

# Voices of Belonging - Linguistic homescape and lifescape as a multisensorial and multimodal research tool

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**ABSTRACT:** Linguistic landscape can be considered “one of the most dynamic and fastest-growing fields in applied linguistics and sociolinguistics” (Gorter & Cenoz, 2024, p. 2), focusing on language use in public space. The research field is constantly expanding its objectives and methodology. In doing so, the borders between public and private become more fluid and flexible. Consequently, the researchers draw attention to more private spaces such as the linguistic homescape (Boivin, 2021; Krompák, 2021; Yu, 2022) and familyscape (Gonçalves & Lanza, 2024). This paper focuses on three “Linguistic Homescape and Lifescape” projects, which explore linguistic and semiotic signs within the home environment and various life contexts. The investigation is guided by the following research questions: How is belonging represented in the linguistic homescape and lifescape? How applicable are linguistic homescape and lifescape as multimodal research tools in the investigation of belonging? Multilingual children and young people and adults (N=31) were included in the research through the use of participatory photography (Holm, 2018), whereby the participants took photographs of their linguistic environment at home and in other life contexts and also explained their choices. The results of the study shed light on three key dimensions of belonging – social belonging, spatial belonging and visceral belonging – and how these are represented in the multimodal data. Furthermore, the study demonstrates that linguistic homescape and lifescape, combined with participant narratives, offer a valuable multimodal research method for gaining deep insights into belonging, language practices, linguistic identity, and family language policy..

**Keywords:** linguistic homescape, lifescape, social, spatial and visceral belonging, participatory photography

**Voces de pertenencia - Paisaje lingüístico del hogar y la vida: representación multisensorial como herramienta de investigación**

**RESUMEN:** El paisaje lingüístico se puede considerar como “uno de los campos más dinámicos y de mayor crecimiento en la lingüística aplicada y la sociolingüística” (Gorter & Cenoz, 2024, p. 2), el cual explora el uso del lenguaje en el espacio público. Este campo de investigación se encuentra constantemente en expansión de sus objetivos y metodologías. Así, las fronteras entre lo público y lo privado se tornan más fluidas y flexibles. En consecuencia, los investigadores prestan atención a espacios más privados, como el “paisaje lingüístico del hogar” (Boivin, 2021; Krompák, 2021; Yu, 2022) o el “paisaje familiar” (Gonçalves & Lanza, 2024). Este artículo se centra en dos proyectos denominados “paisaje lingüístico del

hogar y de la vida”, que exploran los signos lingüísticos y semióticos en el entorno doméstico y diferentes contextos de vida. La investigación se guía por las siguientes preguntas: ¿cómo se representa la pertenencia en el paisaje lingüístico del hogar y en el paisaje vital? ¿Cómo experimentan los niños, jóvenes y adultos multilingües su entorno lingüístico en el hogar y el paisaje vital como herramientas de investigación multimodal en la investigación de la pertenencia? En el estudio, se incluyó a niños, jóvenes y adultos multilingües (N=31) mediante el uso de la fotografía participativa (Holm, 2018), según la cual los participantes toman fotos de su entorno lingüístico en casa y diferentes contextos de vida y explican sus elecciones. Los resultados del estudio arrojan luz sobre tres dimensiones clave de la pertenencia: la pertenencia social, la pertenencia espacial y la pertenencia visceral, y su representación en los datos multimodales. Además, el estudio demostró que el paisaje doméstico y el paisaje vital lingüísticos en combinación con la narración de los datos parece ser un método de investigación multimodal valioso para obtener información profunda sobre la pertenencia, las prácticas lingüísticas, la identidad lingüística y la política lingüística familiar.

**Palabras clave:** paisaje lingüístico del hogar y la vida, pertenencia social, espacial y visceral, fotografía participativa

## 1. LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE AND THE INTERSECTION OF URBAN AND PRIVATE SPACES

Linguistic landscape (LL) represents a relatively young research field which has emerged as “one of the most dynamic and fastest-growing fields in applied linguistics and sociolinguistics” in recent decades (Gorter & Cenoz, 2024, p. 2). The exploration of languages and their semiotic representation in urban spaces has attracted many researchers from all over the world. In doing so, the field has pushed the boundaries of its geographical scope as well as its theoretical and methodological limitations.

While early LL studies focused mainly on signs in public spaces, later studies increasingly included the private sphere. Consequently, researchers challenged the notion of LL as a public space by exploring the fluid and flexible borders between public and private spaces. Following this development, Laihonon (2016) investigated the “Beware of the dog” signs in two historical Hungarian villages (Réte and Vásárút) in Slovakia and compared the language policies and practices depicted in the signs. Similarly, Camilleri Grima (2020) and her students collected photographs of house names in Malta and analysed them by exploring the stories behind the names. A more intimate space is exposed in Gonzales’ (2023) study, which analysed the so-called (micro) discourse of women’s toilets at the National University of Cuyo in Argentina.

Furthermore, Peck and Stroud (2015) conceptualise the body as a physical landscape, coining the term ‘skinscape’ to characterise this field of linguistic landscape. In their study of the tattoo culture in Cape Town, they explore the materiality of the body as a mobile and dynamic space. Other studies have expanded this perspective, for example Järlehed’s (2019) study of T-shirts displaying the Galician and Basque languages and Jaworski and Lou’s (2020) study of clothing and accessories.

By introducing the visceral experience or landscape, Peck et al. (2019) argue in favour of understanding the linguistic landscape by reading it through the visceral that is, the gut, the heart, the liver and the stomach. This shift has also inevitably turned researchers’ attention to the home. As a result, several researchers have coined the term ‘linguistic homescape’ (Boivin, 2021; Krompák, 2021; Yu, 2022) or ‘familyscape’ (Gonçalves & Lanza, 2024).

Drawing on the intersection of urban and private spaces in LL studies, this paper focuses on three empirical studies that employed linguistic homescape and lifescape as research tools to investigate linguistic identity among children, young people and young adults. The investigation is guided by the following research questions: How is belonging represented in the linguistic homescape and lifescape? How applicable are linguistic homescape and lifescape as multimodal research tools in the investigation of belonging?

The paper begins by introducing the conceptual and empirical basis of linguistic homescape and lifescape in greater depth. It then explains the theoretical consideration of belonging and its various dimensions. Subsequently, the research context of the studies and the methodology are described. The results of the three studies are presented according to the key dimensions of belonging – “social belonging”, “spatial belonging” and “visceral belonging” – and discussed in relation to the theoretical background and the research questions.

## 2. LINGUISTIC HOMESCAPE AND LIFESCAPE

The family constitutes a crucial social space for language development, language learning and linguistic practices. Moreover, it can be regarded as a safe place where children and young people are empowered to use different languages and varieties in their interactions and to act agentively by critically engaging with language. As Lanza and Lomeu Gomes describe, “the family can be conceptualized as a space along the private-public continuum of arenas of social life” (2020, p. 165). Accordingly, the linguistic diversity found in public spaces can be reflected in the home environment, visually represented by objects such as books, newspapers, posters, etc. Furthermore, these objects, as elements of the semiotic landscape, capture life experiences and convey a sense of belonging related to languages.

While language portraits (Busch, 2006, 2022) as a visual research tool are widely established in researching language practices and linguistic identity, linguistic homescape remains an emerging field and a less explored methodology. According to a current definition, “linguistic homescape includes visual, auditory, and multimodal signs (soundscape, speech, and video) and their stories in private spaces. In the linguistic homescape task-based activity, a few digital photos are taken of written languages in offline and online spaces (screenshots), symbols or objects; recordings are made of languages that are spoken in the home environment or are used for gaming and communication on social media” (Krompák, 2025, p. 491).

In one of the early studies, linguistic homescape was applied as a research tool to explore language use and identity among second-generation Indian youth in Norway (Haque, 2012). Haque describes homescape as the visible language “on books, calendars, newspapers, cassettes, kitchen products, religious items” within the home environment (Haque, 2012, p. 225). Inspired by the ethnographic research tool, Haque conceptualised data collection through homescape as “outcroppings”. As Fetterman (2020, pp. 71–75) explains, the term “outcropping” has its origins in geology (outcrop), where it refers to a rock or group of rocks that protrudes from the ground. In urban ethnographic studies, outcropping can include skyscrapers, burnt-out buildings or graffiti. These objects unfold their meaning in relation to space and physical setting, often revealing social issues such as poverty or injustice (Fetterman, 2020). Although the application of the tool and the visual data collected remain underexamined, Haque’s study draws attention to the homescape as a meaningful research tool.

Linguistic homescape was later introduced as both research and a pedagogical tool Krompák (2018), who emphasised its potential as a visual and participative method for exploring linguistic identity and everyday linguistic practices. Framed by the questions, “What linguistic signs are in my home? Which signs and symbols reflect my person, my linguistic and my cultural identity?” Secondary school students took photographs in their home environment. From these, they selected key photographs that they described in more depth. The results of such a project can be presented as an art exhibition, a photo book or on a project website (p. 257).

By focusing on visible language in the family environment, Melo-Pfeifer (2020) positions homescape within the research fields of multiliteracy, family language policy and language practices and describes it “as an indicator for the ‘vital signs’ of the family’s languages and their choice”. She also points to the importance of homescape in maintaining the heritage language and fostering multiliteracy practices.

Drawing on ethnographic case studies of three Nepalese families, Boivin (2021, p. 55) defines homescape “as a safe, private, individual, and family space where transmigrant and transnational families can provide capacity for agency of their identity framing”. She also emphasises the importance of multisensory elements, such as smell, sound and taste, as well as emotions and feelings, in the process of revealing identity.

Similarly, Yu (2022) investigated the homescape of four families who speak Chinese and German, focusing on the intersection of family language policy and child agency. To include the perspectives of children and parents, Yu (2022) used the walking tour methodology, which empowers participants as co-researchers. Through this process, children and their parents constructed the homescape in a discursive way as a reflection of their family identity.

To explore individual language use among future teachers in Switzerland, Krompák (in press) applied participatory ethnography approaches that included autoethnographic protocols (Chang, 2008; Ellis et al., 2010), linguistic homescape (Krompák, 2018) and oral and written WhatsApp communications. Based on an analysis of the qualitative data, which included 267 photographs of the linguistic homescape, the study illuminated everyday language practices, emotional responses to language use and regional linguistic identity. The photographs, combined with the participants’ short narrative texts, proved to be a valuable research tool for investigating language practices and linguistic identity. Similarly, linguistic homescape was used as a visual approach in an international online exchange between Maltese and Swiss student teachers (Camilleri & Krompák, in prep).

As a result of my previous research on linguistic homescape (Krompák, 2018, 2021, in press, Camilleri & Krompák, in prep), the concept of *lifescape* emerged, integrating the multimodal and multisensorial aspects of the language and combining the urban and private spheres. Accordingly, *lifescape* refers to the multimodal representation of visible, audible and sensorial languages as they are experienced in meaningful social and geographical spaces and places across various life contexts. The *lifescape* represents a participative research tool that empowers individuals to use their multimodal voices to portray multisensorial and embodied language practices.

### 3. BELONGING

Although belonging and identity have often been used synonymously in the social sciences, the concept of belonging “enables a greater engagement with place and location and the structural and contextual facets of social life” (Anthias, 2018, p. 137). Hence, belonging is reflected in everyday practices and emotions and includes spatial, temporal and affective dimensions (Anthias, 2018).

According to Anthias (2018), belonging encompasses everyday practices and emotions, as well as shared values, culture, language, ethnicity, and nationality. Further key aspects of belonging are temporality and its relationship with the geographical and social spaces to which people feel attached and included. This is, in turn, reflected in the affective dimension of belonging. As Pfaff-Czarnecka (2020, p. 115) defines it, “belonging is an emotionally charged social location”. In addressing the question, ‘When do we belong?’ she combines three interrelated dimensions of belonging: perceptions and performances of commonality, a sense of mutuality and material and immaterial attachments (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2020, pp. 115–116). While commonality refers to shared values and experiences, mutuality comprises the norms and obligations that are relevant in social relations. The third dimension of attachments connects people to places, objects, and other things.

The concept of belonging provides a valuable theoretical foundation for research studies conducted within the context of migration and forced migration, given the obvious connection between emotion and space (e.g. Farrukh et al., 2023; Fobear, 2022; Gordon, 2023; Thompson et al, 2023). To explore the sense of belonging of young Ukrainian refugees in the UK, Gordon (2023) applied art therapy, offering a safe space in which young people could express their trauma and feelings by creating hanging mobiles. While some participants experienced increased agency through arts-based intervention, others reported less agency. However, the arts-based approach allowed participants to express how they felt about belonging at a time of uncertainty. In Australian school context, the case study by Farrukh et al. (2023) investigated newly arrived parent’s perspective on the belonging of their children. As in the previous study, arts-based approaches were employed. The children were asked to draw a picture depicting their sense of belonging in the classroom and explain their drawings in the follow-up interviews. One of the study’s key findings emphasised the significance of peer interactions in shaping children’s sense of belonging. Furthermore, the mothers viewed English language as a mediator in their children’s belonging. However, they found that peer interactions from the same linguistic and cultural backgrounds contributed more to their children’s sense of belonging.

Against the backdrop of belonging and its spatial, temporal and affective dimensions, it emerges as a promising theoretical foundation for exploring the voices of belonging when combined with linguistic homescape and lifescape.

### 4. RESEARCH CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

The research data presented in this paper were collected in two research projects conducted in Switzerland, as well as a linguistic landscape workshop held at a Hungarian university with student teachers. The research projects, “Sprachland – Promoting Multilin-

gualism through Linguistic Landscape” (2020–2022) and “Multilingual Educational Spaces – Inclusive Language Learning through Linguistic Landscape” (2022–2024), aim, on the one hand, to promote students’ family languages and individual multilingualism, and on the other hand, to foster cooperation among a multi-professional team comprising teachers of heritage languages, class teachers, lecturers and students. In addition, these projects seek to exploit the potential of LL as an educational tool and to introduce possibilities for its use in both the heritage language and mainstream classroom. The investigation is guided by the following research questions: How do multilingual children and young people experience their linguistic home environment? How is belonging represented in the linguistic homescapes of Chinese, Russian and Portuguese-speaking children and young people?

We applied a participatory and collaborative research approach (Holm, 2018), which empowered children and young people to act as co-researchers by taking photos of their linguistic environment at home. This approach has the advantage that it “enables the researcher to get a sense of what the participants want to show as important or interesting from their own worlds” (Holm, 2018, p. 441). The visual data collected were analysed through photo-elicitation interviews conducted by the author, student teachers involved in the project as part of their studies, and a heritage language teacher.

The first study focused on Chinese and Russian heritage language classes and involved children aged 5–10 years. The second study, conducted with Portuguese heritage language learners aged 10–14, reflected an evolved understanding of linguistic homescap by incorporating visual and multimodal (audio and video) data. In the first study, participants were given the task: “Take 5–6 photos of objects and languages in your home that you see and are important to you.” In the second study, the task was expanded to include the multimodal representation of language: “Take 5–6 photos of objects and languages, and record videos or audios of the languages that you see and hear in your home and are important to you.” Following the data collection, students in the Chinese, Russian and Portuguese heritage language classes reflected on the diverse multimodal data in focus group interviews (Table 1). All participants and their guardians were informed about the research project and signed a consent form. To ensure participant anonymity, pseudonyms are used in the presentation of the data.

In the LL workshop, Hungarian university students were introduced to a definition of *lifescape*: “Lifescape refers to the multimodal representation of visible, audible, and sensorial languages in relevant social and geographical spaces and places in different life contexts”. They were then given the following task: “Take 5–6 photos and/or record sounds of languages that are visible and that you use in your everyday practice. Design your lifescape by using multimodal tools such as Canva or PowerPoint.” Each student was also asked to add a short narrative to each slide, explaining why they had chosen the multimodal data (Table 1). We received a signed consent form from four of the participating students, and their data will be integrated into the analysis using pseudonyms.

**Table 1.** *Data collected by the participants*

SAMPLE	CHINESE HERITAGE LANGUAGE CLASS (N = 7)	RUSSIAN HERITAGE LANGUAGE CLASS (N=7)	PORTUGUESE HERITAGE LANGUAGE CLASS (N = 13)	HUNGARIAN UNIVER- SITY STUDENTS (N = 4)
Photos	36	43	65	23
Focus group and individual interviews	2	3	18	-
Audio	-	-	7	3
Video	-	-	3	-
Written narration	-	-	-	16

To explore the multimodal data gathered through homescape and lifescape, we first analysed the data by applying qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2014), focusing on the materiality of language, culture and space. In the second step, we compared the data across the different groups to identify continuities and discontinuities. From this analysis, three inductively derived dimensions of belonging emerged: social belonging, spatial belonging and visceral belonging. While these dimensions reflect relevant aspects of the concept of belonging, they do not have clear-cut boundaries.

The following section presents the results in line with the key categories (material culture) materiality, language and space) and dimensions (social, spatial and visceral belonging).

## 5. RESULTS

### 5.1. Material culture of homescapes and lifescapes

As Aronin and Ó Laoire (2013, p. 227) state, “material culture is the core and ineluctable constituent of human life”. This includes everyday objects such as food, books, pens and buildings. Moreover, exploring material culture significantly contributes to the study of multilingualism.

The quantitative analysis of the multimodal data revealed significant differences in the materiality of the linguistic homescape and lifescape across the age groups investigated (Table 2). Young children mainly selected toys such as Lego and plush animals, as well as decorative items and souvenirs. These categories reflect the most significant social practice of this age group: play. Furthermore, the biographical experiences represented by the materiality of decorative items and souvenirs emerged as a significant aspect of the linguistic homescape. Books, particularly in languages such as Chinese and Russian, indicate (multilingual) literacy practices. In contrast, young people focused on their everyday social practices, including watching films and television, and participating in cultural activities such as making wine, cooking and travelling. The lifescapes of future teachers reflected both physical and virtual spaces that are relevant to their multiple roles as students, part-time workers and residents of specific cities or villages.

**Table 2.** *Materiality of the linguistic homescape and lifescape*

<i>Visual data (photos)</i>	CHINESE HERITAGE LANGUAGE CLASS (N=7)	RUSSIAN HERITAGE LANGUAGE CLASS (N=7)	PORTUGUESE HER- ITAGE LANGUAGE CLASS (N = 13)	HUNGARIAN UNI- VERSITY STUDENTS (N = 4)
everyday objects	7	8	5	
toys	11	10	1	
decorative items and souvenirs	11	12	3	
books and papers	4	3	-	5
Places and buildings	-	-	3	6
food	3	-	10	2
screen, computer and television	-	-	9	2
representation of peo- ple, nature, and animals	-	2	29	1
musical instrument	-	1	4	-
tools and vehicle	-	-	-	4
places	-	-	-	4
<b>total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>24</b>

## 5.2. Social belonging

The dimension of social belonging points to connections with family, kinship networks, friends and animals (pets). In Excerpt 1, Gina's linguistic homescape, which focused on her cats, surprised the student-teacher interviewer. Rather than choosing more conventional objects. Gina, in interpreting the task of representing the important objects and languages, took a photo of her cats. In explaining her choice, she sheds light on the family language policy and her connection to pets. Their connection goes beyond the linguistic practices (speaking Russian to the cats), highlighting the affective aspects of "material culture" (Aronin, 2018) by expressing her strong positive emotions towards them.

### Excerpt 1

Interviewer: Ah Gina okay. Good. (3) Your two cats are on it and does that have anything to do with language or- (.)?

Gina: They understand me too.

Interviewer: Ah, they understand you!

Gina: Yes, if you say food in Russian, because I speak Russian at home, then they leave. And when I say come to me in Russian, he sometimes comes to me because he loves me best at home.

Interviewer: Ah, nice! And why did you choose your cats?

Gina: Because I think they're beautiful and I love them (Interview with Gina 11.12.2019).





**Figure 1.** *Linguistic homescape of Gina (7 years old)*

In Excerpt 2, Lucas's choices indicate a different level of social belonging. While the Portuguese flag pinpoints ethnic belonging at the macro level, the logo of his favourite football club and the photo of the football player Pepe shows his belonging to a football fan community at the meso level. His connection to his family at the micro level is represented with an image of the family, standing on the beach at sunset, holding each other's hands. He expresses his strong emotional bond with his family as follows: "without my family I wouldn't be here (.) without my parents without my mum". At the same time, the photo represents a familyscape (Gonçalves & Lanza, 2024) and family identity (Yu, 2022), reflected in positive emotions and a sense of connectedness.

### **Excerpt 2**

Interviewer: Tell me which photos you chose and why.

Lucas: hmm (.) my favourite club from Portugal (.) then I chose our Portuguese flag

Interviewer: yes

Lucas: because I really like our flag and our country

Interviewer: yes

Lucas: it's very beautiful then I chose a photo with my family (.) because family is very important to me (.) and without my family I wouldn't be here (.) without my parents without my mum

Interviewer: mhm

Lucas: then I chose my favourite player (.) Pepe (.) he's 40 years old but he still plays football (.) like some who have retired at 33, 32, 31 (.) then there's a photo of a ball and a goal (.) because my favourite sport is football I like playing football and (.) I'm at the club (.) and that's why I like playing

Interviewer: great (.) yes sir (.) it's all very connected to Portugal isn't it?

Luca: Yes

Interviewer: Why is Portugal so important to you?

Lucas: Hmm (.) because there are a lot of people abroad who don't know Portugal very well (.) a lot of people (.) hmm (.) swap Portugal for Spain (.) swap (.) think it's all the same thing but it's not (.) I wanted to show them out there that (.) it's better (.) so they don't always forget

Interviewer: mhm

Lucas: that Portugal is not Spain (.) that Portugal is one country (.) and Spain or another (.) not to mix it up because that's not the same thing (Interview with Lucas, 02.06.2023).



**Figure 2.** *Lucas's homescape (14 years old)*

### 5.3. Spatial belonging

The spatial dimension of belonging encompasses cultural artefacts, geographical spaces and places, and their visual representations. In Excerpt 3, Peter reports on the Beijing underground map. His sense of belonging to this place is rooted in the fact that he was born in Beijing and has visited the city. Although he was only three years old when he was last in Beijing, he remembers the lines he travelled with his family. The map which incorporates semiotic and linguistic elements, has been in his room ever since, representing his roots and biographical experiences (Figure 3). Additionally, the map on the wall can be considered as a manifestation of family language practices (Yu, 2022), which are reflected in the use of Chinese language in the interaction of the family members.

#### Excerpt 3

Peter: This is a map of the underground.

Interviewer: Map of the underground?

Peter: Yes, and we bought it in Beijing. Yes, or (.) and that (20) is the map. I was already in a few lines in the centre. I have already travelled the lines that are in the middle, and um, because I was born in Beijing and then I was still in the underground there.

(.) And we just bought the map, and I took it home.

Interviewer: Yes, and now it is displayed in your house?

Peter: Yes.

Interviewer: Well, okay. And where exactly did you buy the card, do you remember?

Peter: In the shop, but I don't know where.

LP: And you don't remember what it looked like either?

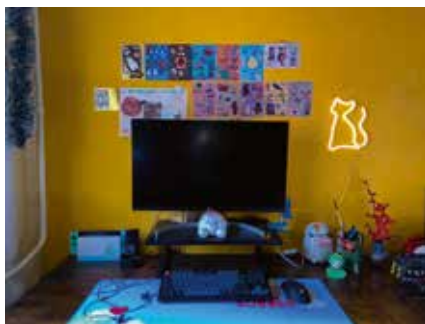
Peter: No, I was only three years old at the time (Interview with Peter, 21.11.2019).



**Figure 3.** *Peter's linguistic homescape (6 years old)*

Gabriella's lifescape includes five photos, two soundscapes and their accompanying narrative in the form of a PowerPoint presentation. The first slide of her lifescape represents her workplace and is accompanied by a soundscape with birdsong. She describes this scene as follows: "This is my desk at my flat in Szeged. It represents home for me where I use a mixture of Hungarian and English with my boyfriend. Our native language is Hungarian, and we both learn English in university, so it comes naturally to use whichever language in which words come to mind first. Since it is located in an outer circle of Szeged, it is quiet and peaceful (soundscape)" (Gabriella's narration, lifescape 1, March 2025).

For Gabriella, the desk with the computer represents "home". At the same time, it creates a space within a space by merging the physical and digital realms. In her everyday life, she uses Hungarian and English in a translanguaging space (Li, 2011) with her boyfriend. Through the inclusion of a nature-based soundscape, featuring birdsong, she introduces a third, external space which is not visible in her photo. The soundscape conveys a deep sense of relaxation through the chirping of birds and the sounds of nature, which are strongly linked to visceral experiences. In doing so, Gabriella's lifescape combines the spatial, social and visceral dimensions of her belonging by integrating multimodal approaches (visual, textual and auditive). Additionally, it points to the fluid boundaries between the described spaces (physical, digital and natural) that merge in the imagination of "home" as a powerful expression of belonging.



**Figure 4.** *Gabriella's linguistic homescape (22 years old)*

#### 5.4. Visceral belonging

The dimension of visceral belonging includes photographs and artefacts connected to food and food customs, such as Chinese tea and a teapot, as well as the chopsticks collected by the children in the Chinese heritage language classes. While the children in the Russian heritage class and the university students did not take photos of food, the presence of food as a dimension of visceral belonging was striking in the Portuguese heritage language classes. One student documented the cooking process of a Portuguese dish, providing eight photographs. Another student described the process of making wine in Portugal, illustrating her account with photos of the grape harvest and pressing. In her audio recording, she describes the process of grape pressing with the feet, which she had also done.

In Excerpt 4, Linda sheds light on the story beyond the photo of her favourite dish, octopus rice. She reports on her cooking experience, where she cooked for two hundred people in her school, which deeply impressed the interviewing heritage language teacher. This example illustrates a dimension of both visceral belonging and social belonging by pointing to the importance of sharing food customs with peers.

#### Excerpt 4

Interviewer: Tell me which photographs you chose and why.

Linda: The first picture I chose was the octopus rice, the octopus rice because I like it a lot and I had to cook it for my school (.)

Interviewer: Aha!

Linda: And I had to cook for 200 people.

Interviewer: On your own?

Linda: Yes.

Interviewer: *Wow!* ((laughs)) And what did your colleagues think of the octopus rice?

Linda: They really liked it (.) they'd never tried it (.) they tried it for the first time, and they liked it.

Interviewer: Great!



**Figure 5.** *Linda's homescape (14 years old)*

## 6. CONCLUSION

As I described earlier, the quantitative analysis showed significant differences in the materiality of linguistic homescape and lifescape across the age groups. The materiality of multilingualism indicates relevant social practices such as play (younger children), language practices, food customs, and the use of physical and digital spaces. Accordingly, the investigation of the “language-defined objects/artifacts” (Aronin & Ó Laoire, 2013, p. 235) in the linguistic homescape and lifescape can open up new perspectives on the interrelationship of objects and belonging.

The analysis of the qualitative data reveals three distinct, yet often overlapping, dimensions of belonging: social, spatial and visceral. While social belonging is represented in different social practices that include family, kinship and peers, spatial belonging is related mainly to the physical, digital and natural space. Visceral belonging is expressed through the way emotions and experiences are bound to the body, especially in practices such as food customs (see also Boivin, 2021) and a sense of connectedness with nature.

To conclude, the linguistic homescape and lifescape emerge as promising research methods for exploring the voices of belonging and different facets of linguistic identity (Krompák, *in press*). They can expose family language policy (Yu, 2022), which includes beliefs and values about languages (Curdtt-Christiansen, 2020; Curdtt-Christiansen & Lanza, 2018), and contribute to the investigation of multimodal, multilingual and digital language practices by extending research tools such as language portrait (Busch, 2006) and mediagram (Vold Lexander & Androutsopoulos, 2023). Furthermore, they engage participants as co-researchers (Yu, 2022) and pave new paths “towards collaborative, participatory, and empowering research” (Yao, 2025) by challenging the traditional hierarchies between researcher and participant. Through the linguistic homescape and lifescape approach, participants raise awareness of the linguistic diversity in the home environment by negotiating the meaning of the signs and connecting them with lived experiences and different dimensions of belonging. In a similar vein, the approach contributes to linguistic agency that underscores “participants’ agentive role of critically engaging with languages” (Krompák & Gorter, 2024, p. 38).

The study has certain limitations. The samples comprise three different age groups: children and young people attending heritage language courses, and university students. Due to both the evolving definitions of homescape and lifescape and the difference in age groups, young people and university students were more eager to include multimodal data. Some of the young children took photos with the help of their parents. In these cases, it would be interesting to include parents’ perspectives in the analysis (Yu, 2022). However, these limitations are indicators of further developments in the field and open up new avenues in the investigation of homescape and lifescape. In line with Aronin and Ó Laoire (2013), it is recommended that the location of the artefacts represented be included in the homescape and lifescape. Furthermore, the use of and interaction with material culture can shed light on different social practices. In order to gain a more comprehensive view of homescape and lifescape as research instruments, further studies could focus on the dimensions of social, spatial and visceral belonging and their conceptual and theoretical relevance in the investigation of the material culture of multilingualism, linguistic identity and family language policy.

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## TRANSCRIPTION NOTATION

(.) (..) (...)	pause (1,2, 3 seconds)
(6)	pause of 6 seconds
((laugh))	para- or nonverbal act
<i>bold</i>	stressed, emphasised
hmmm	holding of consonant, according to intensity
I just-	abortion of utterance
[ ]	commentary
// //	overlap
[...]	supressed text
[xxx]	unintelligible text

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