This study discusses the presence of the Russian language (and Cyrillic alphabet) in street advertisements and other commercial texts advertising services and products in Tallinn. The linguistic landscape data on the situation around Estonian and Russian reveal that regardless of official language policies promoting Estonian as the sole national language, "multilingualism from below” in commercial discourse is wide-spread with the help of the creative forms constructed from the combination of Estonian and Russian languages or script-mixing from the Latin and Cyrillic alphabets. This situation is unique for a number of reasons. Most importantly, although native speakers of Russian represent 29.6% of the Estonian population (and slightly less than 50% of the population of Tallinn) according to the 2011 Population and Housing Census, current Estonian laws and policies do not facilitate its maintenance in Estonia. Language, citizenship and education laws regulate only the knowledge and use of Estonian. Article 1 of the Language Act stipulates that the only official language in Estonia is Estonian; article 2 classifies all other languages as foreign. Place Names Act deals with place names, decreeing them to be in Estonian and in the Estonian-Roman alphabet. The Language Inspectorate has to ensure that the legal acts regulating language use are actually observed. In case of its non-observance fines can be issued. However, Russian (and its orthographical representation) is sometimes used as consumers’ attention-getter and the device that is understood by the advertisement’s target audience. This is an explicit product of social circumstances: being a popular destination for foreign tourists, in 2012 Tallinn attracted almost four times more tourists from the Russian Federation than in 2006. The paper takes a closer look at the social meanings expressed in LL discourse by analysing Russian-language elements in commercial texts in the light of their interactional and wider social contexts.

Keywords: linguistic landscapes, Russian, language policy.