

A LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS OF PATTAYA, THAILAND'S SIN CITY

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Abstract

Pattaya is one of the most popular tourist destinations attracting international travelers. Given its uniquely cosmopolitan nature, it can be regarded as one of the most multilingual and multicultural areas, making it linguistically stand out from other big cities. This paper, therefore, aims to explore the linguistic landscape of Pattaya's two main streets by analyzing the data (542 signs) collected from commercial signs. The results present the variation and dominance of the use of languages in those public spaces. By highlighting the differences among the various linguistic landscapes, it draws on the factors of business types and population dominance.

Keywords

linguistic landscape, Pattaya, sociolinguistics, signs

1 Introduction

Unlike any other country in Southeast Asia, Thailand has one official language that is widely spoken throughout the country. But many Thais, especially Bangkokians and people living near tourist destinations, adequately speak and understand English as the lingua franca (Snodin et al. 2017). According to Kachru's model of 'World Englishes' (1986), Thailand is one of the countries in the Expanding Circle where English is used as a foreign language or an additional language and also for communication mainly with those from other countries (Trakulkasemsuk 2018). While Thai is an official language, in practice English receives quite a special position as an unofficial language. Smalley (1994) states that the Thai language is an internal language, a national symbol, and an official language used in education and communication, while English is Thailand's external language, used in international politics, media, and tourism. English has been around in Thailand for over 100 years but it is only regarded as a foreign language due to the country's promotion of national identity depicted in its language policy (Rappa & Wee Hock An 2006).

Tourism, a rapidly growing industry in Thailand, has become an important economic sector that has an impact on the development of the country's economy. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization's reports on global

travel and tourism, Thailand had ranked in the top ten in 2014-2016. Pattaya is one of the most famous tourist destinations in Thailand because it is inexpensive for tourists at all levels. Pattaya was ranked 17th in the Euromonitor International's 100 Top City Destinations rankings (Gordon 2015). It was ranked second in the top ten popular cities by Thai and foreign tourists in a survey conducted by the Ministry of Tourism and Sports in 2014. This survey states that in 2013 there were nearly seven million foreign tourists and 2.4 million Thai tourists visiting Pattaya. Pattaya was recorded (The Ministry of Tourism and Sports 2015) to have a particularly fast-growing community of foreign tourists travelling to and residing in it. While Pattaya has received much attention from travellers worldwide, local residents have different opinions about this influx (e.g. comments in Pantip.com, facebook.com, and th.tripadvisor.com). Some think Pattaya is partially owned by foreigners and is exclusively catered to foreign tastes. But they all agree with the notion that the main three attractions Pattaya has to offer are "the beach zone, the nightlife and the Pattaya Music Festival" (Longjit & Pearce 2013: 167).

Pattaya is a multilingual and multicultural city. While walking along the streets of Pattaya, you can see public signs in a number of different languages. The linguistic landscape, therefore, is an appropriate tool for studying the signs and language use in this area. Studies of a linguistic landscape such as the present one can be a useful tool for checking the demographics of a population. It can contribute to the field of linguistic landscape in how to use the knowledge of signs for better communication.

2 The study of the linguistic landscape (LL)

Studies of Linguistic Landscape are generally the documentation of the description and analysis of the language situation in a certain location or area. The very popular definition used by most of the researchers in this field is by Landry and Bourhis (1997: 25), the first researchers who clearly defined the term LL: "the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings [that] combine to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration".

Many researchers have adopted this concept but redefined the LL definition according to their own view. Gorter (2006: 2) stated that LL researchers examined "language in its written form in the public sphere," specifically "in the sense related to commercial signage and place names". Cenoz and Gorter (2006) claimed that the linguistic landscape can report information about the sociolinguistic context and the languages on signs can be compared to the region's official policy. Therefore, linguistic landscape refers to "any sign or

announcement located outside or inside a public institution or a private business in a given geographical location” (Ben-Rafael et al. 2006: 14).

LL attempts to understand the linguistic communication through public signs including names of streets, buildings, places, and commercial shops, advertising billboards as well as road signs. Meanings of the signs were not taken into consideration. However, pictures, logos, symbols or other graphic representations, although considered important elements in the study of semiotics, were beyond this study's focus.

Soanes and Stevenson (2003: 1645) distinguish two meanings of sign with the foci on “probable presence or occurrence of something else” and “information or instruction in a written or symbolic form”. However, Backhaus (2006, 2007) advocates for linguistic landscape enthusiasts to follow Landry and Bourhis's definition for a practical reason instead of reinventing the wheel.

LL studies up-to-date have been carried out in different parts of the world. Cenoz and Gorter (2006) compared two streets in two non-national regions in Europe, one in Friesland, Netherlands, and the other in the Spanish Basque Country. These two regions are similar in that both have an official minority language (Frisian and Basque, respectively) and English as the international language. The researchers compared the use of these languages relative to the differences in language policies regarding the minority languages in these two settings and to the spread of English in Europe in order to determine the number of languages used, the languages on the signs and the characteristics of bilingual and multilingual signs. The findings indicated that Dutch is the most prominent language in the linguistic landscape of Friesland, followed by English and Frisian. In the Basque region of Spain, the most prominent languages were Spanish, Basque, and English, in descending order of prominence. Ben-Rafael et al. (2006) compared patterns of LL in a variety of ‘homogeneous’ and ‘mixed’ neighbourhoods in an Israeli city and East Jerusalem. The study focused on the degree of visibility on private and public signs of the three major languages of Israel – Hebrew, Arabic and English. The findings showed that Hebrew was predominant in both the Israeli city and East Jerusalem. On the other side of the Earth, Backhaus (2006, 2007) gave attention to the differences between official and non-official multilingual signs in Tokyo. He found that official signs were designed to reinforce power relations between government and people, and non-official signs were used to communicate with foreigners. Bangkok, Thailand is an example of a city where LL characterizes Thai-English code-mixing (Backhaus 2006).

Quite a number of LL studies were conducted in Thailand. First and foremost, Huebner's (2006) study examined the linguistic landscape of 15 Bangkok

neighbourhoods to explore and compare language contact, language mixing, and language dominance by comparing the government and private sector signs. The study reported that the signs contained multiple scripts in either Thai-English or Thai-Chinese-English. Wangpusit (2012), in another study worthy of mention, looked into the content and the features of business names and business signboards in the area of Siam Square. He found that the three most popular contents from business names and signboards were the owner's name(s), product name(s), and the outstanding features of the business. Yanhong and Rungrung (2013) studied the LL functions in Chiang Mai's tourist attraction areas by analyzing the types of code-mixing on signs. The results showed the importance and influence of English as an international language and summarized them into five types of codemixing, namely codemixing in Thai script, English lexicon and English syntax; codemixing in Thai and English scripts with English lexicon and English syntax; codemixing in Thai and English script, Thai and English lexicon; codemixing in Thai with English script, Thai with English lexicon and English syntax; and codemixing in Thai with English script, and English lexicon. The other study from Thailand is by Pikulthong (2011), who explored the status of language written on commercial signs along Phra Arthit Road, Bangkok, in order to investigate the origins and meanings of the store names and explain the relation between language and Phra Arthit Road. She found that English received the highest status in both positioning and font size on Phra Arthit commercial signs because it acted as a lingua-franca for both foreigners and Thais. The reason for English store names was mainly for the purpose of advertising and to communicate with targeted English speaking customers.

Studies of LL can provide great understanding to multilingual contexts. Particularly in the context of this study, much of Thailand is viewed by its people as monolingual and monocultural. A look into Pattaya can bring about a unique linguistic identity of the city revealed in commercial signs.

Research questions

1. What are the prominent languages visually displayed on public signs in the multilingual city of Pattaya?
2. How are the languages used in different business types?

3 Methodology

3.1 Data collection

Areas

The study focuses on LL in Pattaya, Chonburi. The study's scope of interest was narrowed down to the city area. Pattaya's tourists can identify the city with three attractions: the beach zone, nightlife and the Pattaya Music Festival (Longjit & Pearce 2013). The Pattaya Music Festival is an event that occurs only once a year. Therefore, the areas of night life and beach zones were selected for the present analysis. These two areas include two major areas of commerce in Pattaya, *Beach Road* and *Walking Street*. The two are adjacent streets.

Beach Road is the main district and the most populated out of all the beach zones. It is the only road that connects the three main roads – North Pattaya Road, Central Pattaya Road and South Pattaya. It is approximately three kilometers long.

Walking Street is internationally known for its nightlife, which makes it Pattaya's most populated street. Infamously known as the main entertainment hotspot, which is approximately 500 meters long, it hosts innumerable businesses. Hence, various types of shop signs are found here.

Signs

For the purposes of this study, commercial signs including advertising billboards, shop signs, information signs, and hotel signs found in the area were photographed and analyzed. In order to include or exclude any signs, the consideration of the appearance of the sign was very important. This means that signs collected for the analysis must be major signs – the biggest sign above or in front of a shop entrance which is the most attractive and easiest to notice by the passersby. Moreover, they must present important commercial information of the shop such as name and other details. Minor and unclear signs were excluded. An example of a clearly definable major sign is shown below (Picture 1).



Picture 1: A clearly visible sign

3.3 Data analysis

This study explored dominance of languages used in this unique area of Pattaya by focusing on commercial signs. The total of 542 signs were investigated from the two streets. The first criterion was the number of languages used. Types of businesses visible on signs were also considered. Then, the signs were divided into monolingual, bilingual, trilingual, and multilingual signs. The order in which each language appeared on the signs was not taken into account. After that, all signs from the two streets were categorized by using the seven business coding types created by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT). This typology is officially used by the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of the Kingdom of Thailand. They are, namely, Accommodation, Transportation, Souvenir, Food and Beverage, Service, Tourism and Others.

Coding schemes used in accordance to the business are as follows:

- *Service business*: massage parlors and spas, laundry facilities and Internet cafes
- *Food and Beverage*: restaurants, bars, cafés and fast food stations
- *Accommodation*: hotels, resorts, apartments, house sales and condos
- *Souvenir*: shoe shops, outlets, grocer's shops and souvenir shops
- *Tourism*: tour operators and visa processing services
- *Transportation*: guideposts, bus stops, and rent-a-car companies
- *Other businesses*: schools, dental clinics, medical clinics, dispensaries, exchange counters and banks

The analysis of language meanings and functions was not included in this study because of the researchers' own limitation of knowledge in different languages. Moreover, in order to explore dominance of language use, the occurrences of pictures in the signs were excluded from consideration.

4 Findings

The findings of the study will be presented in two parts. The first part presents comparisons of different languages used between *Beach Road* and *Walking Street*. The second part presents types of business in relation to languages used.

4.1 The comparison of language use between *Beach Road* and *Walking Street*

In terms of language use, languages used on signs were categorized into *monolingual*, *bilingual*, *trilingual* and *multilingual*. The following table presents the results concerning the languages used on the signs collected from the two areas in Pattaya: *Beach Road* and *Walking Street*.

Type of sign	<i>Beach Road</i> (382 signs)	<i>Walking Street</i> (160 signs)	Total (542 signs)
Monolingual	27.49%	46.20%	36.84%
Bilingual	61.26%	46.91%	54.08%
Trilingual	8.12%	6.89%	7.50%
Multilingual	3.14%	0%	1.57%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Table 1: Languages used on signs in the two areas

Table 1 shows the overall picture of the language use on signs in the two areas in this study. The majority of the signs that appeared along the two streets were found to be mostly bilingual, followed by monolingual, trilingual and multilingual. The differences between the appearance of monolingual and bilingual signs on *Beach Road* were considerable but, on *Walking Street*, the differences between the appearance of monolingual and bilingual signs were small. The table below shows details and the overall picture of languages used in commercial signs on *Beach Road* and *Walking Street*.

Language(s)		<i>Beach Road</i> (382 signs)	<i>Walking Street</i> (160 signs)
Monolingual	Thai	14.68%	1.26%
	English	12.32%	41.25%
	Arabic	0%	2.51%
	Russian	0.52%	1.25%
Bilingual	English-Thai	58.14%	38.75%
	English-Russian	2.08%	1.89%
	English-Chinese	0%	1.26%
	English-Arabic	0%	2.51%
	Russian-Thai	1.04%	0.63%
	Arabic-Thai	0%	1.89%
Trilingual	English-Thai-Russian	4.46%	1.26%
	English-Thai-Chinese	1.82%	0.63%
	English-Arabic-Russian	0%	0.63%
	English-Thai-Korean	0.52%	0%
	English-Russian-Chinese	0.52%	0%
	English-Korean-Japanese	0%	0.63%
	English-Thai-German	0.26%	0%
	English-Thai-Arabic	0%	2.5%
	English-Thai-Japanese	0.26%	0%
	English-Thai- Hindi	0.26%	1.26%
Multilingual	English-Thai-Chinese-Russian	1.04%	0%
	English-Thai-Chinese-Russian-Korean	1.04%	0%
	English-Thai-Russian- Hindi	0.26%	0%
	English-Thai- Hindi -Arabic	0.26%	0%
	English-Thai-Chinese-Japanese	0.26%	0%
	English-Thai-Chinese-Russian-Arabic	0.26%	0%
Total		100%	100%

Table 2: Details of language use on signs in the two areas

Monolingual

Beach Road

Along *Beach Road*, Thai was the most prominent language to appear on monolingual signs (14.68%, 56 signs), followed by English (12.32%, 47 signs) and Russian (0.52%, 2 signs). The numbers of monolingual Thai and English-only signs were quite similar. Russian language signs were the third type of monolingual sign found on *Beach Road*.

Walking Street

Along *Walking Street*, English was the most prominent language (41.25%, 66 signs), which was quite numerous compared to the occurrences of Arabic (2.51%, 4 signs), Thai (1.26%, 2 signs) and Russian (1.26%, 2 signs). But, it was surprising to see that Arabic was used more on monolingual signs when compared to Thai and Russian, which were two of the top three dominant languages on signs on *Beach Road*.

Bilingual

Beach Road

There were only three languages visible on bilingual signs along *Beach Road*, namely, Thai, English and Russian. The English-Thai combination was the most prominent bilingual sign found in this area accounting for 58.14 per cent (222 signs) of all bilingual signs, while English-Russian signs combined with Russian-Thai signs were only 2.08 per cent (8 signs). Conforming to the appearance of monolingual signs found in this area, Thai and English were the most prominent languages to appear on road signs.

Walking Street

In the *Walking Street* area, there were more varieties of language use on bilingual signs than on *Beach road*. It was found that there were various combinations of five languages represented on bilingual signs: English, Thai, Arabic, Russian, and Chinese. English-Thai signs were found the most (38.75%, 62 signs), followed by English-Arabic (2.51%, 4 signs), Arabic-Thai (1.89%, 3 signs), English-Russian (1.89%, 3 signs), English-Chinese (1.26%, 2 signs) and Russian-Thai (0.63%, 1 sign). The three most popular languages that appeared on bilingual signs along *Walking Street* were English (44.39%, 77 signs), Thai (41.27%, 66 signs) and Arabic (4.4%, 7 signs). The difference of language use between the two areas was in the choice of languages used. *Beach Road* gave precedence to English, Thai, and Russian, while *Walking Street* gave precedence to English, Thai and Arabic.

Trilingual

Beach Road

Thai, English, and Russian were the most prominent languages on trilingual signs similarly to their individual and dual prominence on monolingual and bilingual signs, respectively. However, German, Japanese, and Hindi languages could not be found in this area. Furthermore, the most prominent languages that appeared on multilingual signs included the combinations of Thai-English-Russian (4.46%, 17 signs) and Thai-English-Chinese (1.82%, 7 signs). The Thai, English, Russian, and Chinese languages were the top four languages to appear on monolingual, bilingual, and trilingual signs.

Walking Street

Along *Walking Street*, the most prominent languages on trilingual signs were English-Thai-Arabic (2.5%, 4 signs), followed by Thai-English-Russian (1.25%, 2 signs) and Thai-English-Hindi (1.25%, 2 signs), while English-Thai-Chinese, English-Arabic-Russian, and English-Korean-Japanese were found only once each.

Multilingual

Beach Road

Furthermore, only 3.12 per cent of signs (12) on *Beach Road* were multilingual signs. Languages varied from English to Thai, Chinese, Russian, Hindi, Korean, Japanese and Arabic. The languages that appeared on multilingual signs were Thai, English, Russian, Chinese and Korean. It is worth noting that the Thai, English, Russian and Chinese languages were the top four languages to appear on monolingual, bilingual, and trilingual signs. Surprisingly, Korean was one of the top five languages to appear on signs along this area. However, Korean was not found on monolingual and bilingual signs.

Walking Street

No multilingual signs were found along *Walking Street*.

4.2 Types of business in relation to languages

In this part, the analysis of *Walking Street* and *Beach Road* will be presented separately. The following table presents the results found of types of businesses in relation to languages collected from *Beach Road*.

Language(s)		Accom. (84 signs)	Transport. (21 signs)	Souvenir (36 signs)	Food and Beverage (91 signs)	Service (97 signs)	Tourism (30 signs)	Other (23 signs)	Total (382 signs)
Monolingual	Thai	2.1	0.52	2.1	3.14	4.72	1.31	0.79	14.68
	English	1.58	1.31	0	3.93	2.36	1.31	1.83	12.32
	Russian	0.26	0	0	0	0	0.26	0	0.52
Bilingual	English-Thai	17.28	3.67	6.03	12.83	13.87	2.1	2.36	58.14
	English-Russian	0.52	0	0	0.26	0.52	0.52	0.26	2.08
	Russian-Thai	0	0	0	0.52	0.26	0.26	0	1.04
Trilingual	English-Thai-Russian	0	0	0.79	0.26	1.31	1.58	0.52	4.46
	English-Thai-Chinese	0.26	0	0.26	0.26	0.52	0.26	0.26	1.82
	English-Thai-Korean	0	0	0	0.52	0	0	0	0.52
	English-Russian-Chinese	0	0	0	0	0.52	0	0	0.52
	English-Thai-German	0	0	0	0.26	0	0	0	0.26
Multilingual	English-Thai-Japanese	0	0	0	0.26	0	0	0	0.26
	English-Thai-Hindi	0	0	0	0.26	0	0	0	0.26
	English-Thai-Chinese-Russian	0	0	0.26	0.26	0.52	0	0	1.04
	English-Thai-Chinese-Russian-Korean	0	0	0	0.52	0.52	0	0	1.04
	English-Thai-Russian-Hindi	0	0	0	0.26	0	0	0	0.26
Multilingual	English-Thai-Hindi-Arabic	0	0	0	0.26	0	0	0	0.26
	English-Thai-Chinese-Japanese	0	0	0	0	0	0.26	0	0.26
	English-Thai-Chinese-Russian-Arabic	0	0	0	0	0.26	0	0	0.26
Total		22	5.5	9.44	23.8	25.38	7.86	6.02	100

Table 3: Percentages of language use on the commercial signs along Beach Road

Beach Road

Table 3 shows the overall picture of languages used on commercial signs on *Beach Road*. It was found that the commercial signs of Service (97 signs), Food and Beverage (91 signs) and Accommodation (84 signs) businesses were scattered mostly along *Beach Road*. Three most frequent languages to appear on these business-type signs were Thai (84.56%, 322 signs), English (83.76%, 320 signs) and Russian (11.22%, 43 signs). The most popular languages that appeared on monolingual signs were Thai and English while English-Thai (43.98%, 168 signs) was the most prominent combination to appear on bilingual signs. The majority of bilingual signs appeared in English (60.22%, 230 signs) and 226 bilingual signs (59.16%) appeared in Thai. We can see that Thai was the most prominent language that appeared on monolingual signs and English was the most prominent language to appear on bilingual signs. English appears in all trilingual and multilingual signs in these top three types of businesses, while 29 signs appeared in Thai. In addition, there were varieties of languages appearing on Food and Beverage and Service signs. Most of them were shown in English (100%, 382 signs), Thai (92.6%, 354 signs), Russian (77.77%, 297 signs) and Chinese (48.15%, 184 signs). There was only one trilingual sign on an Accommodation business which was in Thai-English-Chinese and no multilingual signs were found in this type of business.

Moreover, there were a number of Souvenir signs (9.44%, 36 signs), Tourism (7.86%, 30 signs), Other (6.02%, 23 signs), and Transportation (5.5%, 21 signs). In the Souvenir business, Thai was the only language that appeared on monolingual signs. It was found that there were more monolingual signs in English than those in Thai on Tourism and Other businesses, and on Transportation signs. There was only one monolingual sign in Russian that appeared on a Tourism business. For all the four business sectors with bilingual signs, English and Thai were the most prominent languages to appear on them. No other languages were found except for English and Thai on signs for Transportation and Souvenir businesses. In the Tourism and Other businesses sector, apart from Thai and English, no other languages were found.

The most prominent languages that appeared on trilingual signs were English-Thai-Russian (4.46%, 17 signs), followed by English-Thai-Chinese (1.82%, 7 signs). It was found that there was only one English-Thai-Chinese sign that appeared for a Souvenir, Other, and Tourism business, while no trilingual signs were found on Transportation signs. Two multi-lingual signs appeared, one in English-Thai-Chinese-Russian for a Souvenir business and another in English-Thai-Chinese-Japanese for a Tourism business.

Language(s)	Accom. (15 signs)	Transport. (1 sign)	Souvenir (15 signs)	Food and Beverage (81 signs)	Service (43 signs)	Tourism (9 signs)	Other (0 signs)	Total (160 signs)
Thai	0	0	0.63	0.63	0	0	0	1.26
Monolingual	3.75	0.63	1.25	19.37	14.38	1.88	0	41.18
Arabic	0	0	0	1.88	0.63	0	0	2.51
Russian	0	0	0	1.25	0	0	0	1.25
English-Thai	5	0	6.25	17.5	10	0	0	38.75
Bilingual	0	0	0	1.88	0	0	0	1.88
English-Russian	0	0	0	1.25	0	0	0	1.25
Chinese-English	0	0	0	1.88	0	0.63	0	2.51
Russian-Thai	0	0	0	0.63	0	0	0	0.63
Arabic-Thai	0	0	0.63	0.63	0	0.63	0	1.89
English-Thai-Russian	0	0	0	1.25	0	0	0	1.25
Trilingual								
English-Thai-Chinese	0	0	0.63	0	0	0	0	0.63
English-Arabic-Russian	0.63	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.63
English-Russian-Chinese	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
English-Thai-German	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
English-Korean-Japanese	0	0	0	0	0.63	0	0	0.63
English-Thai-Arabic	0	0	0	1.25	1.25	0	0	2.5
English-Thai-Hindi		0	0	1.25	0	0	0	1.25
Total	9.38	0.63	9.38	50.65	26.81	3.13	0	100

Table 4: Percentages of languages used on the commercial signs along *Walking Street*

Walking Street

Table 4 shows the overall picture of the languages used on the commercial signs on *Walking Street*. The results of *Walking Street*'s LL are quite different from those on *Beach Road*'s LL. Food and Beverage signs (50.65%) were mostly found along *Walking Street*. The numbers of appearances between monolingual (46.20%, 74 signs) and bilingual (46.91%, 75 signs) signs were quite similar. The most prominent language to appear on monolingual signs was English and on bilingual signs English-Thai (38.75%, 62 signs). The appearances of other languages on monolingual and bilingual signs such as Thai, Russian, and Russian-Thai were very low in this business type. Apart from English and Thai, Russian, Arabic and Hindi were found on multilingual signs. It is surprising that the Arabic language, found on all monolingual, bilingual, and trilingual signs (10%, 16 signs) on *Walking Street*, was not found at all on *Beach Road*.

With regard to Service businesses, English (14.38%, 23 signs) was the most prominent language to appear on monolingual signs, and English-Thai (10%, 16 signs) were the most prominent languages to appear on bilingual signs. Apart from English and Thai, Arabic appears third in this category (1.25%, 2 signs).

There are several points that show the similarities of Souvenir and Accommodation signs. First, English and Thai were the top two languages to appear on Souvenir and Accommodation signs. Second, English was the most prominent language to appear on monolingual signs and English-Thai were the most prominent languages to appear on bilingual signs. Last, Arabic was one of the top three languages shown on both Souvenir and Accommodation signs, similarly to Food and Beverage and Service business signs.

There were a small number of Tourism signs (3.13%, 5 signs) shown along *Walking Street*. English (100%) was the most prominent language to appear on monolingual signs. However, on bilingual signs, Arabic was the most prominent language shown (1.88%, 3 signs).

In addition, no other business signs or multilingual signs were found in this area.

5 Discussion

Our results showed that English was commonly used in both areas, and it was the most common language in *Walking Street* whereas on *Beach Road*, Thai was the language that was more dominant than English. In both areas, the bilingual signs were the most general type of sign. Most of the languages used in bilingual signs are English paired with Thai. Like in most countries where English is used as a lingua franca, English is a tool to help businesses function more effectively (Hiranburana 2017).

Table 5 presents the comparison of language use between the two areas in Pattaya: *Beach Road* and *Walking Street*.

Language(s)	<i>Walking Street</i>	<i>Beach Road</i>	Total
English	90.63%	83.77%	87.20%
Thai	48.13%	84.56%	66.35%
Russian	5.63%	68.85%	37.24%
Chinese	1.88%	4.97%	3.43%
Arabic	10.00%	0.52%	5.26%
Korean	0.38%	1.57%	0.98%

Table 5: Comparison of languages on *Beach Road* and *Walking Street*

The status of English in Thailand has always been that of a foreign language; in the 1980s, its importance as an international language for Thailand was recognized (Chutisilp 1984, Debyasuvarn 1981). As visitors to Thailand also include many Europeans and other Asians, English is typically “the common currency for cross-cultural conversation” (Tourism Authority of Thailand n.d.). The LL of these two areas shows that English is found almost everywhere and it is used as a description for signs. Besides its use for shop signs, English is also used for shop names to transliterate the pronunciation of shop names from other languages (see Picture 2 for an example).



Picture 2: Example of use of English as transliteration of pronunciation from Thai

There are some noticeable patterns of language use among monolingual, bilingual, trilingual and multilingual signs on *Beach Road*. The following table shows these patterns.

Sign	Most prominent language	Followed by
Monolingual	Thai	English
Bilingual	Thai, English	Russian
Trilingual	Thai, English, Russian	Chinese, Korean
Multilingual	Thai, English, Chinese, Korean	

Table 6: Prominence of language use

Along *Beach Road*, Thai was the most prominent language to appear on monolingual signs, followed by English. The two most prominent languages, English and Thai, from the monolingual signs made up the top bilingual signs followed by Russian. The most prominent languages found on trilingual, monolingual and bilingual signs were Thai, English and Russian followed by Chinese and Korean. The multilingual signs included the most prominent languages, Thai, English, Chinese and Korean, which appeared on monolingual, bilingual and trilingual signs together.

Along *Walking Street*, the most prominent language on signs is English, followed by Thai and Arabic, while Thai appeared the most on *Beach Road*, followed by English and Russian. As mentioned in the previous section, Pattaya was ranked as the second out of the top ten popular cities among Thai and foreign tourists in a survey conducted by the Ministry of Tourism and Sports in 2014. It could be the case that English and Thai were mostly used in both areas whether in monolingual, bilingual or multilingual signs.

For a long time, Thailand has been considered a sex-tourism destination. The signs on *Walking Street* can illustrate this fact. The majority of the signs are related to nightlife and entertainment. It is alarming to find no health-related businesses such as clinics or pharmacies on this street. Public attitudes to health concerns should be promoted (Cohen 1988).

Apart from English and Thai, it is interesting that Russian and Arabic were shown as the top three languages in both areas. Most of the Russian language signs along *Beach Road* were used in a larger size than other languages. This indicates that Russian people are the main customers and have high purchasing potential for businesses along *Beach Road*.



Picture 3: Russian language on a bilingual sign on *Beach Road*

The number of Russian and Arabic signs in both areas can indicate the trend and population of tourists in each area. Even though these two areas are connected and the most populated and large commercial areas, the results showed some differences between *Beach Road* and *Walking Street*.

Beach Road is a famous destination for tourists, especially Russian tourists. Most of them reserve hotel rooms in advance through a travel agency, so there is not much Russian language found on Accommodation signs. Russian tourists prefer to stay in the city and near the beach areas (Lertputtarak, Lobo & Yingyong 2014). Along *Beach Road*, we can assume that Russian tourists may also be interested in tourism information and service products, whereas on *Walking Street*, Russian signs appear on Food and Beverage and Accommodation businesses. It is interesting to see that no Russian signs were found on Tourism and Service businesses along *Walking Street*. Even though there are many Russian businesses in the area, most of them do not use the Russian language on signs. The current study suggests that Russian signs concerning businesses such as food and health should be increased.



Picture 4: Russian business using English

In addition, English signs were found on more than 90 per cent of the signs on *Walking Street*, since English acts as the international language for all. It shows that this area is a tourist attraction that draws foreigners. Also, there is an increasing trend of tourists travelling from India to Pattaya (Embassy of India, Bangkok, Thailand n.d.). Although people of Hindi origin are also seen as English speakers, there still exist signs in Hindi languages. The numbers of Hindi signs remain small. On the other hand, it is surprising that Arabic ranks at the top of the three languages found along *Walking Street*. Most of the Arabic signs appeared on Food and Beverage and Service businesses and the Arabic language was of larger size than other languages on the same signs.



Picture 5: Arabic language on a bilingual sign on *Walking Street*

Besides, Transportation signs were shown only in monolingual and bilingual forms. The languages which appeared on the Transportation signs were only English and Thai.

6 Conclusion

The street signs found on the two main roads echo the fact that the notorious sin city of Thailand – Pattaya – is a multicultural and multilingual city. While the collective representation of each language shown on street signs may suggest the number of the tourists' mother tongues or their nationalities, English remains an important international language although monolingual signs that show languages other than English and Thai can sometimes be found.

From the current study's findings of LL in the major business areas of the main commercial and populated areas in Pattaya, we can see that LL can help benefit both business and government sectors. It can be an indicator of the dominance of tourists' nationalities and the number of travelers visiting these areas, and act for the benefit of the service providers. Old business providers can gain additional new customers apart from their target groups by improving their products that serve the dominant visitor groups. New service providers or business owners can use LL to plan new businesses that can support the demand or requirements of the market. Regarding the government sector, LL can help relevant authorities in a particular area to plan their policies. For example, Food and Beverage signs may attract excursionists or short-time travelers while real-estate and health and wellness signs may attract long-stay tourists. LL can help the government sector to gain more information and improve the areas in a purposeful way.

This study is exemplary of how this understated method of analysis of signs can be used to broaden understanding of the theory and practice of language planning. However, the study of the LL of an area cannot describe the complete picture of what goes on in the area. A further study may be complemented with a bigger-scale data collection, such as statistics of incoming and outgoing visitors combined with lengths of stay. All of these factors can help in improving and planning any given city strategically in the near and long future.

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