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English in the Linguistic Landscape in the San José Region of Costa Rica

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INTRODUCTION

It is widely accepted that English is a global language and that its presence and importance around the world are growing. The increased use of English can be attributed to a myriad of factors, including tourism (e.g., Aguilar-Sánchez 165), migration from the Global North to the Global South (e.g., Spencer 60), and economic development (e.g., Aguilar-Sánchez 165), among others. Some point out that the spread of English globally has created an interconnected world with increased opportunities for business and cultural exchange (Al-Issa and Dahan 2). Conversely, many have highlighted the negative impact of English globalization in terms of the loss of accessibility to specific industries for work (Mackenzie 13), the loss of or threat to regional or Indigenous languages (Garg 6), or the ever-increasing socioeconomic divide that is often exacerbated by the spread of English (Mackenzie 7).[1]

The promotion and subsequent spread of English can manifest in various ways, with one of the most common being Language Policy (LP). LP has long been a tool of government in the promotion or demotion of a language and the development of national identities (Miller 125–126). The present study looks at LP on English in Costa Rica to determine how policy, in combination with other factors like region, socioeconomics, and tourism, impacts the local linguistic landscape (LL). Costa Rica has long been recognized as an economically stable country and is regularly cited as one of the most stable economies in Latin America (Smith-Castro et al. 95). Costa Rica relies on the tourism sector, which in 2021 accounted for 2.7% of GDP and for over $1.7 billion in revenue (ICT “Divisas”).[2] These facts make Costa Rica an interesting location for research on the influence of English, particularly when bearing in mind that 63% of all annual tourists in 2023 come from Canada or the United States (ICT “Anuario Turismo”).

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[1] While a plethora of research places value judgments on the growing presence of English across the globe (e.g., Hultgren 15; Phillipson 1-15), that discussion is beyond the scope of the present paper. For more on this topic, see Phillipson (1-15), who, in his book on linguistic imperialism, highlighted the power and role English has in the world and how this dynamic upholds power relations between the global north and the global south. Mackenzie (13) also addressed globalization and pointed out that the power dynamic created by linguistic imperialism can create accessibility issues for those in the Global South with things like the internet, as well as in academic institutions, where many academic articles are published in English.

[2] The market hasn’t fully recovered since Covid, where, in 2019, the tourism sector was 4.8% of GDP, representing $3.9 billion (ICT “Divisas”).

As described in the sections below, LP is often promoted through media, whether visual, aural, or written. The present paper examines the presence of English in written media in Costa Rica, specifically in the linguistic landscape (LL), to determine if English is a prominent part of the community's public landscape. In the following sections, we will discuss research on LP and how it relates to the spread of English, as well as how policies may influence written media in the public sphere.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Language Policy

There is no consensus on how to define LP. Some definitions focus on the intentional efforts of those in control to shape and decide language codes (Cooper 3–28). Some researchers attempt to include the role of linguists in the policy and planning process (Eastman 11), while others adopt a broad definition, like Gao (168), who suggests that LP is a dynamic process that often involves official and non-official contributors. For the present paper, a broad definition of LP is adopted, essentially defining the LP as a dynamic process where decisions are made at the official levels, such as by the government, certain media, and educational institutions, and non-official levels, like business owners or individuals.

LP can take place at any level, ranging from the national (e.g., Brock and Holmarsdottir 68–73) to the local (e.g., Guo et al. 6–7), and can have a profound impact on both the spread of a global language like English and the stigmatization of a regional or local variety. Much of the research that focuses on the spread of English centers on LP. For example, Rosendal and Amin Ngabonziza show how the recognition of English as a co-official language in Rwanda helped shape a new national ideology that associated English with development, science, and technology (90–91). Al-Issa and Dahan suggested that the adoption of English as the official language of instruction in the United Arab Emirates had a negative impact on both local culture and native language learning (17). Phyak also looked at the effect of an English teaching policy in Nepal and found that the policy exacerbated class-based social inequalities (214). We see an analogous situation in Zambia, where English became an official language in 1964, which eventually created a situation where the use of local languages in public spaces and the speakers of these languages became increasingly stigmatized (Simungala and Jamaina 19). Of course, not all LP implementations are successful, particularly when they favor a minority variety. Consequences were swift for African American English (AAE) during the Ebonics controversy, when a school district in Oakland, CA, attempted to recognize AAE as a language, prompting a nationwide debate and discussion on the validity of AAE, which ultimately resulted in the district bending to public pressure and revising the resolution (DeBose 89–90). There is also successful LP, such as in the various LPs for French in Quebec that have been implemented since the 1960s, created to protect local languages (Oakes 357). The LP in Quebec promoted French, the local majority language, and brought visibility to French Canadians, and continues to be a success in terms of preserving a localized language through policy actions (Oakes 360).

Clearly, LP can result in negative or positive consequences for members of communities, and tracking the effects of these LPs, can be a valuable way to determine a policy's ultimate success or failure. The linguistic landscape provides a measurable way to observe changes in policies at a variety of levels (e.g., government, regional, local, etc.).

Linguistic Landscape

As mentioned above, an essential component of LP is print media, sometimes referred to in research as print capitalism (Çolak 69), since its influence on the public is broad. One area of print media that often reflects LP is the LL. The LL, an area of sociolinguistics that looks at written language in society, is generally defined as the languages seen in public spaces, specifically on signs in a given locale (Landy and Bourhis 23). The research on LL is often considered to be a window into the status of certain groups within the community.

Early studies on the LL, such as Landry and Bourhis (23) and Gorter ("New Approach" 2–4), focused on defining the LL and determining the use of language in bilingual and multilingual settings, and firmly connecting the LL to the broader field of sociolinguistics. Since these early studies, new research identifying methodological issues, such as how to ensure the sampling of signs is representative of a certain area, and proposing solutions, like the incorporation of apparent time studies—which have historically been reserved for research on spoken language—to the LL, became the focus of LL studies (Backhaus 116–117; Gorter "Multilingual World" 3–4). Once the field was defined and the methods and tools established, the research on the LL expanded to include themes beyond multilingualism, such as the relationship between the LL and those in power, the suppression of minority languages in the LL, and, of course, the relationship between the LL and LP, the topic of the current study. Gorter suggested that "the results of LL research offer fresh perspectives on issues such as urban multilingualism, globalization, minority languages, and LP ("Multilingual World" 205)."

Numerous studies have looked at the presence of English in the LL. One notable study by Lu et al. focused on a Chinese LP that strongly recommended all official signs promote standard written Chinese (4). Despite there not being a specific policy aimed at English, Lu et al. found that 32.3% of both official and private signs in the village of Hongcun contained English (Lu et al. 4). This result highlighted the spread of English, particularly because Korean and Japanese tourists make up the majority of tourists in the region but have less representation in the LL than English (Lu et al. 5). Likewise, Paramarta et al. explored the LLs in Singaraja and Lovina in northern Bali and found that in Singaraja, bilingual and monolingual signs that included English occurred in 41.5% of their data, while in Lovina, monolingual and bilingual signs with English accounted for 64.8% of the data (969). The results demonstrated that English occurred at high rates, and the participants who were interviewed associated English with profit (Paramarta et al. 971). Conversely, the local language, Balinese, did not occur in the LL in either location, and interviewees did not find economic value in the use of Balinese in the LL (Paramarta et al. 970). We see similar results in Foster and Welsh, who explored the LL in Balikpapan on the island of Borneo. The local languages were absent in the LL, while English occurred in 79% of the data (453). The findings of these last two studies were particularly interesting considering that there is a national policy in Indonesia that names Bahasa Indonesian as the national language, which resulted in Indonesian supplanting the local languages in the LL, yet English still held a prominent place in the LL.

Although many LL studies on English have centered around international[3] and metropolitan areas, there are other factors that can play a role in the presence of English in the

[3] For the purpose of the present study, an international city or destination is a city that is considered a destination for visitors. These cities are often associated with higher numbers of visitors in comparison to surrounding areas. Much of the LL research focuses on cities with economies that rely on tourism, such as Singapore, Hong Kong, New York etc. There are organizations like the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and the World Economic Forum (WEF) that supply lists of international cities based on factors like tourism infrastructure, natural resources, or the contribution of tourism to GDP. Nevertheless, it is also important to use localized data, such as censuses, to determine whether a city or area may be considered international and what factors might contribute to this categorization. Regarding Costa Rica, factors such as natural beauty (Mylan sec. 4), beaches, shopping, hiking, volcanos, etc. (ICT "Actividades") play an important role in the number of non-resident visitors. According to ICT ("Pisos"), the Central Valley was

LL. For example, in his study of English in the LL in Bangkok, Huebner found that the signs in some of these cities were not always directed at English speakers or tourists (50). He found instances of English and Thai language mixing, such as Thai script with English syntax, thus suggesting that English in the LL is for both locals and tourists. Lavender, in turn, decided to focus on a non-international destination to see what role English had in the LL. She collected data in the small city of Azogues, Ecuador, which neighbors Cuenca, a city known for hosting more than 8000 English speakers every year (2). She found that despite not being a tourist destination, English was still widespread in Azogues' LL, representing 42.09% of data, including both monolingual and bilingual signs (21). She also concluded that strategies such as font size, color, or positioning on the sign were used in ways that highlighted English (21).

There are also studies, like Savski or Guo et al., that examined the intersection between the LL and LP. Savski, who focused on the LL in Hat Yai, a city in southern Thailand, highlighted the interconnected and sometimes complex relationship between policy and the LL (19). He pointed out that top-down signs—or those composed by governments or public institutions—often reflected LP; however, his data showed that the LL can also be a place for local actors to affirm their agency, whether that is to adhere to policy or to resist it (18). For example, many local Chinese actors did not use Chinese in the LL since Thai was the language the university mandated in the LL, but some used Chinese typology or colors to forecast a Chinese identity (Savski 15). Guao et al. show the resistance to LP at the local level in the Hong Kong LL, where local actors used language policing tactics to deter local business owners from using simplified Chinese, despite the LP in mainland China requiring the use of simplified Chinese. Results underlined that resistance could bring about intense identity performances and language policing at a very local level (5–6). While not all LP allows for individuals to have agency in the LL, this is the case in Costa Rica, where there is a national policy on the use of English in K-12 education, but the LP is directed at educational institutions, thus its relation and control over the LL is minimal.

The studies above demonstrate how LP influences the LL, not just in the presence or absence of languages in public spaces but also in the attitudes of local community members. In different parts of the world, the relationship between official policies and the LL can be filtered through both top-down decisions and the agency of local actors, which can then shape the visibility and status of certain languages. Additionally, the widespread presence of English in the LL, even in places without policies to support it, accentuates the influence of English globally. In Costa Rica, where national policy focuses on teaching English in schools, it is worth exploring how that educational emphasis plays out in public spaces and what it might reveal about language and identity.

Costa Rica

The present study explores the LL in Costa Rica, a country that receives more than 2.6 million tourists annually, of which 1.7 million are from the United States and Canada (ICT "Anuario Turismo"). Costa Rica is also a destination for immigrants due to its economic stability, with around 9% of the population being foreign-born (INEC), one of the highest percentages in Latin America, according to Segura (1). Of the foreign-born, Nicaraguans and Colombians represent about 79%, while North Americans represent about 4% (INEC).

One factor that was taken into consideration when choosing Costa Rica was the presence of lifestyle migrants in the area. Lifestyle migration is a term that broadly refers to certain forms

consistently the region with the most overnight non-resident visitors while the General Directorate of Migration and Foreigners (DGME) identified the Central Valley as the region with the highest population of U.S. born residents (22).

of migration, namely those associated with affluence and higher socioeconomic status (Benson and O'Reilly 609). Although the stereotypical image of an immigrant is that they are poor and unemployed, this is not the case with English-speaking immigrants in Costa Rica, who mostly come from the U.S. or Canada and arrive with resources and economic power, according to Spencer (60). It is difficult to have definitive numbers on how many lifestyle migrants live in Costa Rica, given their movement between their countries of origin and Costa Rica, and the lack of data collected from the Costa Rican and United States governments. There is an estimate that 50% of migrants who come from rich countries are from the United States, which suggests that English is a common language spoken among migrants from wealthier countries (DGME). Lifestyle migrants reside in various regions throughout the country, but according to Puga, many live in cities like Alajuela, Heredia, Cartago, and Escazú, all part of the greater San Jose Metropolitan Area (264). The fact that Costa Rica is a destination for lifestyle migrants and is a top tourist destination for Canadians and people from the United States makes Costa Rica a unique location to study the spread of English in the LL. It was also important to consider any English language policies that are in place in Costa Rica.

Language Policy in Costa Rica

While Costa Rica does not have explicit policies on the use of English in the public sphere, policies have been implemented regarding English in the education system. To start, English has been mandatory in primary schools since 1944, and the commitment to English in primary schools was renewed and expanded to secondary schools in 1997 (Arroyo 14). In 2008, English was declared a national priority in Costa Rica, which effectively established a nationwide EFL training project (Cubillo 31). In 2018, the Alliance for Bilingualism was introduced as a national strategy and included several initiatives that would increase the teaching of English throughout the country. Some of the initiatives included increasing the proficiency requirement for graduating high schoolers, which went into effect in 2019 (Garita et al. 121), incorporating English into preschools, a process that began in 2022 (MEP "Citizenship"), and adopting an English language certification test for baccalaureate students (MEP "Alianza"), such as the Pearson English International Certificate (PEIC) implemented at the University of Costa Rica in 2021. Although not all of the proposed initiatives have been implemented, the intention of the government is clear. Given this commitment to English, it would not be surprising to see English in the Costa Rican LL.

Linguistic Landscape in Costa Rica

Based on the efforts of the Costa Rican government and various other organizations[4] to create LP that frames English as an important component of K-12 education, it would be reasonable to assume that English is present, if not dominant, in the Costa Rican LL. Two recent studies have explored the LL in Costa Rica. Buckingham investigated the LL in three provinces in the Central Valley, namely Alajuela, San Jose, and Heredia, where, as mentioned before, there are high numbers of foreign-born residents and lifestyle migrants (2). She concluded that English is the most prominent non-official language (with Spanish being the only official language in Costa Rica) in the LL in all three provinces, appearing in over 90% of signs that included a non-

[4] For the creation of the declarations outlined in MEP, the following institutions, which include both governmental and non-profit organizations were involved: Costa Rican Investment Promotion Agency (CINDE), Ministry of Science, Innovation, Technology, and Telecommunications (MICITT), National Learning Institute (INA), Ministry of Public Education (MEP), Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MTSS).

official language ("Migration Diversity" 13). She also found that English was more dominant in areas associated with groups of high socioeconomic status, appearing in about 50% of signs in those areas ("Migration Diversity" 13). Buckingham also explored the LL of six towns/cities in the Limón province on the Caribbean side of the country, where there are tourist areas within the province, as well as lifestyle migrants, although to a lesser degree than in the Central Valley. She found that, as expected, English was prominent in LL of tourist areas; however, in non-tourist areas, most of the landscape was monolingual Spanish ("Race, Space" 7). Both studies clearly demonstrated that English maintains a notable standing in the LL in tourist areas of Costa Rica. The present study will address whether English is also present in the LL of areas that are not tourist destinations.

METHODOLOGY

Selection of location for fieldwork

The Central Valley of Costa Rica, where San Jose is located, is a highly visited area for tourists and a region where many lifestyle migrants settle (Buckingham, "Race, Space" 759). The Moravia canton is one of 20 cantons in the San Jose Province. According to INEC, 8.6% of the canton's population is foreign-born. More broadly, the San Jose province, in which Moravia is located, is home to 38% of the foreign-born residents in Costa Rica, with the majority of these living in cantons other than Moravia (INEC). Although the census data do not mention the specific countries of origin of immigrants in Moravia, it can be assumed that the data are similar to national data, where about 4% of foreign-born immigrants are from English-speaking countries (INEC), where some of these likely constitute lifestyle migrants. Evidence for this claim is strengthened through a comparison of the socioeconomic profiles of cantons identified as destinations for lifestyle migrants, including Alajuela, Heredia, and Escazú. These cantons, as well as Moravia, each report that more than 30% of households are classified as middle class (MIVAH 40). In the case of Moravia, fewer than 45% of households fall into the lower-class category, while roughly 14% belong to the upper class (MIVAH 40). These patterns are similar to those found in established lifestyle migrant communities in Escazú and Heredia, suggesting that Moravia could be seen as attractive to lifestyle migrants because of its demographic makeup. Moravia is also a key canton because of its proximity to various international cities such as San Jose, Escazú, Heredia, Grecia, and Atenas. The expectation is that this canton and others like it are more likely to include English in the LL, given the proximity to the aforementioned cities and the similar demographics.

Moravia is considered a middle-class canton and thus has a more educated population, with 61% of the canton having finished secondary school in comparison to 39% nationally, thus making it likely that the people of this canton have more exposure to English through schooling than in other cantons (INEC). This could have an influence on the presence of English in the LL, whether that be more targeted media in English from the government or more English at the local level because of higher levels of English proficiency. In the present study, we expect more top-down examples of English in the LL, given the national education policy on English. Conversely, we may see more variation in bottom-up signs—those authored or composed by local community members—since some may reject the use of English in the LL, while others may embrace it. This might be represented through the use of other non-official languages or a clear rejection of English in the LL. For example, we may see examples of Japanese in the LL, given the presence of the Japanese International School in the canton.

Along with the closeness of the Moravia canton to international areas, it was also hypothesized that the lifestyle migrants were more likely to shop and visit commercial centers that aligned with their socioeconomic status, thus making them potential clients for local business owners in middle- and upper-class neighborhoods, like Moravia. Recall that Buckingham ("Race, Space" 770) found more evidence of English in the LL in areas of high-economic status, but the present study seeks to answer the question of whether a similar pattern will be found in middle-class neighborhoods, which is why the central square of San Vicente was chosen as the site for data collection.

Data Collection

The data in the present paper comprised photographic documentation of a central square in the primary city, San Vicente, of one of Moravia's three districts. The main plaza is a primary commercial center of the canton and, therefore, a key location for data collection. The plaza consisted of locally owned businesses that cater to the middle class, such as used clothing stores, a law office, fast food restaurants, a parish hall, discount stores, etc. This is in contrast to the nearby mall, the Lincoln Plaza, that seems to cater more to the upper classes of the canton with upscale stores such as American Eagle, Diane & Geordi, or international restaurants such as Johny Rockets or fancy ice cream shops like Da Noi. The photographs included a myriad of signs in the LL. For the present paper, a sign was defined as any single item in the designated public space that included text. This ranged from writing on an electrical outlet or a sign on a building to fliers on a telephone pole. Data collection was undertaken in June 2023 over the course of a month. Every sign spanning the two blocks surrounding the central plaza was recorded with an iPhone camera and subsequently analyzed, resulting in 130 signs.

Each sign was then classified according to (a) the presence of a (non) official language (e.g., monolingual English, monolingual Spanish, bilingual); (b) the actor (i.e., private, public, corporate); and (c) the sector in which the (non)official language was present (e.g., clothing, entertainment, restaurant, etc.).

RESULTS

A total of 130 signs were identified, eight of which were excluded for various reasons. Duplicate signs were found in several locations, but only one of those signs was ultimately counted. There were also two illegible signs where the camera was out of focus. Consequently, neither of these two examples was analyzed. There were also two examples of graffiti in the plaza that were deemed illegible and thus not analyzed. Finally, any text found on a vehicle or a person's clothing in the plaza was not considered part of the LL and, therefore, not part of the data collection.

The extent of linguistic diversity in the LL was determined through the presence of non-official languages in the LL. Monolingual Spanish signs were dominant in the LL, representing 76% of the data (n=93), while monolingual English signs were only found in 6% (n=7) (see table 1). Bilingual English and Spanish signs represented 16% (n=19), whereas bilingual signs in Spanish and another non-official language, namely French and Italian, represented 2% of the data.[5] Overall, of the signs that contained a non-official language (n=29), 90% of them included English. This is similar to what Buckingham found in Alajuela, Escazú, and Heredia, where the presence of English in signs with a non-official language reached or exceeded 90% ("Migration

[5] It was expected that there would be signs in Japanese, given that the San Vicente district is home to a Japanese language school, but that was not the case.

Diversity" 765). Similarly, Buckingham's research in Limón also found English to be present in more than 90% of the signs involving non-official languages, with the exception of two cities: Bribi (an Indigenous community), where English occurred in 50% of signs, and Guápiles, where it occurred in 89% of the signs ("Race, Space" 13).

Languages	Number of Signs
Spanish	93
Bilingual Spanish/English	19
Bilingual Spanish/other	3
English	7
Total signs	122

Table 1. Languages found in LL of Moravia.

Signs were subsequently analyzed according to the entity or actor that created them. Using Rodríguez, signs were divided into three categories (see table 2): (1) private texts or texts/signs that were created by individuals or local businesses (see fig. 1); (2) public texts, which included any signs from public institutions, government entities, or public services (see fig. 2); and (3) corporate texts (see fig. 3) at both the national and international levels (3).

	English	Bilingual Spanish/English	Bilingual Spanish/other	Spanish
Private	0	8	3	48
Public	2	0	0	18
Corporate	5	11	0	27
Total	7	19	3	93

Table 2. Types of signs and the corresponding language for each sign.

Rodríguez established that private signs often reflect the language of the community, given that the signs' actors are community members (3). Of the data, 48% were private texts (n=55), but within these, only 13.5% (n=8) of the signs have English on them, thus suggesting that English is not common in the community.

Figure 1. Example of private text.

Figure 3. Example of public text.

Figure 2. Example of corporate text.

Public signs can also provide a window into the community, according to Rodríguez (3), who stated that non-official languages in the LL indicate ethnolinguistic vitality, which can be defined as "that which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in intergroup situations" (Giles et al. 308). In the data, however, English occurs in two public signs, comprising 11% of all public signs. This implies that English (and its speakers) does not carry the social power or di stinctive recognition we would expect from a group with collective organizing and community presence.

The presence of English in corporate signs, as opposed to public and private, is more an indication of some economic benefit rather than a connection to the local community (Rodríguez 3). The data shows that English occurs in 16 corporate signs, representing 37% of all corporate signs, the highest occurrence of all three sign types. This is an interesting result because it suggests that English is most associated with the LL in Moravia because of its economic benefit rather than local associations. Perhaps the sector to which these corporate signs belong can further reveal where English has the most presence.

The sectors or industries to which a sign belongs can also highlight the usefulness of the language. For example, Buckingham ("Race Space" 16–17) found that non-official languages in Puerto Viejo occurred most on signs of restaurants, hotels, or at tourist attractions, thus concluding that a primary reason for the use of non-official languages in the LL is to inform tourists of activities and services available to them. In the current data, the majority of the signs that contained English were associated with the food industry (34%), banking (19%), and clothing (19%) (see table 3). This may imply that English-speaking patrons represent some of the clientele, mainly because restaurants and banks are businesses often frequented by both tourists and local residents. However, looking more closely at the signs, that does not appear to be true. For example, the words *slice* (see fig. 4) and *express* (see fig. 5) do not appear to be aimed at English-

speaking clients since they appear in signs that are primarily in Spanish. This seems to be the case in the majority of the bilingual signs, where 100% (n=19) of the signs contain majority Spanish and 95% of the signs (n=18) have less than three English words present. The data suggest that these words may be anglicisms regularly used in Costa Rica or that these signs are aimed at local, bilingual speakers, although more research would be needed to verify that. While there is no data on the use of anglicisms in Costa Rica, there is research to suggest that anglicisms are common in Costa Rica advertisements (Smith 69).

Sector	Signs with English	Percentage of total English signs
Health and personal care	2	7.7
Entertainment	3	11.5
Clothing and shoes	5	19.2
Restaurant or Food	9	34.6
Money (banks, ATMs etc.)	5	19.2
Utilities	2	7.7
Total	26	100

Table 3. English presence in signs with regard to commercial sector.

Figure 4. Sign with English word *slice*.

Figure 5. Sign with English word *express*.

These results demonstrate that English is, in fact, present in the Moravia LL in a variety of ways and warrant further exploration and interpretation. The following section discusses the implications, limitations, and relevance of these data in detail.

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

Building on the findings presented, the Moravia canton proved to be a unique location for examining the presence of English in the LL. Recall that English occurred in 90% of all signs containing a non-official language (see table 1), thus suggesting that English speakers may frequent the plaza in San Vicente and are therefore targeted in the LL. However, as Huebner pointed out, it is also possible that not all bilingual signs are directed at English speakers (50). For example, of the 19 bilingual Spanish/English signs, 95% of the signs included between one and three words in English (see fig. 6), and the words were either separate from the main text or they followed Spanish syntax (see fig. 7), which could imply that none of these were directed at monolingual English speakers.

Figure 6. Spanish sign with three English words.

Figure 7. Sign with English but Spanish syntax.

This is a somewhat expected result considering that the Moravia canton primarily consists of middle-class native Costa Ricans. At the same time, taking into consideration the education policy in Costa Rica and the increasing presence of English at all levels of education, the limited use of English and English syntax in the LL is suprising. With only seven monolingual English signs (see table 1), the efforts of the government to make English a priority does not appear to have had much of an effect on the LL outside primary tourist regions in the Central Valley. Furthermore, the absence of bilingual signs with more than three English words also indicates that tourists and lifestyle migrants are not frequent patrons of the plaza in Moravia.

This dearth of interaction between lifestyle migrants and tourists and local middle-class Costa Ricans highlights a lack of integration between lifestyle migrants and native Costa Ricans. In a study on the effects of the mobility of lifestyle migrants, Van Noorloos concluded that lifestyle migrants are often viewed as tourists and tend to be less involved locally because of their transnational status and consistent movement between country of origin and Costa Rica (581). This could explain why a middle-class Costa Rican canton has minimal English in the LL, since lifestyle residents may not be participating in local spaces and Costa Ricans do not view them as part of the community. Clearly, these results point to English not having a dominant role in the LL, but there are other factors that speak to the status of English in the LL, one being the positioning and font size of English on the signs.

When considering the font size and positioning of English in each of these signs, seven signs (37%) had English prominently placed on top and/or in larger font (see fig. 8). In the

remainder of the examples (n=12), English was essentially indistinguishable from Spanish (see fig. 7). While these results further support that Spanish is the community's dominant language, English still appears to hold some meaning, given that it is prominently displayed in 37% of the signs with non-official languages. In his study on the occurrence of English in German mediascape, Androutsopoulos concluded that the occurrence of English "on top" in the mediascape indexed international lifestyles or cultures and often occurred in headlines and formulaic phrases as opposed to individually formulated language production (26). If this is the case, then the presence of English in the Moravia LL could be an example of common formulaic language used to index a specific identity. For example, in a study that looks at the use of anglicims in advertising, Smith found that English was used to create several effects including "to fulfill a need or to reinforce one, to arouse identification or to create a bond, to appeal to popularity, exoticism, or social prestige, or to refer to an increase in the size or flavor of a food product." It is likely that English could have similar effects in the Moravia LL but this identity would need to be uncovered in future research.

Figure 8. English word is prominent in sign.

The other possibility is that the signs containing English may be examples of anglicisms commonly used throughout Costa Rica. Smith examined the use of English in Costa Rican media and found that English words and phrases are commonly used in advertising and often position English as prestigious (58). Gerding et al. also found that anglicisms are common in their study on the occurrence of anglicisms in the press in Chile, even in contexts when there are no lexical gaps (51). Building on the findings of these studies, future research might focus on conducting a quantitative analysis of English usage in Costa Rican written media to identify frequently used English terms. Such a study could offer valuable insights into the motivations behind incorporating English into the local linguistic landscape.

Moravia exhibited a clear presence of English in the LL, particularly in relation to corporate texts or specific industries, such as those associated with food, banking, and clothing industries (see table 3). This could be related to the association between English and prestige that Smith identifies (58). He suggested that "English words mixed with Spanish […] create an exotic effect and thus sell more than competing brands" (Smith 58). Similarly, in a study on the use of Spanish in San Antonio, Texas. Hult concluded that Spanish was used in the LL to symbolize and commodify Mexican identity rather than as a function of the linguistic needs of the community (515). This could suggest that English has a similar function in the Moravia LL; the use of English in signage is more for marketing and serves the purpose of selling more products rather than appealing to an English speaking clientele.

Recall that Buckingham found that English was more prominent in areas with high socioeconomic status, concluding that around 50% of the signs in these areas were in monolingual English ("Migration Central Valley" 770). This was not the case in the current data, in which

English occurred in 22% of the data, with only 6% being monolingual (see table 1). Despite its clear presence in the LL, English still seems to be more common in specific areas in the country, namely those associated with tourism and more privileged groups.

The findings also suggest that proximity to an international zone does not mean that English has necessarily spread to the area. This result is surprising, considering that Lavender looked at a similar location in Ecuador and found that English was widespread (19–20). The lack of English in the LL is further evidenced by the dearth of private and public signs that utilize English, ultimately pointing to both low ethnolinguistic vitality and utility of English in Moravia (see table 2). Furthermore, the presence of the various LPs on English did not seem to affect the LL, evidenced by the lack of English signs in both public and private signs, which implies that Costa Rica LP on English is distinctly confined to educational domains.

This is not to say that English does not play any role in the LL in Moravia; it does, however, appear that English is more likely present due to other factors, such as economic benefits or the use of anglicisms as an advertising strategy. Thus, while English maintains a notable, albeit limited, presence in Moravia's linguistic landscape, its role appears to be shaped by economic and cultural factors rather than widespread linguistic integration or language policy, reflecting its nuanced and context-specific role within the community.

This study highlights just how complex and unpredictable the relationship between English and local language environments can be, as seen through Moravia's LL. The data show that English appears in signs and public texts, even when it doesn't seem aimed at English speakers, which challenges some common assumptions about why it's there. Future studies could look more closely at which anglicisms Costa Ricans tend to use, so as to better ascertain whether the English visible in the LL is simply part of Costa Rican Spanish or mostly meant for tourists and lifestyle migrants. Either way, the use of English in the LL suggests it is one of several ways the language continues to spread throughout Costa Rica society. The findings also demonstrate that language policy by itself does not always lead to noticeable change in the LL, and making English a national priority does not automatically mean it will show up more in public spaces. It will be important for future research to see how these policies actually play out in other local communities.

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