The Linguistic Landscape of Leipzig Today: A Place to Mix Sports and Politics

Leipzigs Sprachlandschaft heute: ein Ort, an dem sich Sport und Politik mischen

by

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A thesis
presented to the University of Waterloo
and the Universität Mannheim
in fulfilment of the
thesis requirement for the degree of
Master of Arts
in
Intercultural German Studies

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada / Mannheim, Germany, 2023

Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

When looking at a space and the people within we often turn to polls, surveys, and elections to gauge the feeling of an area, but what happens when those are not enough or people choose to censor themselves in fear of repercussions? By turning to linguistic landscape studies as a way to get an insight into a space and the people who inhabit it, we can get a true and more natural understanding of the area and see how people leave behind traces of their thoughts through interactions. Protected by anonymity, interacting with the linguistic landscape allows these people to mark spaces and create meanings within, without being associated directly with that message. And so, by turning to a combined approach of Geosemiotics, Ethnographic Linguistic Landscape Analysis (ELLA), and turn-taking this thesis can break down moments from the linguistic landscape of Leipzig captured between 2019-2023 and analyse them as more than just photographs. By taking this combined approach I will be able to study the elements of the linguistic landscape and, soccer-related ones in particular, to connect them to the bigger discourses happening around the spaces in which they are placed. By reading the interactions like a conversation left behind for us to discover in the linguistic landscape, we will be able to gain an often overlooked, yet valuable, insight into Leipzig today.

Acknowledgements

I would like to first and foremost thank my supervisor, Dr. Grit Liebscher, for being able to put up with me, all of my chaos, this constantly changing process, and perhaps most of all for being able to sort through my "blumige Sprache". If you had not taken a chance on me as your research assistant, I'm not quite sure where I'd be today or what I'd be working on. Thank you for that and so much more.

I would also like to thank my two readers, Dr. Ann Marie Rasmussen and Dr. Paul Malone, for helping and guiding me since I first arrived at the University of Waterloo through to today. I look forward to all that I will continue learning from you both in the years to come.

And though they are far away I would like to thank Dr. Regine Zeller and Dr. Sandra Beck for all the coffee, cake, help, and chats during my time in Mannheim. I still think almost daily about a saying Dr. Beck once told me: "you always cry twice in Mannheim, once when you arrive and once when you leave"; though I'm not sure where she came across it, she was right. Knowing that, I would still happily do it all again.

To all the others who crossed my path during this journey, both old and new, I thank you too.

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1 Introduction

Growing up as a child who always struggled with grammar and continues to do so, I had sworn off ever going into linguistics because of an association I had created in my mind between the two. As I was finishing up my bachelor's degree the unthinkable happened to me though; due to some administrative issues and course cancelations, I was forced to either take an additional year to make up those courses or study abroad in Germany and fill the remaining missing credits with linguistics courses. Naturally, I decided on the latter, as it would at least allow me to finally visit Germany. Then upon returning, I was first introduced to the field of linguistic landscape studies for the first time in a course on applied German linguistics. This course and Sebastian M. Rasinger's (2014) *Linguistic Landscapes in Southern Carinthia (Austria)* in particular opened my eyes to what linguistics could be; and as my eyes were opened beyond the grammatical aspects of linguistics, so too did my opinion of linguistics change. Unfortunately, my time at the university was ending and I thought that I would not be able to explore that curiosity anymore.

As I later returned to study for my master's, I chose to follow my curiosity for linguistics and found myself looking for courses all across the field and especially for ones related to linguistic landscapes; the field which had most piqued my curiosity and set me on this path again. What I found was that the field of linguistic landscapes was often overlooked, despite its amazing potential for providing insight into language and how it is being used by people to create meanings and communicate with each other, but in a way that combined more than just the written language. Linguistic landscapes combines the written and visual aspects of communication in everyday life in ways that stimulate the senses and truly ask us to interpret

what we see, read, and even at times hear. And so, remembering the first Bundesliga match I had ever seen between Hannover 96 and VfB Stuttgart, which combined symbols, chants, flags, banners, and so many more signs as supporters cheered their clubs on, I sought to look at those in the only way which would allow me to study the whole combination—linguistic landscapes. By taking this approach I hope to expand the applicability of the field beyond the "top-down vs. bottom-up" approach which many linguistic landscape scholars have focused on so far while studying official signage placed in large cities. This thesis, I hope, will go beyond that expansion and help prove the importance of the field and lead to its greater inclusion when looking at the multifaceted world which we inhabit, perhaps even inspiring more scholars to take up the field and teach it to the next generation of curious minds.

To achieve this lofty goal, I would need to first settle on a solid framework and set of research questions to guide my study, which shall be found in the following pages. These pages ,which will guide you through my theory, methodology, analysis, discussion, and conclusion, are all organized into their own chapters for the sake of clarity, as we study the German city of Leipzig and how soccer appears in its linguistic landscape. Guided by the following research questions:

1)What does the linguistic landscape of Leipzig look like in terms of soccer vs.

non-soccer elements?

2) What types of interactions related to soccer are visible in the linguistic

landscape?

3) How do the linguistic landscape and the interactions within link to larger

socio-political trends of the area?

I aim to shed light on how the linguistic landscape serves as a tool to view space as a place to mix sports and politics, in turn serving as a window into the beliefs of the people who interact therein.

Then when you my reader follow along as I answer those three guiding questions, not only will I be able to provide you with an important insight into Leipzig today, but also demonstrate one of the many and important ways in which linguistic landscapes may be used in the future. And as you turn the last page, I hope to have convinced you too to hold the same belief in linguistic landscapes and their importance to our world that I hold.

2 Theory

This chapter provides an overview of the research, both preceding and contemporary, which have come together to form the cornerstone of this linguistic landscape-centred thesis. It is divided into several sections that will first start with a brief introduction to Leipzig as the location of my data and the focus of this thesis, before working through the framework being employed in my analysis. The choice to use multiple theories in my framework is due in part to the cross-disciplinary nature of research in linguistic landscape studies, which is influenced by sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, and linguistics, amongst other fields. Additionally, dividing this chapter into sub-sections will allow me to achieve three goals: introduce each of the theories as they apply to my analysis chapter; give any necessary definitions to readers; and explain where at times my analysis will diverge from the applicable theories being used. This approach is also aimed at providing clarity for the analysis in a field where definitions are still contested and in a constant state of change—with some scholars choosing to focus on more specific terms and other researchers preferring the use of broader terminology when referring to the same concepts.

To understand this thesis it is crucial to first familiarize ourselves with the Eastern German city of Leipzig. Considered to be a midsize city, Leipzig has seen its population grow to 620,858 people in 2022 after a slight decline following German reunification; and according to the *Berlin Institute for Population and Development* it now has the most rapid growth of any German city today (Leipzig.de, 2023). Found in the state of Saxony, Leipzig which can be described not only as having a rich diversity of viewpoints, but crucially also as a stronghold for

far-right political party AfD (Alternative for Germany), even hosting the seat of party leader and member of federal parliament Tino Chrupalla (Pfeifer, 2021). Despite Leipzig being heralded as the "New Berlin" by the likes of *Der Spiegel* (Popp, 2012) and being called a liberal outlier in a conservative region, the city still finds itself in a region divided (Regev, 2020). So, we have to ask ourselves, how is it possible to gain insight into the city and its inhabitants in a more natural way, one not measured through polls or elections but instead through observation of the people going about their daily lives? For this I turn to linguistic landscapes and the way in which people leave their mark around Leipzig, almost unseen or even overlooked by many. Linguistic landscapes can present us with an interesting insight into a space and its inhabitants as they allow people to share their true feelings through their interactions with the city in a way which is not hindered by fear of repercussions, leaving a physical trace behind. A trace which in turn allows for other interactants in that space to continue the series of interactions and build a richer landscape to be studied later on.

As linguistic landscape studies is a wide field with many different subjects of study, I chose to focus on instances of soccer as they appear in the linguistic landscape. Soccer as we know it here in Canada, or football as many others know it, especially in Europe, can reveal a lot about a group, as can sports as a whole. It is around sports that we as groups often build our greatest relationships, live our best ups and worst downs, and crucially around which we build communities. For Germans in particular soccer plays an important role in this process. Soccer has such a prominent influence that often, as is the case in Leipzig, a city may be home to many clubs with rich histories. Leipzig itself is home to top ranking Bundesliga team RB Leipzig (Bundesliga, 2023) as well as Regionalliga Nordost teams 1. FC Lokomotive Leipzig and BSG

Chemie Leipzig (Fussballdaten, 2023), with the latter two clubs having a fierce and longstanding rivalry between them. And as much research has been done regarding soccer in Germany across many fields including Bauer et al. (2005), Merkel (2012), Brandt & Hertel (2015), Ziesche (2017), and Doidge & Lieser (2018), amongst others, it is time to expand that to include a linguistic landscapes perspective.[1]

2.1 Linguistic Landscapes

One of the newest branches of linguistics to emerge is that of Linguistic Landscape Studies (LLS). Roughly 25 years old, the conception of the field as an independent identity is often attributed to Landry and Bourhis (1997) when they coined the term while describing the intersection of language and space they were observing and how it came together: "[t]he language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomerate" (cf. Auer, 2010, p. 273). The term linguistic landscape, however, remains contentious, with some researchers such as Jaworski and Thurlow (2010) referring to this same concept instead as "semiotic landscape". This is a reflection of the additional elements present in a space, such as audio signs or visual signs which go beyond a sign depicting a simple written form of communication, such as the name of a pub written above their door. The use of semiotic landscape would then also cover elements such as the music that can be heard emanating from within that same pub when standing outside. Additionally, when studying the linguistic landscapes of certain specified locations, other researchers use more

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[1] https://fussballlinguistik.de/fussballlinguistik-2/ is a website focusing on the study of soccer from a linguistics perspective; however, it lacks an LL section.

specific terms, such as "schoolscapes" e.g. Dressler (2015) and Cormier (2019), reflective of a school being the space they studied in their work. Many others who continue to work in the field choose instead to use the broader term of "linguistic landscape" e.g. Ben-Raefael et al. (2006), Backhaus (2007), Coupland and Garrett (2010), and Papen (2012). As such, it is common to find a variety of terms being used which revolve around some sort of combination containing 'scapes' when conducting research in the field of LLS, and though these terms differ in name, they refer generally to the same subject matter.

For my thesis, however, it must be noted that I chose to follow in the footsteps of those who refer to the field using the term "linguistic landscape", which from this point forward shall simply be referred to as LL. I made this choice not to discredit or exclude semiotic elements from the field of LL that go beyond the written form, but instead as a reflection of the data in my corpus; the data is comprised exclusively of photographs, therefore limiting us to visual elements when conducting analysis. Had the data consisted of videos or the photographs been accompanied by audio recordings, the use of semiotic landscapes could be justified. However, lacking those additional elements from the time of data collection, I feel it is best to align with the majority of researchers and use the term "linguistic landscape".

Having now established the terminology with which this thesis is written and the relatively short time that the field has existed as an independent entity, it becomes necessary to explain the origins and define the field. For this I return to Jaworski and Thurlow and their definition of LL as "the interplay between language, visual discourse, and the spatial practices and dimensions of culture, especially the textual mediation of discursive constructions of place and the use of space as a semiotic resource in its own right" (2010, p. 1) — or simplified to, how

language is presented and used around us in a way that stimulates our audio-visual senses and creates meaning. Following the work of Cosgrove (1984), Jaworski and Thurlow trace the roots of LL back to the Italian Renaissance and the art of painting and how landscapes are both a way to see the world outside as well as a visual ideology in itself (Jaworski and Thurlow, 2010, p. 3). As our interactions with space as well as our patterns of communication have changed throughout the years since the Renaissance, so too has our understanding of LL, with the landscape now becoming as much a part of social and cultural interaction as it has a part of space itself (2010, p. 4). The notion of space is crucial there, as Peter Auer goes on to underline the importance of location when considering the written elements of language as it plays a key role in our understanding of this language (2010, p. 272), something which all modern LLS researchers need to consider. And so it is the definition given by Jaworski and Thurlow and the additional insights of Auer that we must keep in mind when dealing with LL and this thesis, as all of those elements will come together through the data presented. Only by remembering the combination of these authors' research will we be able to see the forthcoming data as more than simply a collection of photographs in Leipzig.

2.2 Geosemiotics

Noticing a gap in research between the fields of linguistics, cultural geography, communication, sociology, and others, American linguists Ron Scollon and Suzie Wong Scollon set out to produce a theoretical framework which would fill that void and unite these fields. In doing so they also produced the first tailor-made theoretical guide for LLS (to call it simply a theoretical guide, though, is a slight misnomer, as it is a hybrid of both theory and methodology).

That unifying link would come in the form of 'geosemiotics', a framework proposed and developed in *Discourses in Place: Language in the Material World* (2003), at the core of which stood the concept of 'space'. Geosemiotics came to be used by many researchers for "the study of social meaning of the material placement of signs and discourses and of our actions in the material world" (2003, p. 2). It was not wholly a new idea, though, as geosemiotics is a reference to the earlier work of Charles S. Pierce and semiosis, by which social meaning is created through the material placement of signs and to the world surrounding the users of those signs (2003, p. 4).

> In their work, Scollon and Wong Scollon explain 'sign' through the following quote: "[i]n geosemiotics, as in all branches of semiotics, the word 'sign' means any material object that indicates or refers to something other than itself". They later continue, "language and discourse are our primary interest and so in that case we would speak of this sentence, this paragraph, or this book as a sign albeit a very complex sign[,] [b]ut we also include signs in the more conventional sense of who names, traffic regulatory devices, and even the build environment such as roadways . . . [a]nd, of course, we cannot forget that we ourselves are the embodiment of signs in our physical presence, movement, and gestures"(2003, p. 3).

This quote is crucial for geosemiotics as its impact is twofold. Firstly, Scollon and Wong Scollon clearly define geosemiotics as belonging to semiotics, but do not limit the applicability of the framework simply to grammar nor a certain form of communication, whether it is written or visual. Therefore, geosemiotics becomes a framework with a multidisciplinary potential, be it with linguistics, art history, or any other field that communicates with an audience. Secondly, by

drawing this clear link to semiotics they are able to define the terminology by which this framework operates, even expanding the complexity of the term 'sign' with examples. It is, however, important to keep the two definitions of sign given in the above explanation by Scollon and Wong Scollon in mind: the general (any material object) and the more specific sign (such as traffic signs or entrance signs). As long as this distinction is kept in mind, geosemiotics becomes a much easier concept to grasp when being worked with. After all, is a more specific sign not just a more clearly defined version of a general sign? For this thesis, though, and due in part to the framework's application for LLS in which a multitude of signs are present, I will not use *sign* as it traditionally has been applied in the Saussurean way, an approach Liebscher et al. (under review) have also adopted in their work. My reasoning for this is to avoid confusion over the multiple applications of signs which occur in my data, in which many different signs can be found within a given photograph that serves as the frame of analysis. Thus, for clarity, I refer to what a layperson may see as a sign, i.e. a road sign such as stop signs or no parking signs, as a sign. These signs often form the backdrop onto which other signs, e.g. stickers, posters, and writing, are placed. Though these signs (the stickers etc.) also perform the semiotic role of indexing (making a reference to) something other than itself, and for that reason, to not mix them up with specific signs in the LL (such as traffic signs), I instead refer to them as 'elements' in my thesis. This also differs from Sebba (2012), who uses the term 'unit' in a similar manner when distinguishing between different meaning making parts of the LL, such as visual units and grammatical units. The choice of "element" rather than "unit" is because I believe that "unit" implies a degree of unity and makes a reader think of these signs as one, whereas element allows them to be treated as individual components in a bigger picture. These elements can then be

analyzed both as independent but within the same language part as a whole. Therefore, when referring to a photograph of the LL in which there is a street sign with many stickers placed one on top of another on it, the photograph will be described in the following style—there are several elements present, consisting of many stickers one atop the other placed onto a sign, which forms the backdrop for this collage of elements we now see.

Having now established the divergences from the terminology in the framework as laid out by Scollon and Wong Scollon that appear in this thesis, and which are concentrated mostly in the analysis and discussion chapters, it is important to continue with geosemiotics and how it is meant to deal not with the indexicality of language, but rather the indexicality of the world, which is the interplay between the semiotic systems of the world and sign systems of language (2003, p. 5). To achieve this goal there has to be meaning given to the concept we refer to as 'space', because space is much more than simply a blank canvas devoid of meaning. Therefore, building off work begun by Swedish geographer Torsten Hägerstrand (1978) and his eight principles that connect human action to their place in time and space, and expanded on by Giddens (1984, 1991), Scollon and Wong Scollon were able to distil those eight principles into a more refined set of four aspects, which they believe to be crucial for understanding human interaction with the spaces in which we inhabit and interact in our daily lives, which they term: the Social Actor, the Interaction Order, Visual Semiotics, and Place Semiotics (2003, p. 14). However, the 'Social Actor' is always present within the other three elements, as its influence can always be shown through the authorship of signs, the interactions of participants, or even interpretations of space and events. Therefore, Scollon and Wong Scollon instead build geosemiotics on a foundation supported by three main pillars, which they refer to instead as

'systems'—the interaction order, visual semiotics, and place semiotics (2003, p. 8). This choice does away with the separate 'Social Actor', eliminating redundancy and creating a more refined and simplified set of systems.

The first of the three systems, the interaction order, is what Scollon and Wong Scollon believe to be the most complex. Though a broad system, as are the other two, the system of the interaction order is derived from Erwin Goffman (1959, 1963, 1971), who inspired the name of this system. Quoting Goffman, Scollon and Wong Scollon describe the interaction order as "the ways we organize ourselves as single individuals or as conversational patterns . . . through which we interact with these many semiotic systems of the world around us" (2003, p. X); more simply put, how we position ourselves within social interactions. In their system, Scollon and Wong Scollon ensure to include Goffman's caution to focus on the interactions, rather than language, as primary (2003:8). As for LL this is important, as there is both meaning through the interactants (i.e. the individuals who come across elements in the LL and interact with them, which in turn has the delayed asynchronous effect of interacting with later interactants), as Feddersen et al. (2023) demonstrate, versus those who can be described as the passive interactants or passers-by, i.e. those who pass through the spaces and may see the elements present, but do not interact with the space in a way that alters the space; and once they exit the space, so does their effect on the LL. The relationship between author and audience also comes into play here for creating meaning. This relationship is crucial when conducting an analysis, because we may never know the true intentions of an author when they compose a sign or other element of the LL; however, we are able to examine the choices they made which are present in the LL. These choices in turn have a large influence over the relationship with the audience, and how they receive the

messages presented to them via the linguistic choices implemented i.e. through things such as forms of address employed, something Liebscher et al. (under review) discuss in their work.

The second system of geosemiotics developed by Scollon and Wong Scollon is that of visual semiotics, which was founded on previous research starting with Halliday's social semiotic approach to grammar (1978), and which itself was then adapted to form Kress and van Leeuwin's *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Discourse* (1996). Taking on Halliday's approach, Kress and van Leeuwen sought to tackle the issue of creating visual literacy through the analysis of compositional structures of visual images in terms of their different interpretations of experience and different forms of social interaction (2003, p. 17). With that, in mind Scollon and Wong Scollon in turn sought to answer three questions: "the representation of real-world actions in visual images, the problem of how visual images index the real world in which they are placed, [and] the problem of how social actors index these images which are so abundant in our world, constructing ongoing social performances as part of the social situation front" (2003, p. 84). This, however, remains rather complicated to those not fully versed in a linguistic register and so can be thought of instead as: how the real and social world are represented through images, how images gain their meanings from their placement, and how images are used to influence our actions.

Continuing their explanation of visual semiotics, Scollon and Wong Scollon followed Kress and van Leeuwin's belief that the visual components of a text are independently organized and structured around a grammar of their own. They also focus specifically on represented participants, modality, composition, and interactive participants in order to analyze the interaction of social actors as they appear visually (2003, p. 18). This narrowed focus allowed

them to hone in on the visual semiotic components which would allow for structured analysis. Whereas Kress and van Leeuwin had focused on images (pictures, painting, etc.), Scollon and Wong Scollon were able to expand the focus beyond images to include all visual aspects found in the LL, all whilst maintaining a focus on how the interaction order is visually represented and how the placement of visual symbols in the LL affect their interpretation (2003, p. 18). One of the most impactful elements which affect our interaction and understanding comes from the physical layout of elements within a given frame, with the focus being on elements in the centre of a frame and others deemed less important pushed to the periphery. This same ranking is also present through the placement of symbols or writing from top to bottom and left to right. It must be noted that this is a reflection of a "Western" reading style, where a title is at the top to catch your eye, then additional information follows below, as well as key information on the left, with new information often put on the right. Think of items such as menus, which follow this style with items listed on the left and prices which vary listed on the right (2003, pp. 17-18).

Visual semiotics, however goes beyond the meanings we attribute to a frame based on positioning and the interaction visible between elements. The modality plays a major role in our understanding of elements; one of which is colour. Colour carries with it an incredible amount of power in the way of visual semiotics because as an audience we attribute different meanings to colour. Some colours represent different emotions and the more saturated colours are, the more we attribute different meanings to them: e.g. a dark red would be perceived as a powerful or strong element, whereas a light blue would be calming and not indicate any form of danger to a viewer.

The third and final system that makes up geosemiotics is that of place semiotics, which focuses both on spaces that are considered to be either 'semiotic spaces' or 'non-semiotic'. The former space represents one in which signs are permitted and is open to encourage discourse, pictures, and other interactions between participants. The latter, the non-semiotic space, does not allow for that and may be considered even forbidden for LL elements (2003, p. 19). This is placed at the centre of analysis by Scollon and Wong Scollon, as the choice of place contributes as much to an action or a sign's meaning as the semiotic sign itself; for example, think of an orange traffic cone, whose meaning, when placed in its intended space, that of a construction zone, is clear to the audience who interacts with it, and who changes their interactions to adjust for safety accordingly. However, when a student who goes out with friends and enjoys a few alcoholic beverages removes the same traffic cone and places it in their dorm room, the meaning changes. Rather than indexing potential danger ahead, the cone serves as a reminder of that original night when the student acquired the cone, and now serves to index the type of person they are through the cone's emplacement in their dorm, signalling that the new 'owner' is a mischievous person when drinking.

Place semiotics, though, is not limited to the physical space being analyzed, but rather may also include the time frame which is being analyzed and include temporal elements i.e. before, after etc. These time frames also influence our understanding of the LL and cause us to view signs differently depending on how we are positioned in relativity to a time frame. One example is a sign regarding vaccinations ,as seen in Figure 7 of this thesis. A reading of this figure could be seen as indexing many diseases such as chicken pox; however, after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, it becomes clear that it indexes the vaccination program against COVID-19.

Thus, this third system of geosemiotics, place semiotics, plays a crucial role in an analysis, as without the notion of space and the interactions performed within which we attribute to certain spaces, our readings become skewed and the original message and the interactions that ensue can be lost as well. As for LL, the notion of space is also important due to a sign's emplacement within; when signs appear out of their 'expected' spaces they become transgressive. That is to say, any element that violates the conventional semiotics of a space, such as graffiti on a freshly painted wall or snack wrappers littering the ground (2003, p. 217). These elements then strike us as not belonging in a given space and in turn challenge our interpretations and force us to construct new meanings.

2.3 ELLA

Noticing issues with linguistic landscape studies and the lack of an ability to truly explain the meaning-making happening within the landscapes, Jan Blommaert published *Ethnography, Superdiversity and Linguistic Landscapes* (2013), or as it would become better known, ELLA. Serving as both a methodological and theoretical approach to the field, ELLA was meant to tackle all of the shortcomings in LLS Blommaert felt there was at the time of its writing. However, rather than approach the field from the viewpoint of linguistics, Blommaert instead chose to approach ELLA through an ethnographic approach, meaning that people and their cultures, customs, habits, and differences would be taken into consideration anthropologically as well.

One of the major concepts which Blommaert places at the heart of ELLA is 'superdiversity', a concept developed by Steven Vertovec and described as diversity within diversity, and as representing the tremendous increase in the texture of diversity occurring in

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Western cultures today (Vertovec, 2007, 2010, as cited in Blommaert, 2010, p. 4). And in the years since Vertovec first coined this term, the effects described by superdiversity have only become more apparent in the affected cultures. But to understand 'superdiversity' you first need to understand the incredible world changes that occurred in the early 1990s, of which two form the crucible of 'superdiversity'. The first is the collapse of the dominant world order, which coincided with the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. Not only did this mean the rise of several new countries and the disappearance of the domineering Soviet Union, but a freedom of mobility which did not previously exist. This resulted in the migration of peoples to new countries and crossing the former iron curtain like never before, but also of goods and services that were popping up in new locations and markets which they had never been seen before. The patterns of human mobility had forever changed, and that is why you can now see BMWs driving on the streets of Moscow, students from the People's Republic of China studying at many Western universities, and asylum seekers in the streets of Paris (Vertovec, 2010, as cited in Blommaert 2013, p. 5). This also explains the drop in population seen in Leipzig that the city is currently recovering from as with the fall of the Iron Curtain, people left the city to go West in search of opportunity. Additionally, it explains the use of communist referencing in the LL today, because of the city's history under communism before transitioning to a more Western and democratic style republic.

The second factor which coincided with the change in the world order was the rise of the 'online world' with increased internet access. This shift meant that we are able to access knowledge like never before and any source became available through a simple online search but additionally, it allowed us to stay connected instantaneously like never before, making traditional

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forms of communication such as mail almost obsolete. This influx of the online even had a knock-on effect causing people to change how they live their social and cultural lives (Blommaert, 2013, p. 5). These changes, however, are not always welcome, with the likes of Davidson & Goldberg (2010) describing this online shift due to these new technologies as being both fundamental and pervasive, where we are no longer easily able to escape the encroachment of these changes into our lives.

Thus, the impact of superdiversity has created two questions which Blommaert has made key to any contemporary analysis in LLS: 1) Who are we? and 2) Who is the other? (Blommaert, 2013, p. 5), as our societies continue to become more complex and those answers are no longer clear-cut. And as Blommaert points out, language maintains a privileged place in this process and consequently in LL, as defining the paradigmatic impact whilst also serving as a tool which allows researchers to detect the features of superdiversity (2013, p. 6). And so with the ever-changing and complex LLs of today, Blommaert insists that as researchers we must always keep mobility, complexity, and unpredictability at the forefront of our analyses. And as it pertains to this thesis, it is important to not assume that because the LL being studied is in a German city, all of the signs present will be solely in German; the use of German indexes the lingua franca of the area, but does not exclude other languages appearances in the LL as they serve to index the cultural diversity and the mix of minority groups who call Leipzig home today.

2.4 Turn-Taking

Drawing on Sacks et al. (1974) as well as Drew & Heritage (2006), Feddersen et al. (2023) make a strong case for the application of turn-taking to LLS, believing it to be "an intricate part of the linguistic landscape [which] allows us to sharpen our understanding of the

roles of actors beyond the fixation of 'top-down' vs. 'bottom-up' processes, and the construction of meaning through turn-taking" (2023, p. 10). In this sense then, interactions as they show in the LL, can accomplish what lies at the heart of turn-taking, and do something to advance a conversation. To better explain their application of turn-taking, the authors rely on the following categories: partial covering of turns, writing over a turn, parallel turns, and partial destruction of turns. Together these turn or interactional categories do a clear job of demonstrating the applicability of turn-taking in the LL. They are, however, not fixed and can be adapted to fit other studies whilst still fitting the mould of turn-taking. One example is the feature of repair, which is not covered by one of the categories Feddersen et al. focuses on, but could also be applied in a later study. Many of their categories, though, feature a commonality through a degree of erasure based on Pavlenko (2009). Erasure serves as a key to their analysis, and will also feature prominently in the interactional conversations happening with the soccer-related data I will soon present.

Influenced by their work, I too believe that turn-taking is a key part of the interactions happening in the LL. But what exactly is turn-taking, and what is it used for? The answer to this is both simple and complex, as turn-taking is used to regulate a wide range of interactions such as turns in a game, allocating offices, regulating the flow of traffic, customer service orders, interviews, debates, meetings, ceremonies, and conversations, and so turn-taking covers a large part of the interactions occurring our lives, whether we realize it or not (Sacks et al.,1974, p. 696). Sacks et al. apply this theory mostly to spoken conversation, resulting in its place as a cornerstone of conversation analysis guiding the study through fourteen key features of conversation. I believe, however, that in order to apply the theory of turn-taking to LLS we must

first imagine the interactions in a LL as a conversation. However, rather than being a synchronic conversation as one may have face-to-face or via telephone, the conversations taking place in the LL are asynchronous and take place via interactions. These interactions then can be studied at a later time and read much as the transcripts of a more "traditional" spoken conversation in conversation analysis may be read, with each interaction taking the place of an utterance in a face-to-face conversation. After all, we must remember that as long as there are visible turns and interactions in the LL, there always exists the possibility that an interactant will come along and take a new turn, always expanding that conversation.

To better understand the cross-applicability of turn-taking on the LL rather than just spoken conversations we need to first briefly look at a few of the fourteen features of conversation which are immediately apparent within interactions in the LL and the data in this thesis. Starting with the occurrence of speaker change—this is seen through the interactions, i.e. one participant leaving a sticker followed by another participant placing a subsequent sticker. The conversation length is also not specified in advance. As mentioned before, as long as there exists an LL we must assume that it is open and waiting for an interactant to take the next turn. The conversation then only comes to an end when all traces of the interaction become completely removed from the LL. This, however, opens the space for a new conversation. Additionally, regarding the LL the number of parties involved may vary—we can see this through the various elements placed in the collages of Chapter 4. We cannot say how many interactants have interacted and taken a turn with the space, but only that there are multiple and potentially each turn may be one party or a series of returning parties taking more than one turn.

By further analysing captured LL moments in-depth, more of these fourteen features become apparent, further strengthening the connection between LLS and the theory of turn-taking.

There are, however, two departures of note from the fourteen features of conversation: 1) the transition time between turns and 2) the use of turn allocation features. When viewing the LL as an audience, there seems to be no apparent gap in the transitions as we view the conversation as a whole, deciphering it by the turns which have already occurred. To the audience, this means there are no gaps during the transitions; however, in reality the sequence of turns via interactions may have occurred over a long time, with long gaps between turns. The second departure is regarding the use of allocation techniques for turns. As turns are made through interactions, it is not always possible for the 'current speaker' to select the 'next speaker' in the LL. This is because the environment is open to all who enter it. Instead, in order for the conversation to progress, 'speakers' or perhaps better, interactants rely on the 'self-selection' method, in which the conversation is left open and a 'speaker'/interactant then selects themselves as the next turn-taker through their interaction.

Thus, when we can think of interactions in the LL in this way and see how the interactions use all of the fourteen features of conversation, there is no other way to understand the LL except as a disembodied conversation between parties. This in turn allows us to study the LL not just as a static moment like in a picture, but much more. We can study it instead as a conversation between inhabitants of a given space.

3 Methodology

Having first started as a research assistant working with Dr. Grit Liebscher of the University of Waterloo and Dr. Jennifer Dailey-O'Cain of the University of Alberta, I decided that my thesis would be related to LLS. The exact topic, though, was left open as I explored different aspects of the LL, such as forms of address, social activism, how businesses presented themselves, and multi-lingual appearances in one space of the LL. Constantly searching for something to catch my interest when out exploring the city of Mannheim, I kept collecting ideas. Then, after analysing some data for a publication that Dr. Liebscher and Dr. Dailey-O'Cain were writing about interactions in the LL, I settled on soccer as a general theme for my thesis. This came about as I started to notice peculiar patterns emerging in the soccer-related data as rivalries played out not on the field, but in cities, through the use of LL. My interest in soccer continued to grow when out in Mannheim I noticed how riot police were called in and special busses were put into service whenever fans of 1. FC Kaiserslautern arrived in the city to play against SV Waldhof Mannheim. This level of rivalry struck me as particularly interesting as it went beyond what I had been used to, when for example the Calgary Flames would come to play the Edmonton Oilers in what is known as 'Oilersnation', Edmonton and northern Alberta. And so, from that day on I was on the search for soccer as it appeared in the LL of Mannheim.

As I collected data, I came to realize that I wanted to include data not just from one short period of data collection during the fall of 2023, but, data which was collected over a longer period of time, allowing for more interactions to take place during that span of time. Thus, having recently being introduced to corpus linguistics and having experience with several different corpora, I was happy to instead work on my thesis with a pre-existing corpus which was

at my disposal, rather than collecting my own data and creating a new corpus. This decision would result in me being able to pull from more images than I had collected myself, as well as give me a wider timeframe during which the data was collected and assembled to benefit my analyses. For this, though, I thought first of turning to two well-respected and developed corpora with which I was familiar. The first I turned to was DeReKo (Das Deutsche Referenzkorpus/The German reference corpus), developed and maintained by the Leibniz-IDS (Institute for the German Language), after I was introduced to it by Dr. Henning Lobin, the institution's director. Comprised of over 55 billion words as of March 2023, it is the largest electronic corpus of written German in the world today (IDS, 2023). It quickly proved to be insufficient, though, as it lacked any images which could be used for LL. Unfortunately, I came across the same problem with the other corpora I was familiar with, such as the FOLK *Forschungs- und Lehrkorpus Gesprochenes Deutsch* (the Research and Teaching Corpus of Spoken German), DTA *Deutsche Textarchiv* (German text archive), and REDE Regionalsprache.de (Regional Languages.de).

It was then that Dr. Liebscher and Dr. Dailey-O'Cain offered me the use of their corpus.: a corpus which has not been made public as of the date of this publication and has been built up with the help of research assistants in the German cities of Leipzig and Mannheim from 2019-2022, with the express purpose of being used for LL projects. This means that not only does it present data from both the pre-COVID and peri-COVID[2] time frames, but also data from the former West and East Germany. With the wealth of data present within, it allows for their

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[2] Peri-COVID is a medical term which encompasses all the time since the introduction of COVID-19 into the world (Elangovanraaj et al. 2020).

project *Ideologies of English in the linguistic landscape*[3] to explore a variety of subjects related to LLS in contemporary Germany and influence other scholars like myself.

My first step after gaining full access to the *Ideologies of English in the linguistic landscape* corpus was to select a unit of analysis to use before I would be able to continue with my coding. For this I settled on my unit of analysis being divided two different ways. The first way it was divided, was as an individual element isolated in the LL such as a sticker on a pole which could serve as its own unit of analysis. As is often the case with LL, though, elements often find themselves grouped together. In these cases they form a sort of collage, and so the unit of analysis becomes not the individual elements within, but the collage as a whole. This is because you can study each element individually, but due to their placement they contribute to a larger discourse in the LL through the interactions with the audience and elements in proximity. I was then able to separate the 5,000 photographs and look at the roughly 2,000 which were gathered in Leipzig. Realizing there were enough images related to soccer in the Leipzig portion and being most interested in the images from that city, due to how many clubs call Leipzig home as well as the diversity of other clubs appearing in the LL, I chose to focus on this portion of the corpus for my study. This was also partially motivated by not wanting to have my study be solely about the rivalry between Mannheim and Kaiserslautern, which I had mostly come across whilst sorting through data collected in Mannheim. Once I was left with just the Leipzig data, I then started to remove all duplicate images and double-takes (photographs of the same LL but with a slightly different perspective, such as being captured from a half meter away), before coding for

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anything which displayed a connection to soccer. This process left my new soccer-focused corpus at 332 photographs, or roughly 18.5% of all the photographs in the original Leipzig section of the corpus.

Having completed the first round of coding to reduce all the photographs to be soccer related and in Leipzig, a preliminary analysis was conducted to gain a better understanding of the types of photographs in the corpus, as well as to check for any emerging patterns. It was during this preliminary coding that several patterns were noticed. Firstly, there were many more teams and clubs present in the LL than just those which call Leipzig home; and of that second group, BSG Chemie Leipzig appears the most out of all local clubs. Secondly, while many clubs were present, the local clubs seem to be in a 'turf battle' amongst each other in the LL with many attempts made to erase the presence of certain elements from the LL. And thirdly, unlike hockey here in Canada, there was a clear link between soccer and political ideologies being drawn through the use of certain images and references in the LL. With the preliminary analysis conducted and those three initial observations in mind, I created six categories to further code my data into: Club vs. Club, Direct Politicization, Mixed Effect, Territorial/Spatial Claim, Special, and need more information, in order to answer my research questions: what does the LL of Leipzig look like in terms of soccer vs. non-soccer elements, what type of interactions related to soccer are visible in the LL, and how does the LL and the interactions within link to larger socio-political trends of the area?

After my initial coding and preliminary analysis I started a more thorough analysis guided by the three systems of Geosemiotics to study the elements and collages for the meanings being created within. These meanings could be created through authorship or emplacement,

amongst other choices, as they attempt to communicate with the audience. ELLA was then used to connect those meanings and communicative attempt to the greater societal issues at play within Leipzig. After that process I presented my early findings to the *Social Interaction Language and Culture Lab* at the University of Waterloo, to test my hypotheses. During this data session, I presented a selection of images from across my six categories and led a discussion in which the participants and I analyzed the images together. With the input of the participants and my notes from the session guiding me, I then re-coded my data to a reduced three categories based on the function of the elements in each image. This came as a result of my realization that the original six categories had too much overlap between them. The new categories which emerged and into which the data remains organized are:

1) Spatial Claim, in which a single element is placed and unobscured to claim a space for the club represented; this has the effect of extending that club's influence from their home 'turf' into new and other spaces which are out of that traditional 'turf'.

2) Club vs. Club, in which elements from multiple clubs are present in the same space and compete for superior placement and visibility; this often occurs through erasure when one club has a sticker placed on top of another club's sticker.

3) Mixed Effect in which multiple functions are being performed within the unit of analysis; these often consist of collages with multiple stickers, and may consist of a club vs club 'turf' battle whilst also expressing a direct political link.

With these new categories in place, a selection of 9 photographs consisting of the most representative examples were chosen for a final and thorough analysis, which is presented in the analysis chapter, and the series of sub-sections within this thesis; these examples were chosen in

a way that clearly demonstrates the function of their sub-category and were arranged in a presentation order that went from most clear and simple and built up to more complex. An additional set of photos showing more examples of those categories were also selected to be included in a small appendix at the end of this thesis. These photographs either show similar features to those discussed in the analyses or other elements of note, which supports the argument but where I was not able to justify their own analysis in the thesis.

4 Analysis

In this chapter, I will present several examples from my thesis' corpus accompanied by a thorough analysis of each photograph to demonstrate how the LL is being used in Leipzig and serving as a reflection for those who occupy the spaces. To achieve this, the photographs and analyses will be grouped into three sections, which correlate to the functions being performed by the images within. These also are the categories that arose from the early qualitative analysis work. Thus, the first section of this chapter (section 4.1) will present data from the simplest category — Spatial Claim (a single element or sticker being used to claim a space for a club). I will then advance to the second section (4.2) — Club vs. Club (which displays interactions in the LL in which supporters of one club are deliberately targeting another), before presenting the most complex of the sections (4.3) — the Mixed Effect section (often comprised of collages, this category shows a mix of effects, such as a club versus club action, tied with another interaction which directly politicizes the space). This is a natural progression, as this third category combines many elements that can be observed in the preceding two sub-categories, and so it only makes sense to start with the basics and build to the more complex.

Before presenting the sections and analyses, though, I first want to draw your attention to the chart below. Chart 1 is a visual representation of the early work done coding my data. As this is a qualitative study, the quantitative results are not the main focus. It is, however, interesting to take note of how the original 1,812 images were reduced, removing unrelated photographs, duplicates, and other near-identical photographs, leaving a total of 327 photos in my corpus which were then categorized and studied in depth.   The results showed the majority of the soccer-related photographs in the Leipzig LL (63%, or 205 photographs) to be comprised of club

supporters committing Club vs. Club related interactions. These interactions serve as an extension from the soccer fields in which clubs compete against one another for dominance and instead allow the clubs to compete for dominance over spaces around the LL of Leipzig, almost as 'turf wars' between other factions play out.

A greater explanation will be given below in each of the sections before being followed by a discussion bringing together all key points of the analyses.
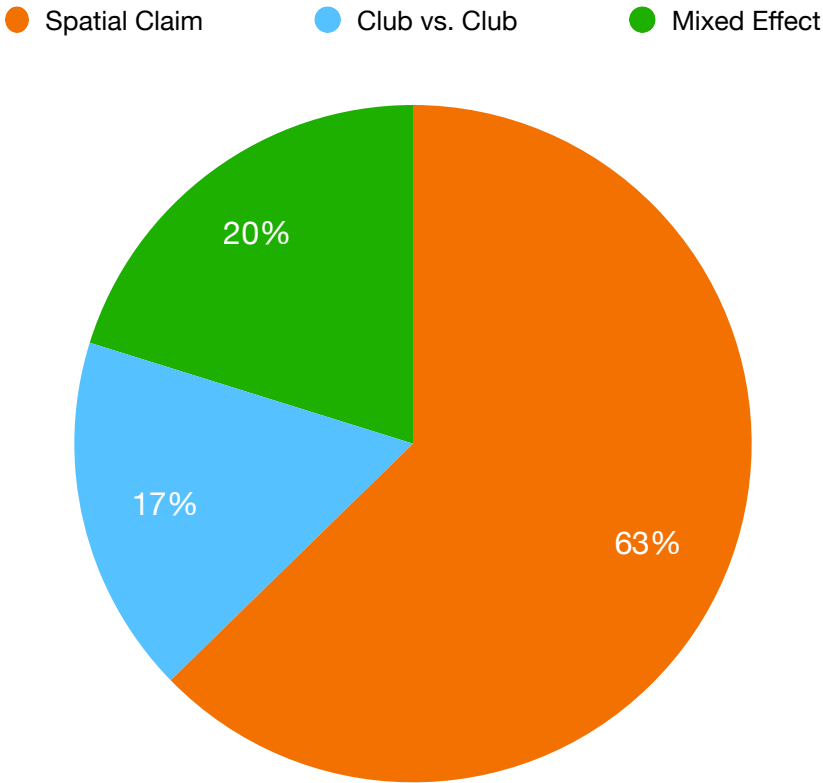

Chart 1. Percentage of data in each category from the corpus.

4.1 Spatial Claims

Leipzig presents an interesting case to us as it is home to a plethora of soccer clubs competing at different levels, from the Bundesliga down to local recreational clubs for fun. Despite that level in difference between the professional and recreational clubs, all of the teams

have fierce and loyal fanbases who support their chosen clubs. It is not only the higher ranked and professional clubs which benefit from large fanbases who are willing to go out to either support or represent them, as is often the case with other sports.. As such, interactants need to claim a certain space to be theirs: a space over which their chosen club dominates and reigns supreme. Therefore it should come as no surprise that the presence of four teams in particular can often be found dominating the LL around Leipzig: RB Leipzig, BSG Chemie Leipzig, 1. FC Lokomotive Leipzig, and Roter Stern Leipzig all of which index the city as a key component of their names. Interestingly though, the LL of Leipzig is not the exclusive space of those aforementioned clubs. Just as with sports as a whole, the influence of rival teams can be found within the LL, such as FC Hansa Rostock, 1. FC Union Berlin, and Hannover 96, amongst others. Much like the clubs calling Leipzig home vary in their level, so too do these other non-Leipzig teams that appear in the LL. With the presence of all these different clubs in the city's LL ,we need to start to look at how these LL elements appear and, more importantly, what they mean when they appear in a certain space, because as Vogel et al. explain, spatial context (location) is crucial for the understanding of what appears in the LL, so much so that with a change in location the original author's message may be changed or even lost when elements get removed from that space (2020, p. 2155). As we see in this section, that constructed meaning is done by interactants in order to claim certain spaces: a claim which is not just spatial in nature but also influential, as these claims have the added effect of extending a club's reach far beyond their home turf and the lines of a soccer field on which they play. This is important to note, as the data here all corresponds to a 'neutral' space—the Mitte district. While RB Leipzig has their stadium

in a neighbourhood in the west end of the Mitte district, it is not in the neighbourhoods of this

data, meaning any of the clubs may lay claim to these spaces as they share the city.

Figure 1. 1. FC Lokomotive Leipzig on a street sign.

Located along a side street, lined with parked cars, stands a *Do-not-enter* sign high above

head level, letting vehicles and other traffic know that this street is designated a one-way flow.

Though its intended audience is vehicular traffic, it is also placed in a way that foot traffic may

easily notice the sign. This serves a dual function: firstly, it stops vehicles from going down the

street in the 'wrong' direction; and secondly, it serves as an indicator to foot traffic that past this

street sign it is less dangerous to cross the street and interact in this space, because interactants in

this space only need to be cautious of traffic approaching from one direction. This in turn has the

effect of allowing interactants here to lower their guard in the space, as it can be perceived and demarcated as a 'safer' space.

The street sign and the pole onto which it is affixed are serving more functions than just one. In addition to being a physical presence which serves as an indicator of spatial demarcation ,they also serve as the backdrop onto which our focus stickers are placed. Placed at the bottom of the street sign are two stickers: one on the left and one on the right. Looking first to the left, we see a rectangular sticker with BÜRO 21 written in a continual stream in black, with the exception of the middle line, which is instead written in red to stand out. Though it jumps out to the audience due to its composition, those with an 'in-knowledge' will recognize it as representing a German hip-hop group. For this reason, it can be ignored for further analysis as it does not interact with the soccer sticker to its right. As such, though the stickers occupy the same space, they also do not compete for the space, and instead coexist independently of each other.

The second sticker, though, is what we will focus on, as it indexes the soccer community of Leipzig. This one in particular stands out to an audience and draws their eye because of the author's choices when composing the sticker. The colour scheme which stands out due to its placement by an interactant on the red background serves to index the colours associated with 1. FC Lokomotive Leipzig, a soccer club which claims to be the oldest of the established clubs in the city, hence the use of 1 as a visual link to their place in the hierarchy of clubs, a practice common amongst German clubs, including 1. SVG Mainz 05 or 1. FC Köln (Bundesliga.Com, 2012). Thus, though their place in the seasonal rankings may vary, they will always remain number 1 regarding longevity. This sticker, however, is serving another function in addition to

reminding the audience of the club's long history; this sticker is claiming this space to be under their influence. Much as the street sign onto which this sticker is placed is performing a function for the space behind it, the sticker is also performing the function of claiming the space, but in a less official way. It indexes the space as being safe, because should somebody be a supporter of Lokomotive they find themselves amongst other club supporters and don't need to worry about harassment for displaying that pride here, even though this area is away from their home stadium and in what could be considered an area up for grabs to competing clubs. It shows that there are other supporters around, so you can freely and happily display your support of the club. It is important to note, though, that it does not necessarily indicate any danger to other club's fans, but simply that as an area claimed by Lokomotive fans. Thus, you would not expect to see signs supporting BSG Chemie Leipzig unless they wish to change the dynamic of the space to a contested one; but this would require considerable influence, much as how you would not expect to see Calgary Flames flags flying in Edmonton's Ice District. And so, though seemingly simple at first, the placement of this one sticker is performing a much more complex function of indexing the space and laying claim to this area of the city for one club and its supporters in particular.

Figure 2a. Two FC Hansa stickers on a pole. Figures 2b and 2c are zoom-ins of Figure 2a.

This photograph presents an interesting case to the audience and one which shows an opposite backdrop to what is presented in Figure 1. Rather than the modern paved street with large glass-clad structures typical of any modern city, in Figure 2 the audience is instead presented with a cobblestone street lined with *Altbauten* (old buildings) standing in stark contrast to the modern yellow garbage bins and parked cars spotted throughout. This serves to show the duality of Leipzig as both a modern European city and one with a long and rich German history. In the foreground, though, prominently stands a metal pole holding two signs up, which unfortunately we are unable to decipher as we are only able to view the back side in this photograph which carries no meaning for the general audience. They do, however, feature

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stickers meant for a smaller audience, one which Goffman would refer to as group within a group, as they are meant for a smaller set of technical workers who work with the signs. These technical stickers related to the signs' manufacturing and inspection are affixed to the back of each by the producer, so that the intended audience would be able to get any information conveyed and necessary but the larger audience could ignore them, much as we now shall too. For the more general audience, however, these signs and the pole are filled with meaning through the various stickers placed on them, not by an official city authority who would have first installed the pole and signs, but instead by people lacking any sort of official or sanctioned authority over the LL —the interactants of the space.

Starting first at the base of the pole and working our way up, we see a large sticker similar to ones placed on the bumper of a vehicle, placed on this pole. The sticker is not for one of the city's many clubs, but instead represents FC Hansa Rostock, a 2. Bundesliga tier club, in which Leipzig is currently unrepresented. On this sticker, the club logo is visible to the right with a cog (sailing ship) indexing the city of Rostock's historical link to the medieval Hanseatic League and the seafaring ways of its people. This link is further enforced through the club's choice of name. Then to the left of the logo the words *Bei Sonne, Sturm und Schnee* (in sun, storm[,] and snow) are printed. This may seem odd at first to those unfamiliar with soccer; however, supporters of the club or even those used to cheering against it as their club faces off against Hansa will recognize this line as a reference both to a popular rally call for the team and part of the lyrics to the club's song *Hey FC Hansa* (Rostock). And so, without the need for any club supporters physically present and singing the song, this sticker serves as a vehicle through which the club's song can still be 'heard' echoing the streets of Leipzig.

Moving up the pole towards the signs above, we notice several other stickers placed on the pole, such as the knock-off crossed *Cs Chanel* logo being used by local musician *Connewitz Cowboy*. Though noticeable to fans and locals, this too can be ignored as 'semiotic or visual noise' due to its failure to interact with the other stickers present. This same rationale may also be applied to the other two stickers above, which have been erased, as Pavlenko (2009) and Feddersen et al. (2023) would call it, from the LL. The first has almost been erased in its entirety, by being peeled off by an interactant. There is, however, a faint trace left in the LL showing where a sticker once was. The second and higher of the two remains more present. Its meaning, however, has also been erased through an act of destruction. At some point, one or more interactant(s) whose motives remain unclear to us, took it upon themselves to repeatedly scratch away at the sticker until this was all that remained. As an audience we can still see traces of this sticker and colours employed by the author during its manufacture; however, the original message is gone, leaving instead a message of dissatisfaction and disagreement.

Finally, the last sticker visible on the pole before we reach the signs is another instance of disagreement over time. Most visible is a blue and white *Ende Gelände* sticker. This group is a climate activism group spread well across Germany, especially in the West where they adamantly oppose mining operations. Though this sticker is damaged, it appears not to be from human interactions, but rather the effects of its emplacement and weathering over time. What is clear and discernible, though, is how it was placed in an effort to cover a previous sticker in that spot, which in turn had been placed over another. We know that due to the faint outline of what was once there before its removal. This is a pattern which we will see repeated later on, but with soccer stickers in the LL.

Returning now to the main focus of this study, we see located on the bottom of the two signs a second soccer sticker. Much like the first sticker, this one also is shaped like a bumper sticker and uses the club logo to index back to the club. It differs, however, in its full composition. Sticking more firmly to a colour scheme of blue and white, like the uniform colours, this sticker instead places the logo front and centre, highlighting its importance both for the community and from the standpoint of composition. We know this because of how Scollon and Wong Scollon (2003) explain, with the system of visual semiotics, that elements of a composition viewed as being of more importance are often placed centrally to dominate the composition. Then on each side of the logo, like bookends on a bookshelf, are the numbers forming the year 1965. This is of course indexing back to the modern club's founding after several earlier organizational variations.

Together in this photograph, the two stickers representing FC Hansa Rostock are performing an interesting role. Here they stand unopposed in the LL by any other soccer clubs, much as they do in their league, due to Leipzig's lack of teams to compete in the 2. Bundesliga. As a result, it appears as though Leipzig fans do not care to cover Rostock's presence in the LL as they would a rival club, indexing that Rostock is not seen as a rival in the LL. This allows the club supporters of Rostock to expand the club's reach not just to this street, but by extension also over Leipzig, a city that is unable to challenge them back on the fields and, as it appears, in the LL too. This is only a reflection of the time leading up to the data gathering. There is no possible prediction as to what the future holds. Any interactant may come and challenge Rostock's domination over this space, just as there may be a team to one day rise in the leagues and

challenge Rostock on the soccer field as they once had during the East German days when Leipzig played against them.

Figure 3. Collage of Chemie Leipzig on one street sign.

The third example of a club and its supporters laying claim to a 'neutral space', meaning a space not home to any club, which would regard it as its home space such as all of Vancouver is for the Canucks or Toronto for the Maple Leafs, is seen here in Figure 3. Additionally, it presents an audience with what can only be described as semiotic excess in order to really show that this space now belongs to Chemie. That excess, however, is what transforms an otherwise mundane traffic sign from something that would often go unnoticed, save for the intended audience of motorists, to becoming highly visible within the LL. What would have normally been just a sign

serving as a demarcation of the space beyond, much like in Figure 1, instructing traffic to keep right of obstructions ahead, is instead now playing host to the collage elements (comprised of both graffiti and stickers in this case) with differing meanings open for a wider audience in the LL to decipher.

The first elements which appear on the street sign are the two instances of graffiti writing, as temporally we can see that the white writing was the first interaction that was then covered by the blue writing and stickers. The larger of the two is written in white paint, which due to the fading and uneven application would indicate has been present longer than the other elements appearing on the sign; this would of course occur naturally over time due to weathering or an attempt at erasure through cleaning, which in this case has proven unsuccessful. The second instance of writing appears to be done with blue ink, and slimly covers a portion of the first written element, but not enough to interfere with its message. Regrettably, I have been unable to decipher the meaning of the graffiti elements present on the sign, but luckily they do not interfere with the main focus of this collage, which falls to the other sticker elements indexing the soccer club BSG Chemie Leipzig.

The main focus and cause of semiotic excess are the various styles of stickers employed by Chemie supporters on this his traffic sign and by extension the greater space around it. For this, we can see five whole stickers (not taking the "nigelism" sticker into account) in various states of deterioration placed along the left and right edges of the sign. Additionally, in the centre of the sign, the corner of a sixth sticker can be seen. This sixth sticker, however, has been removed from the LL ,but in a way that has left a trace remnant, requiring the audience to use their historical body of knowledge (Blommaert, 2013) to decipher what was removed, Feddersen

at al. (2023) also make the point that in some instances interactants choose to leave remnants behind to contribute to the meaning-making in the LL. With knowledge of soccer and a familiarity with the Leipzig LL, though it is possible to recognize this sticker as another of the varieties employed by Chemie, due to the colour scheme of green, white, and black often employed by the club which is also present in the composition of all the remaining Chemie stickers.

Moving in a clockwise fashion, let us now better analyse those Chemie stickers, starting with the one placed on the top right. Placed clear of obstruction, this sticker features many of the symbols and colours typically used by Chemie supporters, including the heart and star. Of particular note, though, is the year 1964, one which is of prominence for the club as it was the last time that they won a major championship in the DDR-Oberliga, though this was not the modern iteration of the club but its pre-unification counterpart, from which the club traces its roots today. Below this sticker is a second which reads *FLUTLICHT FÜR LEUTZSCH* (floodlights for Leutzsch), which displays a stylized set of stadium floodlights above the text, all using green over a white background, the traditional Chemie colour scheme. To understand the true meaning of this sticker it is first important to know that the Alfred-Kunze-Sportpark (formerly known as the Georg, Schwarz-Sportpark during the GDR era) features floodlight quite prominently at their field, as shown in the sticker. Secondly, it is important to notice that this sticker is claiming the new space but also indexing another space, the Leutzsch neighbourhood of Leipzig, which is home to both the stadium and Chemie, since that is their home stadium. Without that 'insider-knowledge' an audience would have simply made a connection between this sticker and sports, rather than to the specific club. The third sticker in this grouping (the

white sticker with green writing above red writing which reads "Chemie Leipzig") making up the collage on this sign differs slightly from the others in its modality. Whereas the other stickers are professionally printed stickers with a glossy finish enabling them to better stand up to the weather, this sticker lacks that finish, resulting in water damage and wrinkling over time, with the traces of that process starting along its top edge. This sticker also has the added personal touch of being made up by somebody writing with two separate pens the words "CHEMIE LEIPZIG" in green and red respectively. We can make this assertion by examining the way the ink has transferred to the base sticker with some parts being darker than others, as well as the lack of total uniformity in lettering which would be achieved through a printed process. This does, however, also give it an added degree of personalization that can only be achieved through writing rather than printing; think of receiving a letter in the mail rather than an email. Stickers like this are not uncommon either, and can be seen in other instances around Leipzig supporting the club, with a variation of colours being employed. Thus, it can be assumed a supporter of the club pre-wrote many of these stickers onto an adhesive base, much like name tags given out at a conference, and went around applying them to the LL either alone or with a group.

Now moving left, we arrive at the first of the two stickers that show a degree of integration between the original interactant, who placed the stickers, and later interactants who contributed to the meaning happening here. For some, this first sticker may not seem immediately clear that it has to do with the club of Chemie. They may, however, assume so based on the shared colour scheme used in the sticker composition, as well the placement including it in the circle with other Chemie-affiliated stickers. The affiliation to soccer only really becomes apparent upon closer investigation, unless someone posses a certain familiarity with the club. It

depicts fans filling the bleachers at a stadium waving a flag with the face of Georg Schwarz, a communist and anti-National Socialism activist turned martyr like figure during the GDR era. This is all accompanied by the text "*GEORG SCHWARZ BRIGADE, BSG CHEMIE LEIPZIG*", both identifying the club by name as well as a well-known nickname for their supporters, the Georg Schwarz brigade. This sticker also has an interesting series of turns associated with it, as after the original sticker was placed by one interactant there have been at least three additional elements placed over it, trying to erase it from the LL, as can be seen through the trace of a circle, a larger square shape tilted to the left, and the corner of another element which is tilted to the right. This means that over time other interactants took turns placing these one on top of the other, changing the LL, until a final interactant removed the three now lost stickers, leaving the original present and restoring its full visibility to the audience. Unfortunately, though, because there is no other evidence present we cannot say what those removed elements were, nor can we theorize as to the motivation behind their placements.

The last of the elements showing a significant level of interaction regarding Chemie and contributing to the semiotic excess in this collage is the top left sticker. This sticker features one of the most common logos used by the club and its supporters, as well as the continued use of their colour scheme in its composition. Interestingly, the crest here features the city name and a stylized C for Chemie surrounded by a wreath of laurel, a common symbol of triumph, success, and superiority, as can be often seen through its association with the emperors of Rome and the god Apollo. All of this symbolism sits above the text "*FÜR IMMER*" (always) implying that Chemie will forever reign as champions over all others they compete against and in turn the spaces they occupy, i.e. Leipzig. However, it also implies that whoever the supporter that placed

this sticker here was and will forevermore be a continuing supporter of the club. At least one other interactant besides the original who posted the sticker, however, took note of it in the LL and chose to fight against it through an act of vandalism or, as Feddersen et al. (2023) refer to it, 'partial destruction'. This is evident through the traces left behind by an attempt at removing the sticker, as can be seen in the damage done to both left corners and the deep scratches across the sticker, which failed to remove it or truly destroy it. This partial destruction left visible traces in the LL of disagreement over the club and their claim to this space.

The remaining elements present at the top of the soccer circle, the heart and a last sticker (the "nigelism" sticker), are of no real consequence when studying discourse surrounding soccer in the LL as presented in this photograph, despite their placement completing the circle with the other elements. The meaning of the heart can never truly be deciphered by what is present, it could be there to simply be there to support Chemie and the semiotic excess on this street sign, or even be there to show support in the fight back against Chemie as it claims dominance over this space. The other sticker too is unrelated to soccer, but instead serves as a marker directing the audience to social medial accounts.

Overall, though, what can be deciphered through the turns that have occurred in Figure 3 are several attempts by Chemie supporters at claiming this space for their team and though not in their traditional or 'home turf' of Leutzsch, it is still within their reach to claim and assert dominance over. Subsequent turns, however, show that this is a contested claim, as interactants have attempted to fight back against the spatial claim through removal, covering, and partial destruction. Regrettably, though, we are unable to attribute that pushback to any groups or rival clubs due to the lack of evidence. Thus, based on what is present, we can simply decipher the

dissatisfaction and lack of complicity taking place in this attempt at a spatial claim, which ultimately can be argued as successful due to the sheer quantity of stickers present and dominating the space in this collage covering the street sign, unchallenged by others.

4.2 Club Versus Club Interactions

This section presents photographs from around the LL that go beyond a simple spatial claim by one interactant. This was briefly teased in Figure 3 from the previous section, in which interactions through spatial claims were present along with additional interactions against those claims through subsequent turns. Figure 3 did, however, lack any party to which these interactions could be attributed. In this current section, though, those interactions can clearly be attributed to interactants supporting their chosen clubs, resulting in the attribution of interactions and turns to certain clubs and their supporters via the evidence left behind in the LL. Most often this is done through the covering (or as Pavlenko 2009 and Feddersen et al. 2023 refer to it, layering) of an element by another (be it sticker over sticker or writing over sticker, etc.), without full erasure of the original LL element being achieved. This can then be seen as one club 'making a move' against another, either for a 'turf war' or other reasons. Regardless, the function on which this section is built remains as one club challenging or taking action against another for whichever reason.

Figure 4a. Chemie and Lok. stickers stacked on a street sign. Figure 4b zoom-in of Figure 4a.

Found standing along the streets of a residential area, this street pole holds three street signs grouped together. As an audience approaching from this angle, it is clear that these street signs were put in place by an official authority for the city. The meaning of these street signs is lost on the audience from this point of view and can only be revealed by turning around and viewing the front of them. The back, however, presents the audience with another message, a less-than-official message, put in place by soccer club supporters through their interactions with each other on this sign. Interactional turns through which a conversation gradually was built up over time, a conversation which unfolded much like a debate over ownership of space.

To decipher the turns and analyse the conversation occurring on these street signs, we must first remove the top sign from our considerations as it is a space left blank, meaning it is an open space which could be added to the conversation but has yet to have been done. The bottom of the three official signs must also be removed from our analysis, but for different reasons. There have been many interactions over time which have taken place on the bottom signs. These,

however, have for the most part been removed or weathered beyond recognition. Additionally, they do not contribute to the focus of soccer, which is concentrated on the second/middle of the three signs. Thus, both the first and third official signs, though seen in the LL by an audience, can be left aside in favour of the right side of the second and official sign, i.e. the one in the middle.

As seen in the previous section, interactants are using the LL to claim spaces for the clubs which they support and in turn, extend the influence of these clubs out of their home 'turf' into new spaces. In those instances, though, these interactants were often left alone and unchallenged over their spatial claims. Here, however we notice a difference, as there is a visible challenge being issued between club supporters in the LL through the covering of stickers and partial destruction of others. Figure 4 in particular shows that spatial challenge playing out between Chemie and their rival Lok.[4] All together this collage of stickers is made up of five stickers which are visible to the audience. Starting their series of turns off, a supporter of Lok laid claim to the space using one of their stickers, as can be seen by the blue and yellow, a typical feature used by authors creating materials for the club, which remains barely visible under all subsequent stickers. This was then covered over nearly entirely by a large square sticker for Chemie, which started the direct challenge issued by Chemie to Lok over this space. Interestingly, though, rather than a Lok supporter then responding and initiating another turn, instead another Chemie supporter then chose to cover the first Chemie sticker with a smaller circular one for the youth ultras of Chemie. It was only after that second sticker was placed in support of Chemie that a Lok supporter placed a new circular sticker on top of the pile to pull the

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[4] Lok is the abbreviated term often used instead of the club's longer name of 1. FC Lokomotive Leipzig.

tide back in favour of Lok. With this interaction, not only was Lok on top and most visible to the LL audience again, but that prominence allowed the club to reclaim the space. This was once again challenged a final time by a supporter of Chemie. In this final turn before the photograph was taken, a circular Chemie sticker was placed on top of all others. However, rather than covering the Lok sticker this new Chemie sticker instead has a slight overlap with the Lok sticker, almost forming the shape of a Venn diagram. This turn can be seen in two ways; it can be seen as Chemie supports taking back the space from Lok, or it could also be interpreted as an attempt as reaching a compromise by which both teams share the space much as they must share the city.

So, this example (Figure 4) demonstrates to us the interesting way in which supporters are using the LL to engage in a dialogue over spaces, with Feddersen et al. explaining this process as "far from being a series of static semiotic displays, linguistic landscapes often and potentially always consist of interlinked semiotic turns that proceed much as the turns of a verbal conversation do, and which together create meanings that go beyond those that are apparent when we do not take interactivity into account" (2023, p. 38). A rather simple example of this process, Figure 4 nevertheless builds off of the spatial claims exhibited through Figures 1-3 of the previous section. As you shall soon see, though, the manner in which clubs engage with each other in these contested spaces is not always as civil as in Figure 4.

Figure 5a. Drain Pipe with three sections of soccer.
Figure 5b (L), 5c (M), and 5d. (R) zoom-ins of the interactions featured in Figure 5a.

When walking down the streets in a shopping area, it is not often that people tend to notice drain pipes and other city infrastructure. Instead, their gaze is often fixed on the different shops and their displays, all of which do their utmost to draw your eye and clutter the LL of an

area. Here though it is nearly impossible to miss this drain pipe as it makes its way up a shop wall. It does not simply blend in as a metal pole normally would, but instead stands out covered in a plethora of stickers, making its own contribution to the LL.

At a first glance at this drain pipe, it seems as though the upper sections have fewer stickers and the bottom portion is the busiest due to how many distinguishable stickers are present, ranging from the "Hello my name is" sticker up to the Los Capitanos sticker. This bottom section is filled with stickers representing various 'crews', e.g. Los Capitanos (a graffiti artist group) and the Schlübber-Crew to social justice (e.g. "Fight Antisemitism") and finally also soccer, with the burning heart of Chemie. What's particularly interesting, though, in this section where there are no soccer-related elements, all of these different stickers are able to coexist in the same space, whereas in other spaces of the LL, stickers are often placed one on top of the other competing for prominence and a clear sightline to the audience (eg. similar to what is shown in Figure 4.). This is particularly noticeable in spaces where soccer is present. This second phenomenon becomes apparent when the attention of the audience is drawn to the first Chemie sticker surrounded by these other ones. Though partially obscured, it is clear that at one point an interactant placed another sticker on top of the Chemie sticker, before it was removed in a subsequent turn. Not only did that turn restore the sticker to a place of prominence in this lower area of the drain pipe, but it ensured that any audience members viewing this pole would be able to understand which club was here, without needed historical knowledge of the city's teams or the colours and symbolism the soccer clubs use. Thus, it can be assumed that this series of interactions was done by supporters of competing clubs, a theory which is reinforced as your vision travels up the pipe to the other stickers.

Moving up to the mid-pipe position (the section framed at the top and bottom by the use of rings around the pipe to affix it to the wall) your eyes travel over the remains of several stickers that had once been visible in the LL. These have all been removed or destroyed over time, save for two soccer-related stickers. This brings the 'turf' challenge aspect into this example. In this space, the same Chimie sticker as below can be seen placed onto the pipe by a supporter of the club. The entire sticker is not visible, though, as on top of it another smaller and circular sticker has been placed by a supporter of Lok to cover the Chemie one. By employing a black and white colour scheme which differed from the blue and yellow usually associated with the club, the sticker does not stand out at first, almost blending in with the colour scheme of the original sticker underneath, though through further inspection "1 FC LOK" can be seen written in a font reminiscent of graffiti usually seen spray painted on walls. This is then circled by the slogan "on the road again". This added slogan repeated twice as it circles the team name, adds an interesting dimension to the sticker as, it does not index the team itself on the road, but instead, their supporters are the ones on the road exploring the LL, and both challenging other clubs over their presence in the LL spaces as well as claiming new ones to fall under the influence of Lok. This reading of the LL becomes even more interesting when you consider the location in which this figure was captured. Rather than being in the Probstheida area of Leipzig, which is the team's home neighbourhood, it is instead in the "Leipzig Mitte" district, a neutral central area of town which is neither home to Lok nor Chemie. Thus, the supporters truly are on the road again as they expand the club's reach.

The final area of the drain pipe that shows how supporters of soccer clubs are engaging in a 'turf' war is at the top. This is also the area in which the most vicious interactions have taken

place. Due in part to that maliciousness, it is also difficult to decipher how many turns have taken place over time in this space. What is clear to the audience, however, is that this series of turns started first when a Chemie sticker was placed on the pipe high above all the over stickers present. At some point later on, a supporter of Lok then decided to partially cover that first sticker in a challenge over the space. This, however, was not received well by a later interactant who, rather than fully removing the Lok sticker and disposing of it, thus removing their presence in the LL, instead chose to tear the sticker up and place the remnants back onto the pile (this can better be seen in Figure 5d). This has an interesting effect on the audience. It shows that Chemie is still there as well as Lok, but Lok is there now in a very different way than before. Their sticker is torn up and looks dishevelled in comparison to the Chemie stickers. This is an act of intimidation and serves as a warning to Lok supporters that if future interactants place new elements in support of Lok, whether those be stickers or writing, their additions to the LL can also expect to face similar treatment. Therefore it is best to leave the space for Chemie and not challenge them again, lest they come out worse for wear as the sticker has.

And so by starting at the bottom of the drain pipe and observing all of the elements from the base up to the top of the pipe which makes up this collage in the LL, the audience is presented with an escalation in violence and even LL fervour, as the two clubs fight for what would normally be a 'neutral' space out of both of their home neighbourhoods. And so, much like how the club supporters often get loud and escalate events when supporting their team in person, this series of turns reflect that passion, through the interactions taking place in the LL.

Figure 6a. Double-sided street sign featuring multiple clubs.
Figure 6b. (L) and 6c. (R) Zoom-ins of Figure 6a.

Returning to another central area of Leipzig in the Mitte, which combines both the historical and modern sides of the city, we can see a pole displaying signs for traffic and pedestrians on both sides. Placed by a city authority, this sign serves to create a demarcation of spaces almost like a border between countries, in which one side is governed by one set of rules and the other by another set. On the far side, there is a mixed-use space shared between vehicles, bikes, and pedestrians. On the side of the invisible border where the photographer of this photograph stands is a pedestrian only zone, a space in which people are safe, surrounded only by other pedestrians and free of worry from potential run-ins with traffic. We know this because the official sign played on the pole by a city authority says to the audience and people in this space that the pedestrian only zone is ending and consequently, when they pass beyond this street sign, they are leaving one space to enter a new space.

As we have seen before, this photograph shows how diverse and busy a space can be regarding the LL, as well as demonstrating the fluidity with which interactants use different modalities, such as stickers or graffiti, in the same space. It also demonstrates how interactants are willing to place their LL elements anywhere, combining unofficial elements with an officially authorized sign (a space one would normally consider to be non-interactive, save for absorbing the meaning the author is passing on, such as viewing art in a museum) in one space, creating a mix of messages the audience needs to take in. The top and the bottom signs (the end of the pedestrian zone and a backwards sign respectively) both are covered in stickers. The middle street sign, however, mixes both stickers and purple graffiti that has gone through an attempted removal, leaving only a fraction on the sign.

Starting with the top sign before moving down, the official end of the pedestrian zone sign, we see two separate instances of interaction using stickers. The higher of the two partially covers the stick figures and is for Dynamo Dresden, a soccer team that has gone through various levels of the professional league but not the top tier, where RB Leipzig competes, meaning they have no direct competitors in the city. This is reminiscing of the examples perviously covered in section 4.1 featuring Hans Rostock stickers. That lack of city competitors could also be a contributing factor as to why no other interactants have made any attempt to erase or damage the Dynamo sticker. With no competitors from the city at that tier of soccer, the presence of Dynamo poses no threat to supporters of the local clubs, with the possibility of many even supporting Dynamo in the league it currently competes in. Then, moving slightly down the sign to the right, there is a collage of stickers piled up, covering each other. These stickers constitute another fight over the same space amongst local teams: Chemie and Lok. The first element placed was a sticker for Chemie claiming that space. In an attempt to counter them, supporters of Lok placed a smaller sticker over the bottom of the first element. This sticker, however, presents the audience with several interesting points. Firstly, due to the size, it does not erase the presence of Chemie, indicating that there is a rivalry between the two clubs without one fully dominating the other. Secondly, it indexes the fact that both of these clubs are from the same city and need to coexist in that space, never fully free of the other. And thirdly, the sticker being used here by Lok fans requires a degree of 'in-knowledge', because it is not immediately identifiable as a Lok affiliated sticker. Instead, what is visible is the blue and yellow colouring, half of a crest, and Markkleeberg. Fans of civic heraldry may recognize it as the city crest used by Markkleeberg, an affluent suburb of western Leipzig; however, those unaware can also obtain that information

through a quick online search. This does raise the question, though, as to how this sticker comes to represent Lok in a fight between clubs over space. Well, to know that you need to be more familiar with the LL and the various elements employed by club supporters. It is only through recognition of other similar stickers that this sticker's affiliation with Lok becomes clear as it is shown in this photograph, because the left half of the sticker is covered. However, what lies underneath that covered portion is the logo for Lok, as can be seen on many other stickers around the LL featuring Markkleberg and Lok combined, with the background colour scheme of many other Lok imagery compositions. This makes the stack of stickers fall directly into the Club versus Club category of data as they compete for space; it is so much more than that, though, too as each of these club supporters could have chosen empty spaces, to place their representative elements. By choosing to place elements in the same space they are directly challenging those other clubs for this space and in turn for dominance over the city they share; and moreover, by engaging in interactions such as erasure, these club supporters are in fact pushing their rivals out of a space and decreasing their influence over a space and even their ability to reach out to a new audience outside of their home 'turf'.   And so, a new twist emerged when another interactant placed a new sticker onto the first two (the Chemie jersey and Markkleeberg stickers), eliminating the clear reference to Lok. That turn is not necessarily a clear one either, as it is a simple sticker featuring a simple white background and the word "Alcatraz" printed across in a black font similar to fraktur. It is not immediately clear what this sticker is indexing. Could it be the prison in California, a crew of sorts, or even an artist? The answer only becomes clear when you look into the soccer scene in Leipzig and discover that one of the ultra groups that support Chemie is the Alcatraz Ultras (Ultras Alcatraz Officiel Page). Thus, despite featuring only a

single word devoid of other colours or imagery to index back to Chemie, this sticker still clearly reclaims the space from Lok in favour of Chemie. However, to truly understand the turns taking place in this set of interactions, a strong 'in-knowledge' is required; otherwise the meaning is easily lost on the audience.

Moving down the pole to the second of the street signs onto, which many new elements are placed, the audience has to sort through many stickers and graffiti to find those relating to soccer. They are not immediately apparent in the sea of elements, as is the case with the first sign. Placed at the bottom of the sign and just to the left of the pole are three elements grouped together. These consist of two stickers and a fragment of purple graffiti. The first turn, though, belongs to a supporter who claimed the space for Chemie when they placed a black and white sticker featuring a crest with the iconic C featured across many of Chemie's designs. This was responded to in a challenge by a supporter of Lok, who placed a smaller circular sticker over the first. This turn mostly erased the first; however, to a perceptive eye, the presence of Chemie is not lost. Eventually, these two elements were both partially covered over in purple graffiti, which can be seen not only covering the stickers but also a part of the silver border at the bottom of the sign, indicating that the soccer stickers were not the only target of this graffiti. Unfortunately, though, the meaning is lost to us at this stage in the LL, as it appears at some point before the photograph was captured another interactant decided with the use of a turn to attempt to remove the graffiti, as indexed by the uneven application of the paint today. Thus, that spot on the LL remains a contested one, with both Chemie and Lok present and competing forthe same space.

The third and last of the three signs forming the backdrop on which different stickers are placed in this photograph shows another two spots in which soccer is represented. The first takes

a very centred and prominent position for the audience. It lies on top of a collage of various stickers and is a mirror of that from Figure 5, which shows 1. FC LOK in a graffiti-style font circled by "on the road again". Undamaged and left uncovered by any other elements in the LL, it claims this spot for Lok, unchallenged by any other clubs. Almost alone as the sole representative of soccer on this third area of the LL, to the right of the Lok sticker is one more addition to the LL. This sticker is a photograph of the Alfred-Kunze-Sportpark, accompanied by the text "100 Jahre Alfred-Kunze-Sportpark" (100 years of…). This was deliberately placed over another element in the LL in a successful attempt to erase its presence, following the logic of Pavlenko (2009). We know that at one point there was something viewable to the audience, which we can no longer identify; it could be the Roter Stern Leipzig, RB Leipzig, or even another Dynamo Dresden sticker. Unfortunately, we can never tell by how the LL currently sits, but can only speculate as to what may be there, due to the red colour that was left uncovered. All we can say for certain is that a supporter of Chemie made a deliberate decision to target that element in particular with a picture of Chemie's home stadium and claim that space for Chemie, eliminating the competition from the LL in the process.

And so, whereas Figure 5 displayed a more aggressive stance between club supporters, in which they engaged in destructive acts to claim a space for their respective clubs, and Figure 4 consisted exclusively of interactants taking turns to partially cover other elements of the LL, this Figure 6 presents a middle ground. In this example, there are clear club versus club scrimmages occurring, as shown through the turns interactants have taken. These turns, however, are aimed more at fully erasing their competition in the LL through complete covering; the Chemie park over the red sticker below, and the Alcatraz sticker covering any elements indexing Lok on the

higher sign. Thus, the function of all these interactions is still to challenge the rival clubs over the shared space, but in a way that removes them unless the audience holds a strong 'in-knowledge' of the Leipzig soccer scene. Otherwise, to the average audience member who does not possess that knowledge, they will not see the scrimmage over space happening here, and only see the signs which are fully present and unobscured, claiming the space for their clubs.

4.3 Mixed Effect

This next section presents the most complex data collected in the LL. Together the elements captured in these photographs perform a mix of effects and meaning-making processes, resulting in the name of this category. The photographs here represent elements which cannot be reduced to performing a single and simple function, but instead multiple. Often, as we shall see, these combine effects such as laying claim to a space whilst also making a very clear connection to a political movement or issue. To further understand this, I will present three more examples as well as analyses in order to better understand the LL and how this category arose from observations made from the data within.

Figure 7. Lok sticker with a syringe covering Chemie.

Located along a shopping street in Leipzig with a cafe just down the block and a Lacoste boutique setting up for a sale, this photograph captures a truly interesting moment in the LL. Not only does it go beyond a spatial competition between clubs, but it expresses a clear political stance regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and the issue of immunization, which remains a hotly debated topic among Germans to this day. Thus, though this photograph is made up of only two visible turns, the conversation being had within is a much deeper and profound one, in which meaning is created through the simple use of a syringe accompanied by a tagline.

Starting with the first sticker, a Chemie Leipzig sticker similar to the many we have seen so far in this thesis (e.g. in Figures 3, 4, and 5) a club supporter claimed this space on a street lamp post, which was devoid of any other sort of signage. This, however, did not last, as a supporter of Lok challenged the Chemie supporter over the space, creating this collage in which both elements remain visible, with the Lok sticker taking pride of place and covering the Chemie one. The result of this interaction visually echos the last section of data (4.2) with multiple teams visibly occupying and vying for the same space, but none are fully erased from the LL. This battle in particular jumps out to the audience due to the stickers' emplacement on this lamp post in a relatively sterile environment. Due to the complete lack of any sort of graffiti or other LL elements placed by any interactants, all that is left are the official signs placed in the environment such as the sale decal being placed in the storefront window in the background or the faint hint of street signs down the block placed by a city authority. Whereas we have seen what Scollon and Wong Scollon (2003) would call transgressive elements before in the previous figures, that is to say, elements of the LL that challenge our perceptions of an environment, causing us to really engage with the LL and creating new meanings, the stickers in this figure are of particular note

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because they are in such a 'clear' or sterile environment of what can only be described as a more 'up-market' shopping street where, graffiti or stickers are not often as present as in other areas of a city. However, it is not just the placement which causes these stickers to challenge our expectations of the space but also the language present, as in the Lacoste storefront their message "SALE […] REDUCTION" can be clearly read in English. This seems odd at first due to the sign being found in a German city; however, as a French company, it makes sense that they would use English to appeal to a wider audience: an audience which is more multicultural and used to seeing words like "Sale" used in multinational companies for marketing to various audiences. This is also reflective of language ideology and, as Blommaert (2013) explains, the privileged place certain languages hold in creating meaning and shaping our interactions, with English being praised as a main lingua franca in commerce today, with nearly everybody getting accustomed to the word sale as opposed to the more traditional German term *Angebot*.

This preference for the English language is also mirrored in the Lok-affiliated sticker on the post. Rather than communicate with the audience in German, as may be expected in Leipzig, the text instead reads in English "GET YOUR VACCINE NOW!" This text is accompanied by the image of a syringe injecting an arm layered over early 20th century style soccer balls commonly used in association with Lok. This choice to use English rather than German as may be expected matches the cosmopolitan feel of the area while also specifically reaching out to all English language users within this space, as is often a choice amongst graffiti artists and other interactants of the LL for a wider audience appeal (Vogel et al. p. 2162). However, the line encouraging the audience to get their vaccine is also a play on words, resulting in the ability to read and understand the message in two different ways. The first way to read it is as an

encouragement to get vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus as this sticker appears right at a time when the government was pushing for vaccines in order to return to 'normal life' again and end other COVID related restrictions; restrictions which were proven to be extremely unpopular particularly in the state of Saxony, where the AfD and other anti-COVID movements were able to politicize the issue as an attack on democracy (Jäckle & Timmis, 2022). When reading the message in this way it makes clear that the supporters of Lok are taking a clear pro-vaccination stance; a stance which has been controversial in general but came to a head during the COVID pandemic. The situation in Saxony was particularly dangerous with many protesting against vaccine mandates which escalated to violent attacks against vaccination centres and even a plot against state premier Michael Kretschmer (Alkousaa, 2021). In addition to the clear pro-vaccination stance pushed onto the audience by this sticker, the sticker lends itself to a second reading, in which based on the syringe and the line "1. FC LOK" printed across it, the message can be interpreted as injecting Lok into your body. Then by injecting it, Lok is in you much like the saying used by many fans of sport in which they say (insert chosen topic) is in my blood in order to emphasize their passion and commitment to said sport. The connection is then deeper than simply supporting the Lok but having it as a part of your life from then on.

And so, because of this double play on the slogan both taking a pro-vaccination stance as well as emphasizing the commitment of Lok supporters to their club, this collage of elements goes beyond the simplicity of a 'turf' fight as seen in section 4.2 and shows us as an audience how even in what may at first seem simple like just a sticker is in fact much more. It is a claim to space, it is deep commitment and devotion to support a club, and more importantly, it serves as a way to subtly express one's political views. This sticker and its placement in this space serve as a

tool for meaning-making; it shows that people are out there expressing political opinions and speaking in support of controversial policies without going and clashing in large demonstrations or putting their faces out in the media. Instead, it is a subtle nod of approval for the government, one which has not been interfered with by other audience members of the LL, indicating that they either are in agreement with the message or because of the subtlety it has gone unnoticed save for the obvious soccer link.

Figure 8a. Collage on a pedestrian zone sign with political messages. Figures 8b (T) and 8c (B) are zoom-ins of focus points.

Found along a busy street lined with *Altbauten*, this large sign features two stick people, presumably a mother and her child, holding hands in a blue circle, below which the word "ZONE" is written but in this instance no longer visible to the audience, due to the collage of stickers placed over the official text. Thus, this official sign placed by the city authority serves the dual function of first demarcating the space beyond it as one exclusive to pedestrians. The second function is to serve as the backdrop onto which a greater discussion is being held through turns in the LL, much as a cork board may do so in the hallways of a university covered in notes and posters communicating to an audience willing to take a moment to stop and look at it.

Due to the sheer volume of stickers present, this collage is at first overwhelming and reminiscent of other instances of semiotic excess captured within this corpus. However, prominent amongst all these different stickers are those related to soccer appearing above all others, both on the pole which holds up this pedestrian zone sign and on the sign itself. Untouched by other turns and placed prominently on the pole is one sticker combining features which index East and West Europe with the words "RUSSIAN SPURS" printed on it, above which a stylized wall and tower reminiscent of the Spasskaya tower of Moscow's Kremlin sit crowned not by the double-headed eagles of the Romanovs nor the red stars of the Soviets, but instead by a cockerel on a soccer ball; replacing one iconic symbol with another, that of Tottenham Hotspur F.C. Tottenham is a very English soccer club, and so to see their imagery and name being mixed with what is clearly Russian symbolism requires more research to understand. However, with some work, it can be discovered that this sticker was placed by a group of Russian Tottenham supporters; but what is interesting is not necessarily that a sticker has been placed in Germany, but instead that Tottenham has been able to extend their influence so far as to

reach a Russian audience, who in turn are either from the large Russian diaspora in Leipzig or are travelling to Germany and once again extending the club's sphere of influence; Especially as both Leipzig and Russia are areas in which the club does not play. This action also demonstrates how there still exists the possibility to claim space and recruit more fans outside of a designated play area, which may even one day result in similar stickers to the Russian Spurs one appearing in other spaces around the world which have been modified to feature symbols of Leipzig rather than Russian ones, as new supporters extend the influence and reach of Tottenham, much like these Russian fans have done here.

Then moving up to the sign itself, onto which the majority of the stickers are placed, it is clear that many turns have occurred over time; but throughout all these turns, soccer has remained one of the most frequent reoccurring themes, with a mix of soccer-related stickers placed all across the sign fighting for a place of prominence amongst the sea of stickers. Additionally, here it is interesting to see that not only is there a reoccurrence of many of the same stickers which have been found throughout the LL of Leipzig, such as the handmade Chemie stickers which this time feature yellow writing on green unlike, in Figure 3, but also the return of Hansa and the first appearance of FC Rot-Weiß Erfurt, which has almost been completely covered through subsequent turns. And as all of these different teams compete over what is a 'neutral' ground (meaning none of these clubs are located in this particular area of Leipzig), there is one in particular which stands out amongst the others through placement. Almost as if to lay a claim to the same space but not involve itself in the fighting occurring below; that of Hansa on the top.

The first Hansa sticker (seen best in Figure 8b.) which is noticeable is placed just above the larger collage of stickers in the middle left space of the street sign, untouched by the chaos of the turns and interactions which have occurred below, yet still a part of the discourse due to its proximity. The second, however, is more removed from the majority of the sticker gouging at the bottom of the sign and is high above all others and instead by the shoulder of the 'mother' stick figure. Though mostly covered, it is recognizable as the logo which is featured on the Hansa sticker below. This one, however, is of particular note because of all the different soccer clubs represented by stickers in this collage, a later interactant chose to single this Hansa sticker out and erase it from the LL, to the best of their ability, using a sticker featuring a clear and definite political stance against right-wing and National Socialist sympathizers: a simple black rectangle with white writing stating "*Gegen Nazis in Leipzig und anderswo*" (against nazis in Leipzig and everywhere) and featuring a fist punching and destroying a swastika. This begs the question: why is it this particular club that was targeted, when there are stickers for at least three other clubs that can be found in this collage? The only logical answer is that the interactant responsible for this turn is using their turn to call out Hansa: and by placing their sticker directly onto that of the Hansa sticker, it is calling this club out as a symbol of right-wing extremism and the city of Rostock itself, which is notorious for the 1992 right-wing riots (Brady Berlin, 2017). Because of that, it is noteworthy that whereas other elements have been covered or damaged through subsequent interactions and turns, this call out by an anti-nazi activist has been left untouched, indicating a level of support amongst other audience members of the LL who chose not to become an active member and take subsequent turns against this sticker, remaining passive in that regard and leaving it be.

Thus, this photograph serves as a prime example of how the LL is a good gauge aof the true beliefs of a populace in their own space through their interactions, especially those related to soccer, which serve as a tool to deliver a message and in turn show adherence to greater ideological beliefs.

Figure 9a. Bike area sign covered by repeating patterns of Chemie and Leipzig. Figures 9b (T) and 9c (B) are zoom-ins of 9a.

The third photograph which can be seen above is an interesting combination of many of the different functions and LL trends which we have already come across through the analyses of earlier figures. At its core, this photograph shows interactants using an officially installed and sanctioned street sign as the backdrop on which they perform their conversation. And what may

at first appear to be a simple collage of stickers is in fact a much deeper topic in need of unraveling to understand.

This particular street sign carries with it an interesting series of turns, and the three largest stickers which form a triangle almost all have a similar set of tuns happening to them. In the bottom two corners a large Chemie sticker was placed, claiming those spaces. This also happened in the top corner, however, with a different sticker; a sticker which shows a stick figure running toward the right and following an arrow towards a crest of Chemie. Though the arrow is covered, this is not the first time that this style of sticker has appeared in the LL, making it familiar to those who go about their daily lives in Leipzig. Additionally, the composition is not unfamiliar to other audience members, as it mirrors emergency exit signs common in Germany; except where a door would be depicted, it instead depicts a Chemie symbol, thus changing the message from "this way to exit" to "this way to Chemie".

This triangle of Chemie stickers have all been followed up by long bumper-like stickers being placed over the original Chemie stickers, not erasing them but instead issuing another challenge over the space. There is, however, a strong difference between the previous examples of challenges over space, because the earlier ones all issue this challenge in a relatively 'neutral' space, the Mitte district of town; this, however, is not a neutral area for the clubs involved in this photograph. As this is the Mitte district, it is away from Chemie's home turf but close to RB Leipzig's, the other team featured on this street sign, and their arena which lies in a western neighbourhood of the Mitte district. Thus, this can be interpreted not as clubs competing over a neutral area and expanding their influence, but instead as RB Leipzig defining what they believe to be their space, despite these clubs competing at drastically different tiers of soccer and never

having the possibility to meet on a soccer field. Nevertheless, RB does not want any other teams from Leipzig in their space. Retaliating against RB's defence in subsequent turns, two of those three RB stickers have had an attempt to peel them off, resulting in the team they represent being lost to the audience, unless they have the previous knowledge to recognize them as representing RB Leipzig. The top sticker, however, had a different fate befall it. Though it too has become difficult to decipher without an 'in-knowledge' of the LL in Leipzig, it was not destroyed, but instead covered by a political sticker. This new sticker which is manufactured and authored by a politically left group, the Red and Anarchist Skinheads Leipzig, features interesting symbolism, as their name and establishment date of 2008 circle around crossed axes framed by a branch and gear, reminiscent of the former communist crests of the USSR and eastern block nations. Why it would appear in a 'turf' war for soccer clubs may at first seem odd, until the relationship between the multinational conglomerate of Red Bull and the RB Leipzig team is exposed. It is only at this point that the choice to cover an RB sticker becomes clear, as an attempt by these self-described reds and anarchists, to express their discontent at the connection between the big money of Red Bull and soccer. This sticker and its placement change from just stickers in the LL to a meaning-making tool to condemn both the club, and to a greater extent, the capitalist machine that is the Red Bull corporation, uniting the micro and macro levels of the LL in which the micro represents the turns themselves and the macro level, which is the interpretation of these turns and how they apply in regard to broader social discourse (Collins & Slembrouck, 2007, pp. 337-341, cited in Feddersen et al. p. 41) Interestingly, just as with the previous "*Gegen Nazi*" sticker from Figure 8, this clear, politically identifiable sticker is left alone and unaltered through

later turns in the LL, giving the impression that once a clear political stance has been declared the conversation is over.

Thus, we can see how the collages shown in this section (4.3), comprising many different elements in the LL, often convey more than just one meaning to us as an audience. They are used like tools, though not always the traditional way one would expect to see an expression of sentiment, through which the residents of Leipzig are able to express themselves. They can show their allegiances to soccer clubs, create communities, and built community spaces around those connections, as well as being able to exercise their voice and express political and social beliefs. Here, for example, in Figure 9 an interactant has been able to condemn big money in sports and one company in particular with the 'simple' action of placing a sticker; an action that has allowed that interactant to engage in a larger societal dialogue, rather than through another action, such as disruptive large-scale protest. This interaction also allows the interactant to do so in a way that is more impactful, as their sticker will remain in the LL to be seen time and time again until a reset happens, meaning every day a new audience will be able to see it and absorb its message, rather than a select group who saw a protest on one day.

5 Discussion

To better understand soccer and the LL of Leipzig, it is important to summarize and discuss the findings from the previous chapter. To do this, let us return to the three research questions which set this thesis in motion to see how they have been answered. Then, we can turn our attention to any additional findings which may have been observed, of which there are a few.

Let us first begin with the first research question and discuss what the LL of Leipzig looks like in terms of soccer vs. non-soccer related elements as they appear in the city. Starting with non-soccer related elements, we notice a few things. Mostly there is a diversity of different artist, clubs, advocacy groups, and political messages which one would expect to see in any modern and metropolitan city today, using the LL to make their mark in the city almost like a form of guerrilla marketing. These groups also rely predominantly on German to communicate with the audience, as that is the language primarily used in Leipzig. But that is not to say the LL is devoid of other languages, as we also notice that English appears (e.g. Figure 7) on the focus soccer sticker, as well as in the background where the Lacoste shop was using window decals to advertise an upcoming sale. This shows a language ideology at play in Leipzig in which German is used to communicate with the majority of people and the locals, reflecting the city's primary demographic; but that English has a privileged position as a second choice for reaching out to non-German speakers reflecting, the influence of multiculturalism both within the city itself and for the spread of global commerce. Then, as we start to hone in on the different elements used within the LL, there are two main modalities often employed by interactants (stickers and writing), that is to say, those who engage with the LL and leave their own mark in a non-official

capacity. What is of particular interest, though, is the way in which interactants combine both official elements (e.g. street signs) and unofficial elements through the use of the official element as a backdrop on which they are able to engage with each other. While doing this, the interactants are careful to not fully destroy or completely erase the message from the official element, with their actions. This results in a space where the official city authority addresses the audience in one way, and then through the use of unofficial elements, interactants are able to address the audience in another, but with both parties using the same space. Additionally, when looking at the type of elements being employed by these interactants, we notice that sticking is still by far the favoured medium to use, as they appear more in the soccer and non-soccer elements over graffiti or another mediums such as posters. Focusing in more, let us now turn our attention to look at stickers. They are interesting because the interactants of Leipzig are using stickers as a means to mark spaces and to declare the presence of a group either within them or as controlling said spaces. Looking first at the non-soccer stickers, we notice a few things: there are by large either stickers for different cultural groups (i.e. music groups, artists, collectives, etc.) or some sort of protest/political group such as *Ende Gelände* for climate action. Perhaps resulting from the period of socialism which reigned over the city during the GDR era, there is also an abundance of what can only be described as 'politically left' orientated stickers, which declare certain affiliated organizations to be communist, anarchist etc., or just indexing those groups through the stylistic choice in the composition of their stickers through symbolism reminiscent of many former socialist states.

Focusing then on soccer-related stickers, the first thing to notice is the sheer variety of teams and tiers of soccer being represented, not only from the local Leipzig clubs, but also

national and international clubs. The data shows us that interactants are willing to go out into the LL and leave the mark of their chosen clubs whether they are only a local recreational team or even all the way up to the top tier of professional soccer in Germany, but also willing to engage and defend their spaces when other teams start to move in. This can either be in the form of another local club, as we have seen with the turf wars e.g. between Chemie and Lok, or even other German teams. Of note, though, is that those other teams do not always pose a threat to locals and their space when that club competes at a different level of soccer than any of the local teams. This could be because the local audience is not perceiving those 'visiting' clubs as threats, not necessitating a reply. The exception to this is when a certain club is linked to another party or ideology that the interactant does not agree with. When this occurs, those soccer-related elements potentially face destruction from the LL. It is also of particular note that by far the most interactions and series of interactions occur primarily through soccer-related elements, whereas with the non-soccer elements, the interactant often places their sticker on an official sign, such as a street sign, and there are no subsequent turns directly aimed at those elements creating, what can often only be described as a pile of semiotic excess.

Having now established the difference between the soccer and non-soccer LL elements, we turn to the second question which this thesis sought to investigate—what type of interactions related to soccer are visible in Leipzig's LL? As briefly touched on above, here we will discuss the functions more in depth. And so to answer this second research question, it can only really be answered with a simple word: many. This is a reflection of the vast diversity of interactions that are observable via turns taken in the LL. The most prominent and traceable can be described by two works which we have already touched on before. Starting with Pavlenko, we can describe

many of the traceable turns as what she refers to as layering and erasure. She argues that there are three main ways in which this can be accomplished in the LL: replacing old signs with new ones leaving no trace of the original, deletion (i.e. painting over signs), and modification (i.e. modifying an existing element in the LL to create a new meaning) (2009, p. 255). Of these three types of LL interactions, modification does not appear in my data set. Instead, there are many instances of both deletion and replacing when looking at soccer interactions, as many different stickers have been removed in favour of others or simply covered over to remove their influence on a space. When graffiti is involved, it is even possible to see instances where the writing had been cleaned so that its message too was lost on the audience. Pavlenko, however, limited the scope of this work to only focus on 'official signs', those put in place by an authority such as street signs installed by the ministry of transport. And while those are no doubt a large part of the LL and often the backdrop on which soccer interactions physically take place, the interaction in this thesis goes beyond official signs. As such, we need to move beyond Pavlenko in order to fully describe the rest of the interactions occurring in the LL.

To further expand on Pavlenko and explain the additional types of interactions visible, we must turn to the four types of what Feddersen et al. referred to as "observational models of interaction", of which they identify four: partial covering of turns, writing over turns, partial destruction of turns, and parallel turns (2023, p. 15). By combining these with Pavlenko, we can see that the interactions occurring with soccer are quite typical of those occurring in other interaction-based conversations of the LL. The most notable overlap is in the form of partial destruction of turns, which is visible in the interaction of the Club versus Club section (4.2), and the interactions of the Mixed Effect section (4.3). These sections demonstrated how the partial

destruction of stickers is a reoccurring feature of the clubs and their competition over spaces, regardless of where their home turfs are in Leipzig or difference in level that the clubs compete at. When instead elements for clubs that do not necessarily pose a threat to any of the Leipzig clubs are present, they are often left alone, meaning that they coexist in the LL in such proximity to other elements that they could be described as parallel turns when following the logic of Feddersen et al. (2023). These different types of interactions are also often combined in the same space, making for a rich story in the LL that, when proper time is taken, reads as a reflection of the city. The one type of conversational feature which I have not analysed in this data set, though, is that of repair. That is not to say that it is lacking in the LL of Leipzig. I believe, though, that all of the turns occurring in soccer-related interactions are deliberate; but in order to include repair as a way to analyse this data a fixed definition of repair as it pertains to the LL would be needed, which has yet to be fully established and agreed upon by scholars. Once that is done, there exists the possibility of including this aspect in a re-examination of this data and data like it in future studies.

The third and final research question which has guided this thesis, and to which we now turn, is—how does the LL and the interactions within link to larger socio-political trends in the area? Simply by looking at the interactions occurring in Leipzig, there can be no doubt that they relate to something much larger and of greater importance than simply soccer. Perhaps, because soccer holds such an important role in many people's lives much as their core beliefs and political views do, that is why we are seeing a link between soccer and these greater conversations of society. These links range from being made directly by the elements of the LL which soccer clubs supporters have such as in Figure 7, where the Lok supporters are themselves

engaging in a debate on vaccination, to other stickers that are not related to soccer and are being inserted into the soccer debate such as in Figure 8 and Figure 9 in which a *Leipzig against nazis* sticker is placed over a Hansa sticker and a red and anarchist group sticker was placed over a RB Leipzig sticker. These interactions took what at first were simply soccer-related interactions and directly politicized them. This then allowed the greater public to express themselves and their views, which are often shared amongst others in Leipzig. We can assert this because of how they have been left alone in the LL, thus showing that while there are a variety of viewpoints in Leipzig, and the area surrounding the city tends to hold sympathies for right-wing politics, the people of Leipzig themselves are condemning the right wing and neo-nazism. At the same time, they are also taking a stand against big money and capitalist conglomerates such as Red Bull taking over and asserting their influence on everyday life through means such as their partnership with RB Leipzig. It would be interesting to see if a link could be drawn to the city's past and lingering socialist sympathies or if these are the feelings of a new generation entirely. Regardless, observing this in the LL it is also indexing the larger issues society is facing today globally in which we see the rise of alt- and extreme-right groups again as well as the soaring cost of living which has been disenfranchising young people and those of a limited means with the status quo.

In addition to the findings described above, which help to answer the research questions, there were several other points of note which were raised through analysis. The first is the reoccurring use of stickers as a preferred modality when interacting and leaving a trace in the LL, especially amongst soccer related elements. This allows interactants to quickly and, crucially, discreetly interact with the LL without drawing unwanted attention, as is the case often

with other modalities such as spray painting, which require an interactant to stay in a space much longer as they author a message and apply it to the chosen space. However, this does not mean that the LL is devoid of any other modalities, especially regarding soccer. There are still instances, though fewer, in the data collected for this thesis which demonstrate how spray paint is being used to mark spaces and even examples of a sharpie-like marker being used, the latter of which allows an author to quickly leave their mark whilst remaining relatively discreet similar to the use of stickers. This apparent preference for stickers as a modality also has the added effect of creating a degree of uniformity in appearance of the LL, by which mass-produced stickers can be applied in many spaces and share images, writing, colour schemes, and many other compositional features across them. This results in a degree of recognizability for the audience, who are then able to quickly absorb the presence of a club in the LL without a longer examination of each individual element when they happen upon them. Then by exploring the city as a member of the audience you are able to recognize these stickers and to what subject matter they refer, one great example being the large Chemie sticker featuring flags and a burning heart which has been seen repeated in many of the analyses. This means that even when having undergone the process of erasure from the LL, if there is still a fragment left the audience is able to identify the presence of Chemie in the LL.

Another of the patterns which have emerged through analysis of the LL is regarding the overtly politicized stickers such as in Figure 8, featuring a message condemnation of national socialist and extreme-right views. Though throughout the LL many elements are either destroyed, erased, or in some way impacted through additional turns, these overtly political messages tend to be left alone. As a whole these tend to be messages condemning right-wing

groups who are seen as nationalistic or holding racist values; with slogans like FCK AFD in the style of hip-hop group Run DMC's logo, to swastikas being destroyed through punches and being stepped on, to even the swastika being thrown into a trash can. As to why those have been left unaffected in the LL, we can only theorize as to the reason. Being known as a rather left -leaning and modern city, Leipzig is growing and becoming more metropolitan each day, thus it should be no surprise that we are seeing those 'left' orientated messages appearing as many politically and socially left-leaning people tend to congregate and live in larger cities, whereas the more right-leaning people are often found in smaller areas such as suburbs or out of the cites. The data presented here, though, has all been gathered in the Mitte area of town where those 'left' orientated would be expected to be; thus seeing those elements in the LL which express their view would be met with approval and left undisturbed for more of the audience to see. Additionally, by placing those politicized sticker interactants are effectively placing an end to the discussion occurring in the LL, especially regarding soccer. No longer is the conversation focused on spaces and influence but instead on politics, thus in one abrupt move changing subjects.

These are some of the insights which have been gained by studying this set of data. But that does not mean that there cannot be more information revealed to us through further investigation. Additionally, by combining interpretations of the LL and the semiotic signs being employed within with other people we will be able to expand our understanding and create a richer dialogue around this data set, as we all bring our own understandings and historical tool belts of knowledge and experience with us as we examine the data.

6 Conclusion

This thesis set out with the goal of studying the LL of Leipzig in order to answer three research questions, which, through the process of analysis using the hybrid theory-methodologies of geosemiotics and ELLA as well as conversation analysis' turn-taking, it has been able to do. Turning to a qualitative analysis approach rather than the quantitative approach which has long dominated LLS has allowed us as an audience to view the LL as a conversation taking place over time that tells the story of the city and those who inhabit and interact with it every day. Moreover, this thesis has also proven how sports and soccer, in particular, can prove to be an invaluable tool in studying a population's thoughts and feelings; shedding light on the area in ways that can not be achieved through more traditional means such as interviews and polls, as the LL allows people to remain anonymous while also putting those views on public display to reach a broader audience. This anonymity frees the interactants from possible repercussions, ensuring they share their true beliefs, ensuring no fear-based self-censorship.

This is, however, only the first step in what could prove to be a long and fruitful academic journey yielding many results and insight for future scholars. This thesis has proven the potential of LLS and how it can only continue to grow and expand its influence on linguistic topics as well as cultural ones; but for that to happen, we need to recognize the limitations of this study and where potential future studies may go.

While this study was insightful, it focused only on one city in Germany, Leipzig. Using a similar approach to what I have done here, though, this process could be repeated and expanded across Germany. This would give an interesting view into the different areas and show us what kinds of issues are important to locals across Germany. It would also be interesting to see what

type of signs and patterns emerge in various cities; we may see certain similarities to Leipzig, or the complete opposite, leading us to believe that perhaps Germany is not as unified as we would like to believe. For example, when answering the first research question in this thesis, it became apparent that there was an abundance of politically left and communist sympathizing graffiti and stickers in Leipzig's LL being used across both soccer and non-soccer related elements, and so this alone could serve as a launching point for conducting a similar LL based study elsewhere in Germany, the findings of which could then be compared to see if the volume of this type of elements is indexing the past of Leipzig as part of the GDR, or perhaps a greater national wide push against the status quo, in which people would rather turn to a more socialist based system than the more capitalist-focused system currently governing over Germany. Whatever the case may be, it will only be revealed to us through continued LL research of the nature presented here in this thesis.

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Appendix

Figure 10. Skinheads against repression.

Figure 11. Run towards Chemie.

Figure 12. Biking zone sign.

Figure 13. Lok against nazis.

Figure 14. Chemie fans against evil.

Figure 15. ACAB with Hannover 96.

Figure 16. "Fuck Lok".

Figure 17. Antifa Ultras with Lok and Chemie.

Figure 18. Georg Schwarz-Chemie sticker.

Figure 19. Chemie sticker with erased graffiti.

Figure 20. Drain pipe and power box with Chemie.