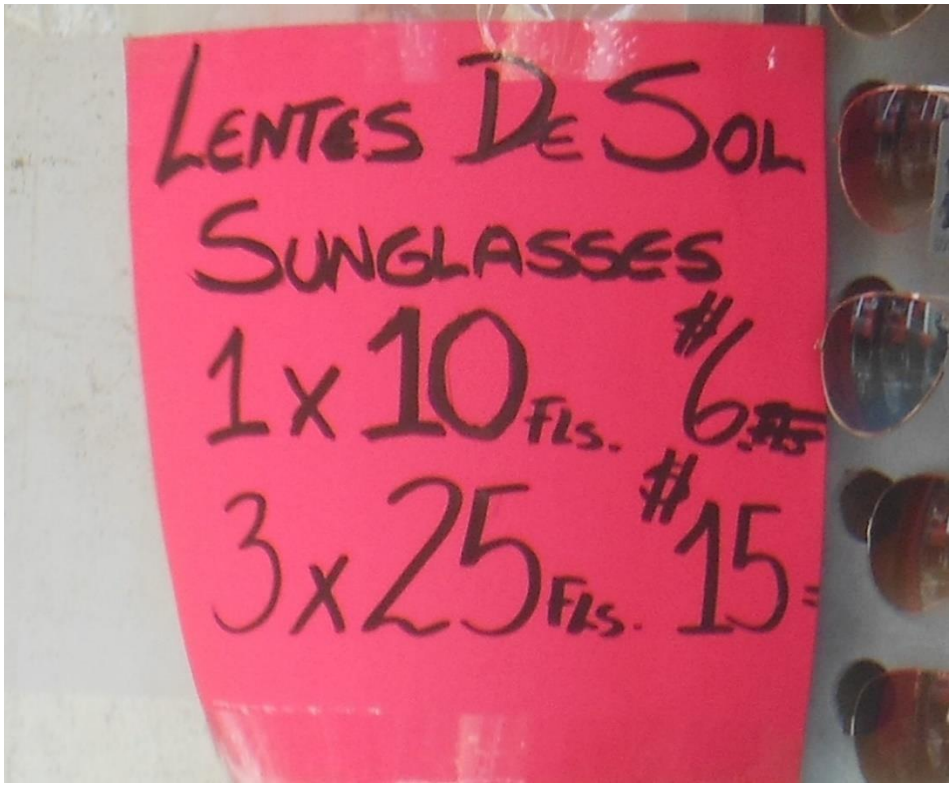


Map of selected streets in Noord:



Map of selected streets in San Nicolas:

9. Appendix B: Picture selection Oranjestad




PRIVADO


HOOGSPANNING
LEVENSGEVAAR
PELIGRO DI MORTO
ELECTRICIDAD

10. Appendix C: Picture selection Noord


AKI TA BENDE
BON DIA
Aruba
LIDER DEN
NOTICIA!


Lekker!
en altijd gezellig
Refreshing the Caribbean since 1941
PILSENER
POLAR
I ARUBA®
LOOK FOR THE RED LINE

11. Appendix D: Picture selection San Nicolas


Dialuna t/m Diasabra
9.00 am - 2.00 pm <-> 3.00pm - 5.30 pm
5842850 - 5622808 - 6002908


Charlie's Bar & Restaurant
Hours
OPEN Most Days About 11:or 12:a.m.
Occasionally as Early as 7:a.m.
But Some Days As Late As 12:or 1:p.m.
WE CLOSE About 9:00 or 10:30 p.m.
Occasionally About 4:or 5:a.m ?
SOME DAYS or Afternoons We
Aren't Here At All but Lately
I've Been Here Just About All The time,
Except When I'm Some place Else,
But I Should Be Here Then, Too.
SUNDAYS·HOLIDAYS CLOSED
NO