The linguistic landscape consists of the languages used on signs. It is a relatively new research subject attracting more and more scholarly attention worldwide.

This dissertation describes an investigation of linguistic landscapes in the Netherlands. By means of a detailed quantitative analysis it explores the extent to which the linguistic landscape reflects the languages spoken by the speech community. Moreover, factors that influence linguistic and semiotic properties of signs are identified. The study took place in both the capital city of Amsterdam which has many immigrants and foreign tourists, and in the province of Friesland which is home to a Frisian-speaking minority.

The main finding is that in the linguistic landscape in both field sites, Dutch and English prevail, whereas minority languages have a limited presence. Differences in the ethnolinguistic composition of Amsterdam and Friesland’s populations are partly reflected in differences between the linguistic landscapes. Factors relating to linguistic landscape actors were found to influence the properties of signs. Another important factor is the linguistic content of the signs. Those displaying one or more proper names, such as a brand name, were linguistically more diverse than signs with other text.

This study is of interest to scholars working in the field of linguistic landscape, sociolinguistics and multilingualism.