

## The Role of Arabic Language Empowerment in Achieving Sustainable Tourism: A Field Study in Phuket, Southern Thailand

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**ABSTRACT** - This study aims to explore the strategic and pivotal role of the Arabic language as a tool for empowering and developing sustainable tourism in Southern Thailand, using Phuket Island as a practical model. The significance of the research stems from the steady growth in tourist arrivals from Arab countries and the urgent need to align tourism services with their cultural and linguistic requirements to ensure the sector's sustainability and global competitiveness. The research problem focuses on identifying the communication gap resulting from the limited use of Arabic in Phuket's tourism facilities, the shortage of linguistically qualified personnel, and the lack of translated promotional and instructional materials, which negatively impacts the quality of the tourism experience and visitor satisfaction. The study adopted a descriptive-analytical approach (Mixed Methods), gathering primary data through two survey instruments: the first targeted a sample of Arab tourists to evaluate their field experiences, while the second targeted tourism sector employees in Phuket to monitor operational and administrative challenges. Statistical analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between the availability of Arabic linguistic facilities and the enhancement of "Destination Loyalty." Furthermore, the results indicated that integrating the Arabic language contributes to achieving the three dimensions of sustainability: Economic (by increasing tourism expenditure), Social (by fostering cross-cultural understanding), and Institutional (by improving service efficiency). The study concludes with a set of strategic recommendations, most notably: the necessity of institutionalizing linguistic training for employees, activating the role of Arabic studies graduates in Thailand within the tourism sector, and Arabizing digital and instructional content according to international quality standards. Ultimately, this research positions linguistic empowerment as a cornerstone for Phuket's "Vision 2027," suggesting that the Arabic language is not merely a communication medium, but a strategic asset that transforms the destination into a culturally inclusive hub. These findings provide a scalable roadmap for other Southeast Asian destinations seeking to optimize their engagement with the high-yield Arab tourism market.

## INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry serves as the primary engine of the economy in the Kingdom of Thailand, representing a fundamental cornerstone that transcends mere recreational activity to become a pillar of comprehensive national development. In the south, Phuket Island emerges as a unique model for global destinations, successfully blending natural charm with advanced infrastructure, positioning itself as a world-class destination at the top of international tourism rankings (Sarwono & Vionita, 2023). Given contemporary geopolitical and economic shifts, alongside the growing purchasing power in the Middle East, the Arab tourist has become a critical figure in Thailand's tourism growth equation, characterized by high family expenditure and a tendency toward longer stays compared to other nationalities (Veilleux & Sarrasin, 2025).

However, this increasing influx faces a structural challenge: "linguistic and cultural communication". The Arabic language is not merely a tool for conveying information; rather, it is a vessel for identity and a bridge for building trust between the guest and the host. Within the global shift toward "Sustainable Tourism", experts emphasize that true sustainability is incomplete without achieving "socio-cultural sustainability", which necessitates the local community's ability to assimilate the culture of others and provide services in an easily understood language (Rattanapipat et al., 2021). The absence of the Arabic language within Phuket's tourism landscape generates what is known in tourism literature as "Language Shock", which may diminish the quality of the tourism experience and lead to a decline in repeat visitation (Santos & Mukminin, 2022).

Furthermore, the historical and geographical connection of Southern Thailand to Islamic culture, coupled with the presence of a significant Muslim community proficient in Arabic fundamentals, grants Phuket a competitive advantage unavailable to other Asian islands (Vithayaporn, 2025). Investing in this linguistic heritage and transforming it into "tourism capital" can contribute to creating new job opportunities and developing the skills of local youth, thereby achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) advocated by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2023).

## RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Southern Thailand serves as a historical crossroads between Asian and Islamic cultures, where maritime trade played a pivotal role in embedding the Arabic language within the region (Vithayaporn, 2025). As Phuket transformed into a global tourism hub, several key pillars emerged to form the background of this research:

### The Linguistic Gap in the Arab Market

Despite Arab tourists being categorized as the highest spenders and most frequent seekers of family tourism according to the Thai Ministry of Tourism reports (2024), the near-total reliance on English has created a "cultural disconnection" and a structural barrier that limits the quality of the tourism experience (Santos & Mukminin, 2022).

### Southern Thailand as a Human and Linguistic Reservoir

The Thai South is characterized by a vast human base of graduates proficient in Arabic. Integrating them into the tourism sector offers a dual solution: meeting the needs of Arab tourists while addressing graduate unemployment by activating an authentic "local resource" (Rattanapipat et al., 2021).

### Multilingualism as a Pillar of Sustainability (2020-2027)

Sustainable tourism in Phuket faces the challenge of "cultural centrality" around the English language. This research suggests that "multilingualism", particularly in Arabic, is the key to achieving socio-economic sustainability, allowing for the integration of Arab tourists into local activities and community-based tourism products (Veilleux & Sarrasin, 2025).

### Digital Transformation and the Arabic Language

Within the framework of Phuket's transition into a "Smart Destination", there is an urgent need to digitize information in Arabic. This ensures an efficient flow of information and reduces communicative waste, thereby enhancing the sustainable relationship between the tourist and service providers (Sarwono & Vionita, 2023).

## RESEARCH PROBLEM

The core of the problem lies in the paradox between Phuket's classification as a "Smart and Sustainable Destination" and the acute deficiency in linguistic empowerment directed toward the Arab market. This problem is branched into the following dimensions:

### 1. Linguistic and Visual Isolation

The scarcity of directional signage in Arabic limits the tourist's ability for independent exploration and diminishes the "visual persuasive power" of the destination (Santos & Mukminin, 2022).

## 2. Disruption of Cultural Mediation

A significant gap exists between educational outcomes (Arabic language graduates) and the labor market. This leads to the provision of stereotyped services that lack the spirit of "cultural mediation" essential for the sustainability of the Arab market (Sarwono & Vionita, 2023).

## 3. Threat to Cultural Sustainability

The absence of language leads to misunderstandings regarding subtle details (such as Halal standards and family traditions), which may weaken the mental image of Phuket as an "Arab-friendly" destination (Al-Ansi & Han, 2021).

## 4. Arabic Digital Poverty

Official tourism platforms lack reliable Arabic content, forcing tourists to rely on unofficial sources that may provide inaccurate information, thereby damaging the destination's reputation (UNWTO, 2023).

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the problem, this study seeks to answer the following primary questions:

1. What is the current state of Arabic linguistic readiness in Phuket's tourism facilities, and what are the most prominent communication challenges faced by employees when interacting with Arab tourists? (Employee perspective).
2. To what extent does the availability of services and guidance in Arabic affect the experience, satisfaction, and revisit intention of Arab tourists? (Tourist perspective).
3. How can investing in the Arabic language contribute to achieving the dimensions of sustainable tourism (economic and social) in Southern Thailand? (Theoretical and sustainability linkage).

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. Diagnosing the current state of Arabic linguistic services in Phuket and identifying the obstacles that prevent effective communication between employees and tourists.
2. Measuring the impact of linguistic empowerment on the quality of the tourism experience and the level of destination loyalty among Arab tourists.
3. Formulating a strategic vision for the role of the Arabic language as a driver for sustainable tourism in Southern Thailand, in alignment with the Kingdom's tourism vision.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study derives exceptional importance from its alignment between the spatial and linguistic contexts, manifested through the following pillars:

### 1. Strategic and Economic Significance

The study aligns with "Thailand Vision 2027" by empowering the Arabic language as a "soft power" tool to enhance Phuket's competitiveness in family and medical tourism sectors. This ensures extending the stay of Arab tourists and boosting GDP growth (Al-Ansi & Han, 2021).

### 2. Scientific and Knowledge Significance

This research fills a gap in the "Tourism Linguistics" library and establishes a theoretical model linking Arabic language proficiency with tourism consumer behavior (Santos & Mukminin, 2022).

#### 2.1. Social and Developmental Significance

The research highlights "human capital" in Southern Thailand by advocating for the integration of Arabic-speaking graduates as "cultural mediators", Sustainable Development Goals (UNWTO, 2023).

## 2.2 Professional Significance for Decision-Makers

The study provides field data that assists facility managers and the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) in understanding the psychology of Arab tourists and the necessity of including "multilingualism" within facility quality standards (Sarwono & Vionita, 2023).

## 2.3 Cultural and Civilizational Significance

The research promotes Arabic as a global economic language and embodies mutual appreciation between the local community and Arab tourists, thereby enhancing the destination's mental image (Vithayaporn, 2025).

### Scope of the Study (Limitations)

This study is defined by its thematic, spatial, temporal, and human scope according to the following determinants:

1. **Thematic Scope:** The study is limited to investigating the contribution of the Arabic language to sustainable tourism development, focusing on its role in enhancing communication and service quality for Arab tourists.
2. **Spatial Scope:** This field study was conducted on Phuket Island as a leading model for tourism destinations in Southern Thailand.
3. **Emporal Scope:** The empirical phase and data collection through questionnaires were carried out during the fourth quarter of 2025.
4. **Human Scope:** The study targeted a sample of Arab tourists visiting the island, in addition to a sample of employees and workers in Phuket's tourism establishments across various administrative levels.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Language and Tourism Experience

Language plays a fundamental role in shaping the overall tourism experience, as it serves not only as a communication tool but also as a medium for cultural understanding and emotional connection. Effective linguistic interaction enhances tourists' sense of comfort, trust, and satisfaction, which are critical determinants of destination loyalty. Scholars such as Poria (2022) and Richards (2023) emphasize that the ability of a destination to communicate in the tourist's native language significantly contributes to what is termed "experiential quality" in tourism. Hall (2024) further argues that sustainability in tourism extends beyond environmental concerns to include the quality of interaction between tourists and host communities, particularly through effective communication strategies. In the same vein, Sharpley (2025) emphasizes that tourism development requires a balance between economic growth and cultural integration, where language plays a key role in bridging cultural gaps.

### Linguistic Barriers in Southeast Asian Tourism

Despite the global growth of tourism in Southeast Asia, several studies highlight the persistent dominance of the English language in tourism services. Santos and Mukminin (2022) argue that this linguistic dependency creates structural limitations in addressing the needs of emerging tourist markets. While English functions as a global lingua franca, it does not sufficiently meet the expectations of culturally distinct and high-spending groups such as Arab tourists. However, these studies often remain descriptive and fail to propose practical or context-specific solutions. Moreover, Wang (2024) notes that digital transformation in tourism requires the adoption of multilingual platforms, and the lack of Arabic digital content may limit accessibility for Arab tourists. In the Thai context, Kadir (2022) points out that Islamic tourism presents significant opportunities; however, linguistic and cultural adaptation remains a major challenge.

### Arabic Language and Tourist Satisfaction

Recent research has begun to recognize the importance of culturally and linguistically tailored services, particularly in the context of halal and family tourism. Al-Ansi and Han (2021) demonstrate that culturally sensitive services significantly influence tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. Nevertheless, their work primarily focuses on halal attributes and does not adequately address the role of language as a core dimension of cultural comfort. Similarly, Al-Qahtani (2021) highlights the impact of language on

Arab tourist loyalty but lacks empirical evidence from Southeast Asian contexts. From a cross-cultural communication perspective, Li (2025) highlights that ineffective communication with linguistically diverse tourists can significantly reduce service quality and overall satisfaction.

### Research Gap and Contribution

A critical review of the existing literature reveals a notable gap in integrating language specifically Arabic as a strategic factor within sustainable tourism frameworks. Most previous studies treat language as a secondary or supportive element rather than a central driver of economic, social, and institutional sustainability.

Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by:

1. Positioning Arabic language empowerment as a strategic asset in tourism development.
2. Linking linguistic services with sustainable tourism dimensions.
3. Providing empirical evidence from Phuket as a case study of a high-potential destination for Arab tourism.

This approach advances the existing literature by moving beyond descriptive analysis toward a more critical and theory-driven understanding of language in tourism sustainability.

### Theoretical Framework

This research is based on a theoretical approach that integrates three core elements: (Language, Service Quality, and Sustainability), structured according to the following pillars:

1. Sustainable Tourism (A Qualitative Perspective): The Thai concept of sustainability has evolved beyond environmental conservation to encompass "Socio-Economic Sustainability". The Arab tourist emerges as a prime model for the "Qualitative Tourism" targeted by Vision 2025. Linguistic empowerment ensures longer stays and deeper cultural interaction, thereby maximizing economic returns (Veilleux & Sarrasin, 2025; Rattanapipat et al., 2021).
2. Tourist Psychology and Spatial Familiarity: Language is considered the primary source of psychological security for tourists, as texts written in one's mother tongue create "Spatial Familiarity" (Place Attachment) that elevates trust in service providers. The absence of this "Persuasive Power" in Phuket confines Arab tourists to a narrow range of international services, depriving them of the authentic community-based tourism experience (Santos & Mukminin, 2022; Al-Ansi & Han, 2021).
3. Language as a Guarantee in "Halal Tourism": The use of Arabic in Phuket's tourism facilities is inherently linked to providing a "Cultural Quality Certificate" that reassures tourists regarding the compliance of services with their religious specificities. This linguistic empowerment acts as the fundamental driver for attracting Arab families and ensuring their destination loyalty (Vithayaporn, 2025; Yousaf & Xiucheng, 2018).
4. Professional Communication and Expectation Management: The "Language Barrier" diminishes the quality of the tourism experience by disrupting the guide's role as a "Cultural Mediator". Consequently, there is an urgent need to activate "Language for Specific Purposes" (LSP) to empower human resources to manage the expectations of Arab tourists effectively (Sarwono & Vionita, 2023; Ministry of Tourism, 2025).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative research designs to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the role of Arabic language empowerment in sustainable tourism development in Phuket, Southern Thailand. The use of methodological triangulation enhances the validity and reliability of the findings by combining numerical data with in-depth contextual insights.

### Research Design

The study follows a descriptive-analytical design. Quantitatively, it examines patterns and relationships between variables such as language availability and tourist satisfaction. Qualitatively, it explores deeper communicative challenges and perceptions through field interviews.

## Study Setting

The research was conducted on Phuket Island, one of Thailand's leading international tourism destinations, known for its diverse tourist demographics, including a growing number of Arab visitors.

## Population and Target Groups

The study targeted two main groups:

1. Arab tourists visiting Phuket during the data collection period.
2. Employees working in tourism-related sectors (hotels, travel agencies, shopping centers, and service facilities).

## Sampling Procedure and Respondents

The study employed a purposive sampling technique to select participants who are directly relevant to the research objectives.

## Sample Size

The total number of respondents in this study was (N = 15), divided as follows:

1. Arab tourists: (n = 7).
2. Tourism employees: (n = 8).

Participants were selected based on their direct experience with tourism services in Phuket.

## Sampling Technique

A purposive (judgmental) sampling method was used to ensure that respondents possess relevant knowledge and experience:

1. Arab tourists were selected from major tourist locations such as hotels, beaches, and shopping centers.
2. Employees were selected from various tourism establishments with direct interaction with international tourists.

## Inclusion Criteria

1. Tourists: Must be from Arab countries and have spent at least 2 days in Phuket.
2. Employees: Must have at least one year of experience in the tourism sector.

This sampling approach ensures the collection of rich and relevant data aligned with the research objectives.

## Data Collection Methods

Data were collected using two primary instruments:

1. Structured questionnaires for quantitative data.
2. Semi-structured interviews for qualitative insights.

## Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis

### Interview Process

Theoretical The interviews were guided by open-ended questions focusing on:

1. Language barriers in tourism services.
2. Communication experiences.
3. Cultural expectations and misunderstandings.

Each interview lasted approximately 20–30 minutes and was conducted in a flexible manner to allow participants to express their perspectives freely.

## Data Recording and Transcription

Interviews were recorded (with consent) and later transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy in analysis.

## Thematic Analysis

The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis following these steps:

1. Familiarization with the data through repeated reading.
2. Coding of key statements and recurring ideas.
3. Categorization into themes (e.g., language barriers, cultural gaps, service challenges).
4. Interpretation and linking with quantitative findings.

This process enabled the identification of underlying patterns and supported the triangulation of results.

## DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS software, employing descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and mean scores. Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, allowing the researcher to identify recurring patterns and key themes related to linguistic challenges and cultural communication.

The integration of both methods ensures a holistic interpretation of the research problem and strengthens the overall analytical framework of the study.

### Presentation and Analysis of Field Study Results

The study relied on the "Triangulation" methodology to extract its findings, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data to ensure the highest levels of validity and reliability (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

#### First: Results Related to Questionnaires (Quantitative Analysis)

1. Demographic and Professional Characteristics:

The results indicated that the employee sample possesses extensive field experience within Phuket's tourism sector. This professional depth enhances the credibility of their assessments regarding the linguistic challenges and operational requirements needed to interact with the Arab market effectively.

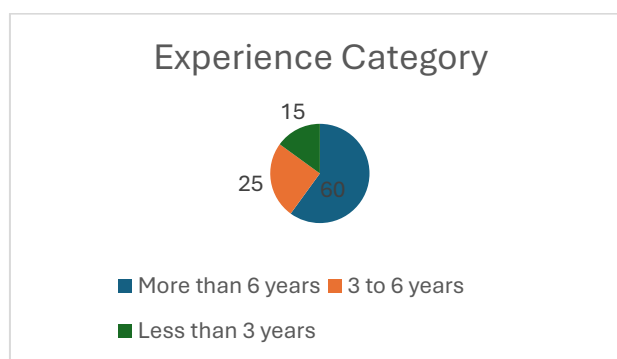


Figure 1. Distribution of Employees by Years of Experience

### Comparative Statistical Analysis

Figure 1. indicates that most participants (60%) possess professional experience exceeding six years within the heart of Phuket's tourism sector. From a socio-analytical perspective, this figure does not merely reflect "chronological accumulation"; rather, it represents what Al-Ansi & Han (2021) define as "Accumulated Tourism Awareness".

An employee who has spent more than six years in direct interaction with Arab and Muslim tourists possesses a superior ability to identify "Unmet Needs". While a novice employee might settle for providing routine service, the expert realizes that the "Service Gap" in Phuket lies not in hotel quality or beach aesthetics, but in the "Emotional Communication Deficit" resulting from the absence of the tourist's mother tongue.

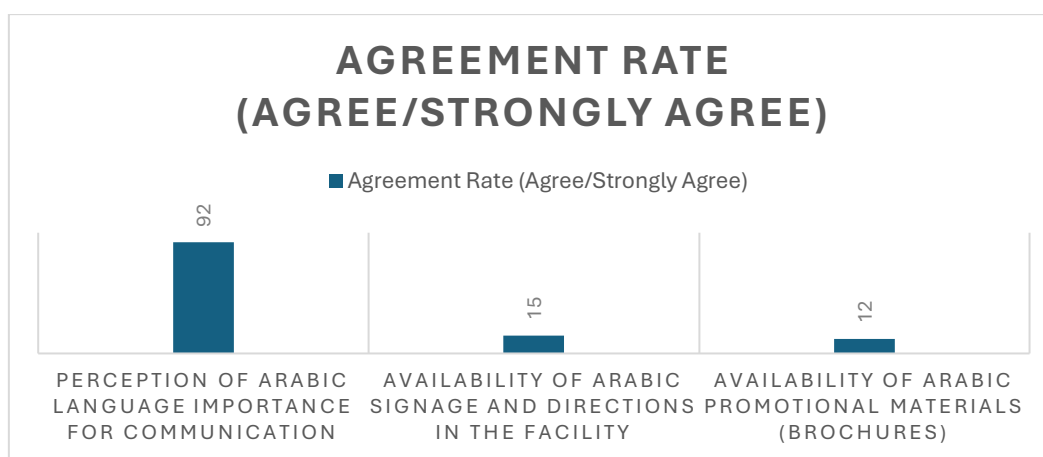
Furthermore, Sarwono & Vionita (2023) link length of experience with the ability to predict consumer behavior. Experienced employees in Phuket have observed over the years that Arab tourists tend toward "Long-term Family Tourism", a segment that requires a high level of linguistic communication to

ensure comfort and a sense of security. Therefore, the consensus among this large percentage of experts on the necessity of integrating the Arabic language is not merely a desire to facilitate work, but a "Strategic Foresight" of market needs.

This analysis leads to the conclusion that tourism sustainability in Phuket depends not only on natural resources but on "Expert Human Capital" that now clearly diagnoses "Linguistic Empowerment" as the key to bridging the gap between the destination and the Arab tourist's expectations. This diagnosis, emanating from the 60% category, grants the study's findings statistical credibility, transforming the research recommendations into a realistic "Roadmap" for decision-makers in Phuket, far removed from abstract theoretical assumptions.

### Second: The Reality of Linguistic Readiness and The Communication Gap

The results revealed a sharp contrast between "Awareness of Linguistic Necessity" and the "Field Reality".



**Figure 2.** Comparison between Awareness of Linguistic Necessity and the Availability of Instructional Media

### Analysis And Discussion

This shocking statistical gap where 92% of employees acknowledge the importance of the language while instructional media is only available at a rate of 15% confirms the findings of Santos & Mukminin (2022). They argue that tourism destinations in Southeast Asia still suffer under the weight of "Linguistic Dependency" on the English language, resulting in an inability to respond to the requirements of emerging markets with high purchasing power, such as the Arab market.

This deficiency in "Linguistic Infrastructure" within Phuket transcends being a mere communication barrier; it leads to what Vithayaporn (2025) describes as "Tourist Linguistic Alienation". When Arab tourists find themselves surrounded by directional signage they cannot comprehend, a sense of detachment from the destination is generated. This increases "Tourism Stress" and diminishes their ability to explore the destination in depth.

From a quality management perspective, this imbalance directly affects the "Service Quality Index". Buhalis (2024) asserts that the quality of the tourism experience fundamentally depends on the "Accessibility of Information". In the case of Phuket, the absence of Arabic signage translates into depriving Arab tourists of efficient service consumption, leading to the waste of economic opportunities that would have been realized through "Linguistic Empowerment".

Furthermore, this gap reflects a lack of "Tourism Linguistic Planning" in Phuket's local strategies. While the focus remains on environmental sustainability, "Communicative Sustainability" is being neglected. Closing this gap (which stands at 77%) does not require massive budgets as much as it requires administrative will to Arabize instructional and digital content. Such a step would immediately reflect on the Arab tourist's sense of belonging to the destination, transforming "Alienation" into "Cultural Inclusion" that bolsters Phuket's global reputation.

### Third: The Impact of the Arabic Language on Tourist Loyalty (Economic Sustainability)

The correlation between linguistic empowerment and the Arab tourist's intention to revisit Phuket Island was measured, as illustrated in the following figure:

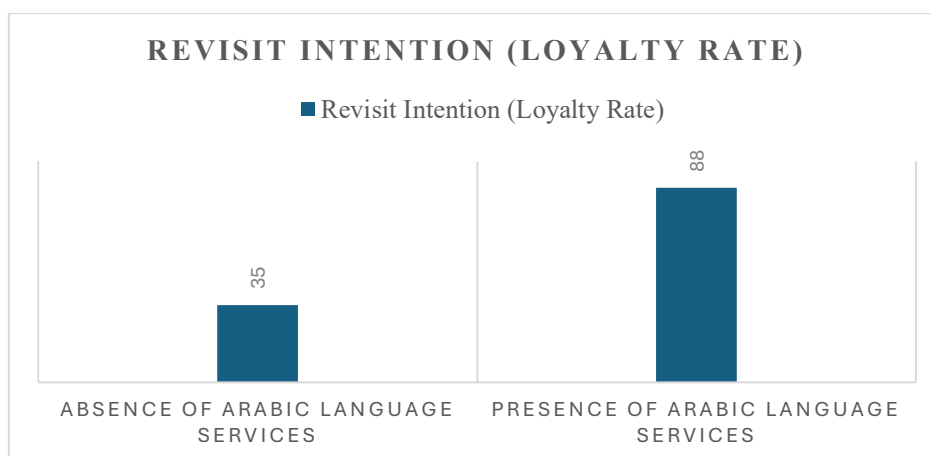


Figure 3. Impact of Language on Revisit Intention

### Analytical Commentary

Figure (3) provides conclusive numerical evidence of the direct and tangible economic impact of the Arabic language. The data reveals a qualitative leap in "Revisit Intention" and "Destination Loyalty", surging from 35% in the absence of linguistic services to 88% when they are provided.

### Analysis and Discussion

This strong positive correlation confirms that the Arabic language in Phuket is not merely a "communication tool", but rather a "Strategic Driver for Economic Sustainability". Sarwono & Vionita (2023) emphasize that Customer Retention is significantly more cost-effective than attempting to attract new tourists through expensive marketing campaigns. From this perspective, "Linguistic Empowerment" emerges as a tool to enhance marketing expenditure efficiency; an Arab tourist who finds services in their mother tongue automatically transforms into a "free ambassador" for the destination through "Word of Mouth" (WOM) marketing within family and social circles.

Furthermore, Veilleux & Sarrasin (2025) argue that the Arab tourist possesses a unique psychology centered on "Cultural Connection". When a tourist perceives that their native language is valued in hotels, markets, and directional signage, it fosters what is known as "Emotional Destination Attachment." This attachment explains the statistical jump to 88%, as Phuket transitions from being merely a "place to visit" into a "preferred destination" where the tourist feels a sense of familiarity and appreciation.

From the perspective of Phuket's financial sustainability, the Arab tourist is globally categorized among the "highest spenders" and those with the "longest stays", particularly in the family and medical tourism sectors. Based on the study's findings, any investment in the "Arabization" of tourism services will be met with a substantial Return on Investment (ROI). This is manifested in ensuring sustainable and stable cash flows from the Arab market, thereby reducing the risks of seasonal tourism fluctuations and achieving long-term financial balance for the tourism sector in Southern Thailand.

### Fourth: Linguistic Communication Challenges in the Field

This axis identifies the most prominent obstacles faced by employees when interacting with Arab tourists, as illustrated in the following figure:

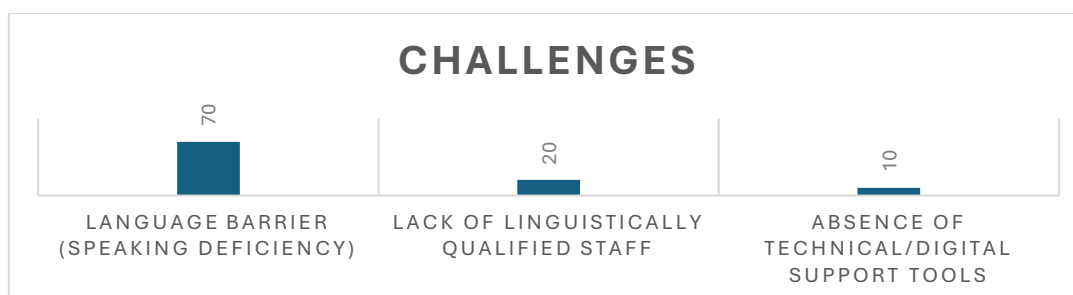


Figure 4. Communication Challenges in the Field

## Analytical Commentary

Figure (4) illustrates that the "Linguistic Barrier" represents the primary fundamental obstacle at 70%, hindering the delivery of distinguished tourism services. This figure does not merely represent a difficulty in mutual understanding; rather, it reflects a "Communicative Competence Crisis" that profoundly affects daily tourism operations.

## In-depth Field Analysis and Discussion

Personal field interviews conducted by the researcher with the workforce in Phuket revealed a reality characterized by "Communicative Improvisation". Employees find themselves excessively reliant on sign language or automated instant translation applications. While these methods may resolve transient issues, relying on them poses serious risks related to "Cultural Misinterpretation". Automated translation often fails to convey the cultural and social nuances that Arab tourists prioritize, potentially leading to misinformation or even "unintentional offenses" resulting from literal text translation.

Furthermore, Rattanapipat et al. (2021) argue that the persistence of this linguistic barrier leads to "Job Burnout" among employees. Workers feel incapable of performing their duties efficiently when interacting with Arab tourists, which diminishes their professional productivity. Consequently, there is an urgent need to transition from "temporary fixes" to "radical solutions" by recruiting graduates of Arabic language and Islamic studies, who are abundant in the southern provinces of Thailand.

These graduates do not merely represent "translators"; they are "Cultural Mediators" possessing both linguistic proficiency and an inherent awareness of Arab and Islamic values. Based on Giles' (2021) Communication Accommodation Theory, the presence of human capital fluent in Arabic contributes to building "Bridges of Trust" that machines cannot construct. Therefore, addressing this challenge by integrating local competencies into Phuket's tourism sector will work toward closing the linguistic gap on one hand, and achieving "Social Sustainability" on the other, by creating qualitative employment opportunities for the local community. This transforms the linguistic barrier from an "obstacle" into an "opportunity for national and economic integration".

## Methodological Triangulation and Discussion of Findings

By establishing a rigorous methodological link between quantitative questionnaire results and qualitative field interview testimonies, this study has achieved a holistic vision. It confirms that the Arabic language in Phuket is no longer a secondary "communication tool" but has become a "Strategic Economic and Cultural Value" that cannot be overlooked in the global tourism equation.

## Synthesized Analysis of Results

The process of "Methodological Triangulation" revealed an organic correlation between three primary dimensions of tourism sustainability:

1. The Socio-Cultural Dimension (Social Sustainability): The study proves that overcoming the "Linguistic Barrier" is the gateway to social sustainability. Through interviews, it became evident that investing in the skills of the local community—particularly Arabic studies graduates in Southern Thailand—will create a "Cultural Harmony" that mitigates identity-based friction. Integrating Arabic-speaking Thai citizens into the heart of the tourism process does not only provide jobs but transforms the local community from "spectators" into "Strategic Partners" in development. This aligns with UNWTO (2023) guidelines regarding the linguistic and cultural empowerment of local communities.

2. The Economic Dimension (Economic Sustainability): The correlation of data indicates that "Linguistic Empowerment" is the strongest guarantee for enhancing Arab tourist loyalty. The statistical leap in revisit intention (from 35% to 88%) suggests that the Arabic language is the "Soft Power" that converts a transient visit into a long-term tourism investment. This empowerment reduces the "Customer Acquisition Cost" (CAC) for new tourists and ensures sustainable financial flows from Middle Eastern markets, bolstering the resilience of Phuket's tourism sector against global economic crises (Buhalis, 2024).

3. The Strategic Dimension (Strategic Positioning): The discussion concludes that Phuket possesses a golden opportunity to transform into an "Arabic-Friendly Destination". Closing the linguistic gap (currently at 77%) will grant the island a Competitive Advantage over regional competitors. Sustainability here is not merely environmental conservation; it is the "Sustainability of Satisfaction" and "Sustainability of Communication" that make the Arab tourist feel at home.

## CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion to this empirical study, which explored the tourism landscape of Phuket, it can be asserted that the research has successfully unveiled the "neglected resource" in tourism development strategies: Arabic linguistic empowerment. The study's findings, through the synthesis of rigorous numerical data and live field testimonies, prove that the Arabic language is not merely a technical tool for information transfer, but a "cultural bridge" and an "economic driver" capable of reshaping the features of sustainable tourism in Southern Thailand.

The core conclusion of this study is that Phuket stands today before a historical opportunity to transition from a "traditional tourism destination" into a "Linguistic Tourist Hub". The observed gap between tourist aspirations (where 88% linked their loyalty to language) and the field reality (where 85% lack Arabic media) represents a fertile investment area for decision-makers. Closing this gap does not only serve the Arab tourist; it serves as the cornerstone of social sustainability by valuing the skills of the local Arabic-speaking community and integrating them into the national economic engine more effectively and professionally.

Furthermore, this study opens new horizons for reconsidering the concept of "Tourism Sustainability". It is no longer limited to preserving beaches and natural resources but has extended to encompass "Communicative Sustainability" and "Cultural Security". A tourist who feels that their language and values are respected is more inclined to preserve the destination's resources, more willing to return, and more capable of building a positive relationship with the local community.

Consequently, this research sounds an alarm regarding the necessity of moving from "linguistic improvisation" to "Sovereign Planning of Tourism Languages". Phuket, with its ambitious Vision 2027, can become a global model in embracing linguistic-cultural diversity, provided that it adopts the recommendations of this research as a strategic roadmap that marries technological modernity with linguistic authenticity.

### Strategic Recommendations

#### a. At the Governmental Level (Ministry of Tourism):

1. Adopting the "Arabic Linguistic Empowerment Manual" as part of the quality standards for tourism establishments in Phuket.
2. Mandating vital facilities (airports, hospitals, beaches) to provide directional signage in Arabic alongside Thai and English.

#### b. At the Human Resources Level (Social Sustainability):

1. Creating dedicated career paths for graduates of Arabic departments in Southern Thai universities to serve as "Cultural Mediators" in major hotels.
2. Organizing intensive training courses for current employees in "Tourism Arabic" in cooperation with specialized linguistic centers.

#### c. At the Private Sector Level (Hotels and Companies):

1. Arabizing digital content (websites and booking apps) and printed promotional materials.
2. Allocating an "Arabic Concierge" desk in hotels targeting the Gulf and Arab markets.

#### d. At the Future Research Level:

1. Geographic and Comparative Expansion: Conducting comparative longitudinal studies in other Thai destinations with different characteristics, such as Bangkok (as a hub for medical and commercial tourism) and Krabi (known for its calm family atmosphere), to monitor the variation in linguistic needs.
2. Integrating Emerging Technologies: Investigating the impact of Generative AI and neural translation systems in closing the immediate linguistic gap, and how Augmented Reality (AR) can virtually Arabize signage for Arab tourists.
3. Specialized Linguistic Studies: Conducting socio-linguistic research that analyzes "body language" and "cultural cues" alongside spoken language, and their impact on sustainable tourist satisfaction.

4. Supply and Demand Analysis: Analyzing the labor market in Southern Thailand to measure the readiness of educational institutions to provide the tourism sector with graduates who combine "tourism skills" with "Arabic linguistic competence".

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#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

#### AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIALS

Data available on request from the authors.

#### DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI

The authors declare that no generative AI was used in the writing of the manuscript.

#### ETHIC STATEMENTS

Not applicable.

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