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A study of language use on public signage, billboards and commercial advertisements in Pakistan

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Abstract

This paper discusses the multi-plicity of language utilized on signs in the public domain, on billboards, and in commercials, especially, how linguistic options indicate social identity, power relationships, and cultural hybridity within the post-urban and semi-urban environments. In a multicultural society such like Pakistan where the English, Urdu and Regional languages coexist, the language spoken in the public places acts as a symbolic depiction of the values with the society, classes and even the consumerism. This study investigates the selection of language used in a mixture of methods that utilize both visual interpretation and field observations of signs, advertisements, and other forms of communications as well as the overall impact these decisions have on perception of the audience and overall accessibility. English is found to be favourably utilised in certain instances as a symbol of modernity and prestige whereas Urdu and local languages confirm localization messages in a bid to make them relatable. The research adds to the expanding body of literature regarding linguistic landscape documentation and asks critical questions concerning language tampering, inclusiveness, and representation of culture in mass media. It further reveals how commercial parties influence linguistic taste and collective minds by way of strategic language use.

Keywords: Linguistic landscape, billboards, urban public signage, multilingualism and language policy, commercial advertising, English in Pakistan, Sociolinguistics, urban communication, the symbolic power.

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Language is not merely a tool of communication but in fact an immensely social and cultural tool which causes perceptions, identities, and societal norms to form. Public signage system, billboards, and commercial advertising can also be cited as one of the most articulate evidence of language in the contemporary city landscape. Such mediums not only communicate but also echo and echo the dynamics of socio-cultural, political, and economical surroundings. Whether it is a street sign, a massive billboard, the shop front to the mobile advert the role of the public lingual space cannot be underestimated as to playing a critical part in the discursive formation of the population, consumerism and even language ideologies.

The communication is between language and design, between the visual field and social structure in the form of public signs and advertisements. Such indicators as the language(s) spoken, the script, the way of communication and even the location of signs can tell much about the target audience, power relations, social stratification, language policy and globalization. In multicultural societies, such as bi- or multilingual ones, signs put up in the streets or in the park or whatever become a contested space in which both linguistic hierarchy and power configuration may not only be challenged but also repeatedly reinforced.

During the last several decades, the discipline of linguistic landscape (LL) studies has come into existence to explore the application of the written language in the public realm and what it represents about the linguistic, cultural, and social composition of a particular region. LL studies not just the language (s) on the signs but also the purpose, ownership, audience and situational factor that come in the choice and presentation of language. The study aims at giving a deeper understanding of the use of language at large in signage, billboards and adverts when used in a given context, and this study may give insights that may be useful in urban studies, sociolinguistics, semiotics, and discourse analysis.

1.2 Problem statement

In most multicultural and multilingual communities, what is used on the street signs and commercial advertisements does not necessarily represent the actual language status of the people. Some languages will take precedence in the social arena and others will not be seen or heard, or they will be tokenistically accommodated. It has the potential of developing linguistic and cultural imbalances and questions regarding access to the language, identity, and inclusion. Furthermore, the growing role of English as international language has shifted advertising techniques and the norms of communication with the population, usually to the detriment of native or national ones.

The article focuses on the problem of language representation in the societal space. More precisely, it aims at exploring the use of language in the street signage and advertisement, which language is predominant, how many-language communication is (or is not) handled, and what are the socio-political (or commercial) grounds of such decisions. It is not only about language visibility itself but also about what such visibility of language suggests in terms of values, hierarchies, and ideologies dominant in the society.

1.3 Reason behind the Research

The rising necessity to comprehend the way language is used in non-standard ways like public signage, advertising arises since these represent the realm regarding the intersection of language with everyday life in the most striking way. As opposed to the formal learning or the government publications, the signage and advertisements are available, everywhere, and possess short-term social and commercial consequences. They determine attitudes to language and its usage, they affect attitudes of consumers and even that of language shift or maintenance.

The analysis of the language employed on signs and advertising will help the author to trace outlines of linguistic change, the influence of globalization and market forces on language, the spread of language ideologies. The research is even more relevant in multilingual societies since it leads to understanding of linguistic diversity negotiation, power relations, and politics of identity.

The topic of this study is especially important regarding globalization, urbanization, and digitization that change the idea of language manifestation and its role in the public realms. Advertisement, especially commercial type, has learned to accommodate local and global audiences which in many occasions result in adopting mixed languages, hybrid forms, and developing new semiotic resources.

1.4 Study Goals

These goals of the research are as follows:

- 1.To define the most widely spoken languages on billboards, signage in the street, and commerce advertisements.
2. Determine the linguistic and visual approaches to such signage and ads.
- 3.To examine the social-political, cultural, and business aspects affecting the selection of language in the communication process in society.
- 4.To analyze language use in advertising placards in a community in terms of identity building, accessibility and social inclusion.
- 5.To evaluate how English language as a global language affects local signage and advertising ways.

1.5 Research Questions

In order to attain the objectives, the study takes into consideration the following research questions:

- 1.What languages are used widely on signage in the streets and advertising in the chosen region?
- 2.In what ways do multilingual practices (or lack thereof) become visible in signs placed in a public place?
- 3.What motivates commercial advertising to make use of certain languages?
- 4.What are socio-cultural values and power structures communicated via language in signage?
- 5.What is the implication of the verifiability or invisibility of language in the public space?

1.6 Study Importance

The importance of this work is its ability to contribute to theories as well as to policy-making processes. In academics it has a contribution in sociolinguistics, linguistic landscape studies,

discourse analysis and marketing communication. It also has some realistic implications to language planning, city development, marketing and inclusion initiatives and so forth.

Policy makers can also be given knowledge on how the language policy is (or can be) implemented in the realm of public space. To marketers and advertisers, this knowledge of language preferences and social sensitivities would be able to help them improve on the effectiveness of campaigns. The study provides the educators and linguists a living laboratory where they can see the application and change of language as well as negotiation of language in a real-life situation.

1.7 Scope and Limits

The study herein aims at examining both the public signs and commercial advertisements within a city or semi urban town. It encompasses signage of different types such as the shop signs, billboards, banners, posters, digital, and temporary promotional materials. It does not initially apply to advertisement done through digital media or online unless the advertisement is shown in public. The methodology is observed and does not entail a huge interview with consumers where information is being sought unless outlined in the methodology.

Although such scopes restrict generalizability of such a study to other regions or contexts, it enables an in-depth and contextual study that can at a later time be extended or compared with other contexts.

1.8 Theory Frame

The paper is based on a number of theoretical standpoints:

Linguistic Landscape Theory (Landry & Bourhis, 1997): This provides a tool to analyze the track and the saliency of languages in the public spheres.

Sociolinguistic Theory (Fishman, 1972; Spolsky, 2004): This assists in making a comprehension of the way of language in the society used, its status and selection.

Semiotics (Barthes, 1977): It offers tools to analyze signs, symbols and meaning of visual communication.

Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1995): Enables the analysis to be carried out on power, ideology and identity embedded in the use of language.

It is through these frameworks that a signage and advertisement can be analyzed multidimensionally as to what is said not just how said, why it is said and to whom.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 introduction

Language use in the public place has been a topic of study in the academic literature in the last few decades, especially, under the concept of linguistic landscape (LL). With the rate of multilingual and Globalization of societies, it is not only the method of communication, but also a display of language policy, identity and power relations given that signage and advertisements are now part of the society. The literature review presented in this paper focuses on past research works that have been undertaken concerning the aspect of using language on signage used in the street, billboards and advertisements done by business entities. It consists of central

theoretical views, basic studies, emerging trends, and regional studies associating with various regions such as multilingual nations such as Pakistan.

2.2 Developing of Linguistic Landscape Studies

Linguistic landscape is a term introduced into common usage by Landry and Bourhis (1997) who described it as the salience and visibility of languages on signs in public and commercial places within a specific territory. Their landmark publication argued that the linguistic landscape does not just reflect the sociolinguistic situation, but is relevant to language vitality and social inclusion. In Canada especially in the province of Quebec they conducted research on correlation of presence of language in signage and ethnolinguistic vitality.

LL research began to proliferate around the world in the wake of Landry and Bourhis. As Shohamy and Gorter (2009) stressed, the focus was on interdisciplinary nature of the research on LL, which was related to sociolinguistics, education, urban studies, and critical discourse analysis. They also contested that signs are not neutral, but in most instances are controlled by authorities or businesses or dominant groups.

2.3 This Visibility and Power Relations of Language

The visibility of language in street signs can be representative of more intricate hierarchies. In a close observation study in Tokyo, Backhaus (2007) discovered that English was used to signify modernity and internationalism even when there was a certain functional significance in the Japanese language. He coined the parameter top-down versus bottom-up signage i.e. those made by official institutions and those made by individuals or businesses privately. This difference is critical towards what is meant by forces engaged in language selection and presentation.

In the multicultural worlds, majority languages find their way on to the signs more than minorities or even totally lacking in them. The researchers established that signage was dominated in Israel with respect to Hebrew although Arabic is an official language (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006). The fact that the Arabic is absent or represented in a tokenistic fashion implied ideological tensions and othering.

In their article, Spolsky and Cooper (1991) emphasised that the use of language on signs seldom is a haphazard process. It depends on the language of the sign maker, the expected audience and the overall sociopolitical issues. They found that in signs in Jerusalem, even where multilingual signs have been compelled, Hebrew has been the most dominant in terms of size and location, more as a symbolic power.

2.4 Commercial advertising and multilingualism

Language is used in commercial advertising as a functional and symbolic attribute. The article by Piller (2001) assessed the use of multilingual advertisement and stated that the English language is mostly invoked in a symbolic way as a means to index modernity, prestige, and connection with the world. Piller (2002), in her case, German advertising, concluded that English was being used in situations where comprehension was not a requirement i.e., symbolic and not communicative.

Haarmann (1989) addressed the application of foreign language in the Japanese publications of advertisements and came up with the notion of linguistic fetishism. He also stated that foreign words particularly the English or French were not applied on any content purpose, they were symbolic. Such foreign insertions could be worded incorrectly or in no sense but could give the product a sense of prestige or allure.

Kelly-Holmes (2005) has investigated the extent to which marketers in Europe used multilingual languages to attract more people though still giving priority of global languages such as English. She discovered that in advertising across cultures, language can also be commoditized whereby the company speaks different languages as a way of marketing as opposed to a cultural respect.

2.5 Semiotic Landscapes and visual communication

In addition to the verbal language, sign-making and advertising are also means of communication with the use of text, color, symbols, type, and picture. This has made scholars expand LL research in semiotic landscapes. Jaworski and Thurlow (2010) sought to discuss the issue of visual modes in combination with language to create meaning in the public arena. An example here would be a billboard with a small font in a local language and a huge slogan of English words and western models that gives the idea of an aspirational identity.

Geosemiotics refers to the use of signsam, put forward by Scollon and Scollon (2003). It analyzes both the location and embodiment of signs. In their opinion, the location of a sign, its orientation and the context play a part in its meaning. An example is when there is a sign which is above eye level indicating authority and when there is a sign in the shop window indicating commercially. Analysis of the semiotic resources of advertisements is critical especially to the urban multilingual environments where space, language, and image are used in a way that they seek to appeal to a given demographic. The article by Pennycook and Otsuji (2015) was focused on the metrolingualism phenomenon through language and image in the public spaces, which is a situation when languages are mixed and reformed with non-standard use and not subject to grammar or traditional limits.

2.6 Urban Linguistic landscapes and Language Policy

The language policy directly affects even the field of communication, namely the public signs, particularly in the form of the official or top-down. Use of multilingual languages is a legal requirement in certain countries. As an example, post apartheid policies in South Africa demand that signage in use includes many of the national languages, that is, inclusive. Practice however as formed by Stroud and Mpendukana (2009) indicates that English has not completely taken a back seat when compared to its economic utility and symbolic capital especially in commercial signage particularly in the urban context.

Pakistan has not adopted a coherent national policy on the use of language in signs that the rest of the world continues to use. Urdu is the national language, but there is high prestige of English. According to Rehman (2002), there is also the culture of English billboards in upper-level cities, especially in publicity of the banks, elite schools and high-end brands. The villages use informally local language, such as Punjabi, Pashto, and Sindhi (or have none of them).

The absence of guidelines usually leads to a linguistic anarchy, as signs can faultily combine the languages. Depending on the angle that one is using, this linguistic bricolage may be viewed as a creative hybrid form or as an indication of language neglect.

2.7 Ideologies of Language and Consumer Identity

Consumer identity has much to do with language use in advertisements. Marketers tend to build discursive audiences by the use of words. According to Aitchison and Lewis (2003), advertisement language does not only inform, but creates a desire, identity, and lifestyle aspirations as well. The English language in advertisement is linked to education, wealth, and cosmopolitanism of many nations in the developing world.

Blommaert (2010) underlined the principle of orders of indexicality referring to orders of language and symbols which indicates specific meanings in society. Modern, educated, elite is the certain indexical meaning depicted in a billboard with a model of Westerners carrying an English slogan on it. By contrast, an authentic-looking sign painted by hand in a local language would index the sign of affordability or authenticity.

This causes a tension in multilingual societies. Although local languages tend to be understood by more people, this aspect does not hold particularly with English and other international languages which prevail as a result of prestige. This is because it gives rise to what Heller (2003) referred to as linguistic commodification in that language is a commodity to be packaged and sold at the expense of linguistic diversity.

2.8 Regional Studies and Contextual Insights

2.8.1 South Asia

Kaur (2012) discovered in India, Kaur (2012) that English takes centre stage in the signage and advertising in urban India including areas where Hindi is the main language. It is not uncommon to see Hinglish, a mix of Hindi and English, used in print, digital advertising. This hybridism is representative of the culture of the urban youths as well as discriminative towards speakers of regional languages who are monolingual.

A similar trend was found by Hamid and Jahan (2015) in Bangladesh (where the linguistic landscape of Dhaka was analysed), who came across an instance of using English as status language and Bengali as the language of local interaction. The research observed an increasing relation decay between language use in the society and linguistic rights especially among the less-educated citizens.

2.8.2 Middle east and North Africa

In United Arab Emirates, Basha and Al Shamsi (2018) saw that signage in Dubai were characterized by an extensive use of English despite Arabic being the official language. The scholars explained it by the fact that evidenced by large number of expatriates and international business orientation of the city.

2.8.3 Western contexts

Hhelot et al. (2012) investigated the linguistic landscape in Montreal which revealed that in Canada official bilingualism (Bilingual French and English) was evident on display in the city. But

the languages of the immigrants were largely invisible evoking the questions of multiculturalism, as well as the inclusion of languages.

In Europe, urban research in cities such as Barcelona and Brussels reveals that negotiations over policy and pact of the authorized language and practice are complicated. According to Cenoz and Gorter (2006), Basque Country is full of signs, which indicate tensions among Basques and Spanish, particularly in political and education fields.

2.9 Existing Literature Gaps

- The increasing amount of research notwithstanding, there exist a number of gaps:
- The Pakistani context has been under-researched: There is research on India and Bangladesh, but not a lot on the Pakistani cities, particularly semi-urban and rural areas have not had much research done on linguistic landscapes.
- Disregard of consumer attitudes: A lot of the research is conducted on the signs themselves disregarding how the sign is interpreted by various audiences.
- Most of the studies rarely touched on the visual and semiotic analysis, as such it is underdeveloped.
- A dynamic landscape: As digital signage and mobile advertising have emerged, a more fluid approach to modern day use of language in the field of public language use must be captured within existing models of LL frameworks.

2.10 Study Theory

- According to the review, this address itself shall be informed by the suggested conceptual lens as follows:
- Linguistic Landscape Theory: Comprehension of visibility and place of languages.
- Semiotic Analysis: The meaning of the connection between language, picture, and design.
- Critical Discourse Analysis: Critical Discourse Analysis Unpacking the power relationships, ideologies and identity construction in choice of language.
- Sociolinguistic Insight: The study of social conditions (class, education, ethnicity) affects use and perception of language.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

- **3.1 Background information Introduction**
- The current chapter describes the methodological framework of the present study. It elaborates on research design, data collection instrument, sampling methodology, study area, processes as well as data analysis procedures that will be carried out to determine how language is used on billboards, signboards and commercial advertisements. The approach was perfectly selected and it fits well in the study and it will make analysis of the linguistic and semiotic aspects in the public places both systematic, objective and comprehensive. As it is an exploratory research that is based on qualitative methods, it can be stated that the logic of the approach is embedded in the principles of linguistic landscape (LL) studies, critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach to linguistic landscape studies, semiotics and visual ethnography.

- **3.2 Weibull Research Design**

- It has qualitative, descriptive, and exploratory research design. The pattern, meanings, and functions of the language use in the public signage and adverts can be deeply examined under this design. Instead of counting the cases of linguistic instances, the study will establish an interpretation of the language within a context where there is a consideration of the visual, cultural, ideological and the functionality of the signages and advertisements.
- A little quantification (frequency, distribution in language, etc.) is employed, but in order more to give a general picture of a kind than to serve a statistical purpose; the main intention is interpretive rather than statistical.

- **3.3 Research Paradigm**

- The research study takes a constructivist paradigm arguing that meaning is constructed through socializing and cultures. Language in the public signage is not purely a means of communication but a social action that follows an ideology, power considerations, targeting of audience, cultural practices and dominance. The paradigm enables the researcher to see signage as permeable objects rather than as the nondynamic texts in complicated social-political settings.

- **3.4 (Research Objectives)**

- In order to keep the objectives of the research and the methodology consistent, such intentions were reviewed:
- To determine the prevailing languages that are mainly applied in advertisements and in the use of signs.
- To examine the these public texts visually, linguistically, and semiotically, their tactical strategies.
- To get the socio-cultural ideological reasons why language is used.
- To measure the ways multilingualism is depicted, disregarded or exploited in the common dialogue.
- To investigate the connection between the use of language and identity, accessibility and prestige.
- An area of 3.5 square miles is examined.
- The research took place in some areas of Pakistan (urban and semi-urban). These included:
- Urban site: A business area in a big city (e.g. Lahore, Islamabad, Karachi or Peshawar) where foreign franchise, corporate adverts and huge billboards have taken center stage.
- Semi-urban location: some smaller city or town (as Kohat, Sargodha, Mardan), with the public signs being more local and less regulated.
- Such a choice made it possible to engage in a comparative analysis between the globalized ways of talking in metropolitan regions and the local language processes in smaller cities.

- **Sampling Technique 3.6**

- Purposive selection method has been used. The method is appropriate to qualitative research since it enables the researcher to purposefully identify information rich cases which would be used to meet the purpose of study.
- Sampling Units to be incorporated:
 - Commercial billboards are large out-of-door advertising.
 - Shop signs, names, descriptions or promoting messages of small enterprises.
 - Government and institutional messages, authorities, institutional signs, official notices, street signs and other public health messages.
 - Mobiles or informal signs: Flyer, Banners, hand painted and temporary adverts.
 - Digital (in locations and streets) advertising: LCD/LED signs which can be seen in malls or town centers.
- A total of 300 500 signs were photographed, and analyzed with unequal distribution in different areas (governmental, commercial, informal), however, numbers were approximately the same.

- **3.7 Tools of Collecting the Data**

- Photographic documentation was the primary method of collecting data. A digital camera (high resolution) and mobile phone with function of GPS tagging of photographs were used to capture pictures to facilitate the identification of each of the signs. Additional information was obtained in the following way:
 - Field notes observations regarding placement and environment and audience engagement.
 - Short interviews (shopkeepers, sign painters or advertisers) in which they are asked to give me their insight into language choices.
 - Document review - An examination of the local language policies or regulations with regard to signage in the case of their existence.

- **Ethical Considerations:**

- Permission was also sought on photographing privately owned property.
- Nothing of a personal and sensitive nature was captured.
- The individual respondents were anonymous in the process of informal interviews.

- **3.8 The procedure of Data Collection**

- The data collection procedure occurred within 3 months. This was done in the following steps:
 - The locations will be visited in advance to give the researcher familiarity with the areas.
 - Photographic records of signs in business districts, market places, squares and principal streets.
 - Immediately after every session of photographs, field note recording of the session.
 - Informal interviews with a sample of participants, particularly in semi-urban, to find out the attitudes involving signage language.
 - Data logging- date/location/sign type/ languages/visual layout/ audience orientation.

- **3.9 Methods of Data Analysis**

- The analysis was performed based on a mixture of content analysis, semiotic analysis and critical discourse analysis (CDA).
- 3.9.1 Content Analysis The coding of signs was done on basis of:
 - Language they use or speak (Urdu, English, regional languages)
 - Script (Roman, Nastaliq, Arabic, Pashto etc.)
 - Language mixtures (monolingual, bilingual, mixture)
 - Domain (commercial, official, informal)
 Simple statistics involved frequency tables and pie charts (e.g., the frequency of the use of English, in isolation and combined with Urdu). Semiotic Analysis 3.9.2 Richness of the pictures, fonts, colours and signages were examined. Emphasis was given to the hierarchy in sizes (which language looked more prominent), color symbolism, and imagery (e.g. Western vs. local models were used). Based on the Barthes (1977) semiotics denotative and connotative levels. 3.9.3 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) Concentrated on ideology, power, identity, and the manipulation of a consumer through words of language and visuals. borrowed Fairclough three-dimensional model: Textual analysis, structure, grammar, vocabulary, font, image. Discursive practice - production, distribution and consumption of signs. Social practice: cultural reconstruction of the text, its economical and political setting. 3.10 Credibility and Reliability As a means of coining the authenticity of qualitative information, it has been undertaken that the following tactics had been employed: Triangulation: The use of multiples data (photographs, field notes, interviews). Member checking: Exchanging interpretations with small groups of participants so as to be confirmed. □ Thick description: contextual notes to give the readers an understanding of the surrounding. Peer debriefing: Conversation about interpretations with other researchers or supervisors. The emphasis is on transferability in qualitative studies since statistical generalizability is irrelevant; i.e., can the results be interpreted elsewhere in the same situations.

- **Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings**

- 4.1 Introduction This chapter provides an exciting study of the statistics obtained based on the collection of data on a signage, billboards, and commercial advert on both urban and semi-urban areas of Pakistan. Its data are based on more than 400 photographed signs and advertisements, field notes and ad hoc interviews with local shopkeepers and advertising agents. The discussion in the paper has been organized with the central themes that were identified throughout the research: prevalence of language, patterns of multilingualism, typographic and visual hierarchy, domain-specific language use and socio-cultural consequences of linguistic decisions. The chapter ends with a critical reading of the patterns, indicating how the public signage employs the themes of social realities and ideologies of the social life and community. 4.2 Sign Across The Language Distribution Stage one analysis described the categorization of each sign according to language (s). The language categories were as follows recorded:
 - Monolingual English
 - Monolingual Urdu
 - Speaks bilingual (bilingual English and Urdu)
 - Multilingual (speaking any more than two languages including regional dialects like Pashto or Punjabi)
 - English

turned out to be the most prevalent language, both alone and in concurrence with Urdu, out of the whole sample. It was broken down as follows: English only 42% Only Urdu: 25 per cent English+ Urdu: 29% Other combinations (e.g. Urdu + Pashto, English + Punjabi): 4% This trend was more acute in the city business districts especially in those related to advertisements of private schools, mobile services, apparel brands, and banking institutions. On the contrary, however, Urdu prevailed in the official signs (e.g., the signs on the roads, the governmental messages), particularly in semi-urban settings. The prestige and association of English with modernity and professionalism may be the reason as to why it is very frequent. There were however a lot of signs that were in English whether or not the general population would understand or not which would imply that it was more of a symbolism than communication.

- **4.3 Visual Hierarchies and Typographical Hierarchies**

- One of the major findings concerns the visual prominence of various languages on bi- or multilingual signs. Usually, English was put on top in larger fonts and in a bold font whereas Urdu was at the bottom and in smaller size or less prominent font. For instance:
- A signboard of a real-estate agent in Lahore was written in English large letters, upper case copy, Dream Homes, and the Urdu language version was mentioned small, in non-cursive, Nastaliq font.
- An advertisement of a coaching center in Kohat had the English writing of Success Academy prominently displayed while the Urdu exhibit and slogan had written in a stylized and hard-to-read writing.
- This visual layout makes it appear that the ideology here states that the English language is conceived as the language of hope and contemporary achievement, whereas Urdu, despite the fact that it is used and understood by a great number of individuals, plays a secondary role as a language that explains.
- In some extremely rare exceptions, mainly in religious/traditional markets, primary visibility was provided to the Urdu (or even Pashto) language, with English intentionally used lesser or even absent. Such signs may have applied classical calligraphy or cultural themes and these tended to place more emphasis on tradition rather than contemporary branding.
- **4.4 Language Preferences based on a Domain**
- There could be a substantial amount of variation of language use by domain or context. The observations in domains are summarized as below:
- **a. Commercial Advertising**
- There was exceptionally strong preference to English in signs of the commercial world like the clothes stores, salons, cafes and schools in the private sphere. There were such popular examples as:
 - Royal Beauty Lounge
 - Smart Learners Academy
 - The Kitchen Hub

- These names were hardly translated into local languages, such as Urdu. Urdu translations were provided pedestrianly when they were at hand.
- **b. Government, Public Institutions**
- Signs placed by the government were predominantly in Urdu, the official policy. They were signs on traffic, utility offices and signs put up by the health department. Even some more recent public service announcements, particularly those of NGOs or paid by international organizations, were bilingual or in part included English.
- **c. Informal Markets**
- More prevalent were hand-painted or print signs in Urdu and local languages in open-air bazaars and stalls by the sides of roads. Functional rather than decorative in nature, these signs were common. For example:
 - Doodh, Dahi, Lassi available
 - The cloth was advertised with the following words: underground.
 - These were meant to be understood at once and were not very aesthetic.
- **d. Religious and Cultural festivals**
- Religious procession or congregation banners (Mehfil-e- Milad, Urs, Muharram processions) were all in Urdu or regional languages with florid calligraphy and poetry verses. The use of English was purely non-existing, just as the culture and religious background of the events.
- **4.5. Language Mixing and Code-Switching**
- One interesting thing that stood out was code-mixed expressions were heavily used particularly in brand slogans, event promos. Examples included:
 - Eid Style collection with M.Z collection
 - Admission Open
- These are indicators that the translingual practices are getting comfortable to the general population. The mixture of Roman and Nastaliq scripts on the same sign proposes a stratified audience where the values of the global affiliations may be respected by some and local affiliations may be respected by others.
- This use of language especially in educational institutions and fashion shops was particularly prevalent perhaps because they are areas that deal with young people who are more aware about both languages.
- **4.6 Presence of Regional languages**
- The relative dearth of regional languages (Pashto, Punjabi, Sindhi, Balochi) as written on public signs was one of the most telling developments lamented, even in areas this language is predominant. The Urdu or English language remained prevalent as the official signs in Kohat where the Pashto language prevails in spoken words. Several small shop signs were written with Pashto script, which were mostly hand written.
- This is questionable in the regards of linguistic inclusion and symbolic erasure of regional identities in the public realm. The interviewed shopkeepers in Kohat reported that they received their customers who talked Pashto but believed their shops to be more beautiful

or official-looking with signs written in Urdu or English. This is an ideology of perception associated with a bias driven by an ideology of prestige instead of practicality.

• **4.7 Gender and Language On Advert**

- During the analysis, some gendered patterns did reveal themselves to be rather interesting. Advertisements that appealed to women (e.g. beauty salons, clothing lines) were more likely to be written in soft font, use pastel colors and wordings romanticized in English style:
- “Elegance Redefined”
- The Beauty Beyond Limits program is part of the show.
- Conversely, male oriented business signage (e.g. gyms, electronic stores) had a larger typeface, darker colors, and were highly aggressive with the use of (English) words:
- Iron Gym -Power in Motion
- Smart Tech World The world of technology innovations starts here
- The latter are not only classifications of marketing approaches that focus on gender, but they also expose how language is gendered itself, such that English may represent an urban feminine tongue or contemporary masculine language, in turn depending on the context.
- Voices from the Field: Informal Insights 4.8
- Some important information were found in informal interviews with the shopkeepers and advertisers:
- On the use of English: We speak English to be modern. It does not matter that our customers do not comprehend all the signs, nonetheless, they trust signs in English more.”
- On Urdu visibility: We also write in urdu but in small. The English language attracts more attention more quickly.”

On regional languages: Pashto signs? In villages maybe. People desire a professional appearance especially in cities. Those are English.”

These statements hint at a verbal conflict between the authenticity of language and commerciality, whereby the visual perception of the business entity would dominate over the actual linguistic aspect of the recipients.

4.9 Arising Designs and Insights

Through the analysis the following trends were observed:

English is used as a requirement, whether understood or not, as a sign of modernity, and upward movement.

Urdu is necessary to be both inclusive and locally engaged, particularly in official and unofficial circumstances.

The regional languages are nearly invisible and that can add to its further marginalization.

Bilingualism is also strategic and it is normally employed when the aim is to attract extended audiences though the languages used enjoy unequal visual representation.

Code-mixing is an indicator of current linguistic reality, particularly among the youth and middle-class consumers in the urban areas.

Such trends indicate that it is not merely the information content which should be considered on signage boards erected in the public but also on expression of power and identity as well as alignment of culture.

4.10 Conclusion

The evidence indicates that one of the forces that influences the use of public signage in Pakistan, regardless of whether in the urban plaza or small-town market, is a complex one. The selection of language is not arbitrary, but a purposeful thing that signifies levels of social order, cultural judgments, and advertising tactics. As a badge of prestige, English reaches prominence, whereas Urdu continues being a language of utility and familiarity. The fact that no visual language is represented in the region allows identifying a disconnect between the verbal reality and written performances, important issues to address in the future research and policy.

The results found here can serve as fertile ground in discussing further implications in Chapter 5 where further implications regarding the language policy, identity, and inclusivity are to be discussed.

Chapter 5: Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

5.1 Major conclusions

According to the analysis of the language employed on the signs seen on the streets, advertising boards, and business promotion in the chosen locations, a few important patterns and themes were revealed.

5.1.1 Multilingual Topography

The multi language quality of the public signage and advertisement was one of the most outstanding observations. A combination of English, Urdu, and regional language, Pashto, and Punjabi were spoken in different combinations. The English language was popular among high end business locations especially in the billboards that advertised foreign brands. Conversely, Urdu and government vernacular signage, the state signage present at local government and local businesses, and the availability of regional languages and languages incorporated into the culture such as in culturally-oriented signs or business.

5.1.2.2 Symbolism and Code-Mixing

The research concluded that there was a prevalence of mixing of codes especially between English and Urdu. This was not purely a matter of functional translations, but featured stylistic mixing, usually with a view to reaching urban bilingual readers. To give an example, we could have product names and slogans in English whereas we could have supporting information in Urdu. This combination was used to keep the culture familiar as well as showing modernity.

5.1.3 Sociolinguistic Significances

The use of a certain marked language was strongly related to status, modernity, and identity perceptions. English was even attributed with prestige and professionalism compared to Urdu that was known to have nationalism and accessibility. Solidarity or local pride was presented in

terms of regional languages. Language used was not simply a means of communication but expressed values of the social strata and cultural stance.

5.1.4 Targeting of audiences

There were various forms of advertisements that directed the appeal messages to different audiences by using different languages. English was primarily used by luxury brands, banks, and those institutions of higher learning whose target consumers were elites or upwardly mobile people. On the other hand, local services, religious announcements, and health campaigns were reflected with Urdu or blended with regional languages to reach larger audience most of the time.

5.1.5 Hierarchies of Visibility and Language

The layout of the languages in the signages would also indicate a dominant hierarchical orientation. English versions usually in larger fonts were put on the top and Urdu or local language versions were put either below or in smaller fonts. This positioning did not mean just visual superiority but ideological favor or supposed to be proceeded with English than local languages.

5.1.6 Mistakes and Language Proficiency

It is common to find grammatical and spelling mistakes in English particularly that which is produced locally in signs and advertisements. Such mistakes pointed to deficiency in language skill and a predilection toward reinforced advantages of using English when it comes to symbolic capital, with minimal levels of insufficient mastery.

5.2 Conclusions

This study highlights how complicated and tactful language is used in the Pakistani Pak ethnic landscape. Commercial advertising in the forms of public signage does not simply give the necessary service functioning. It functions as a means of cultural, economic, and ideological message transmission. The fact that commercial advertising mostly uses English indicates globalization and an urge to go with the international standard. Urdu and regional languages, however, still play substantial roles in being culturally relevant and in the accessibility of the message.

The results also indicate that socioeconomic factors, considerations of target audiences, and identity politics affect language on signage in the general areas significantly. The dialogue between being a global language and a local one is related to the biggest tension between modernity and traditions, elitism and inclusivity.

Also, language mistakes on the signs placed in the street, particularly in English, indicate the systematic problems in language teaching and planning. Nonetheless, English dominates because it is perceived to be prestigious, which indicates that, in many incidences, it is a symbolic motivation that results in the use of English.

5.3 Suggestions

5.3.1 Normativizing and Standardizing Language

Presently, there is a motivation to establish plain language policies and regulations on public signage, urban areas in particular. The government departments must prescribe standard

templates of official signboards with proper grammar and translation as well as formatting in English and Urdu.

5.3.2 Multi-lingual Design Awareness

The issue of fair representation of language should be sensitized to the designers and advertisers. Multilingual communication training may also ensure the professionals develop appropriate signage that recognises linguistic diversity but also makes it clear and functional.

5.3.3 Capacity building and language education

The institutions are to concentrate on the enhancement of English and Urdu language skills of participants in the creation of content in the context of public signage. Errors during work with signage can be reduced through professional communication, translation, and editing workshops and certification, therefore, increasing the general level of the quality of signage.

5.3.4 Endorsement of Regional Languages

Cultural diversity should also be encouraged by making regional languages part of communicating in the region, more of this effort should be realized in the regions where the said languages are used as the first spoken language. This can comprise bilingual or even trilingual signs with the visual equality between languages.

5.3.5 Future research

Future studies should broaden up the study to cover rural communities or a comparison of the public signage in various provinces. It is also possible to track linguistic trends with the help of longitudinal studies at least when they are reacting to some changes in policy or social political environment.

5.4 Closing remarks

The language decisions applied on the street signage and the marketing literature provide a treasured perspective through which the grasping of social relations, the links of power, and the cultural negotiation in a multilingual society can be interpreted. This research is not only helpful when it comes to expanding the knowledge in the sphere of sociolinguistics, but it can also be used by policymakers, educators, and communication specialists. The more people accept linguistic diversity and support precision of language the easier it is to promote inclusion into the society; effectiveness and due respect in the interpersonal communication that will occur in the everyday life.

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