

Linguistic Landscape of Languages Used in Signboards in Larkana, Sindh

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Abstract

The present study investigates the use of local, official and national languages and the incessant use of English on the localized Sindhi Roman script. Linguistic landscape is the study of written language on public road Signs, advertisements, billboards or front shops. Bilingualism is very common on the public signboards of Larkana city, where English language is used as market language. Many local people consider it as foreign language still English is used on every local and public signboard of Larkana city. The study used semi-structured interviews from different businesspeople, shopkeepers and owners of the institutions. The results show that Romanized Sindhi language/ Sindhlsh and Bilingualism is influenced and dominant on the linguistic landscape of Larkana. In the comparison of English language the local/ native languages of the particular area of Larkana city seem missed or least used on signboards.

Keywords: Linguistic Landscape, Multilingualism, Bilingualism, Official Language, Roman Sindhi

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Introduction

Linguistically, Pakistan is vast country having more than 60 spoken languages and six major languages. Since the independence of Pakistan, Urdu as National Language and English as Official language enjoyed a great privilege and higher status in Pakistan. The influence of language can be measured in any form. Linguistic landscape is one the important aspect of measuring the impact of any written language on the public or local signboard. The representation of any written language on government boards/ buildings, academic institutes, hotels/restaurants, Marts/Bakers or local shops is known as Linguistic landscape. The study of Linguistic landscape has begun in 1970s. Linguistic Landscape, gradually slowly has flourished its fields in sociolinguistics, social sciences sociology and media studies. The great contribution was given in LL by the seminal work of Landry and Bourhis (1997).

Hult (2009) states that the basic role of linguistic landscape is the visible representation of the languages on the local and public spaces and areas. Linguistic landscape functions as the important instrument of connecting us with our everyday places like streets, parks, shops and buildings Ben-Rafel (2008). It holds a bond among the group's, nations and communities. This study contributes to the research gap and serves in the field of linguistic landscape in the context of Pakistan. Akram (2007) maintains that Pakistan addresses English as her official language, from this notion it is obvious that English preserves the significant status as used in Pakistan's Law and court, educational policies, science, technology and media etc. The dominance of English in everything and even on the public and local signboards of Pakistan's cities replaces the local and indigenous languages of Pakistan. As Shohamy (2006) maintains that the presence and absence of any language on the public laces/ local signboards represents the importance of certain languages. This study examines the role of official, national and local/ indigenous languages on the public and local signboards of Pakistan in the context of Larkana City.

2. Literature Review

This section represents overview of the studies on Linguistic landscape, and it also highlights some studies of linguistic landscape in the context of Pakistan. Landry and Bourhis cited in their studies of 1997 that Linguistic landscape means the language of public signage on every kind of signboards such as street names, shop advertisements, governmental or private buildings and advertising billboards etc. Blommaert (2014) declared that LL offered us an insight to behold the signs as index which beckons towards social, cultural, ideological and material context of the society. The visibility of the signs not only represents the story of the language but also

cultural, social, political story through the LL study we see signs as indexes that point. Each sign indicates production and surrounding of that peculiar area where they have influenced a lot through LL Blommaert (2014). Sonia Yavari (2012) investigated Linguistics landscape Policies: A comparative case study of Linköping University and ETH Zurich, her study contributed to know that how language policies are distributed at two different universities. With the help of LL researchers can easily estimate the number of languages which were used at university. The study identified the distribution of languages on the Linguistics landscape maintained through top-down and bottom-up signs of the university. The results showed the similarities in the usages of languages at both universities. In Linköping University Swedish and English were mostly dominant languages and in ETH Zurich German and English languages were mostly dominant in both universities there was the dominance of National languages. Ying (2019) researched on three Chinese schools to examine the beliefs of EFL learners towards pedagogical values of linguistics landscape. The study showed the attitudes of Learners who belonged to three groups of high school, undergraduate and graduate students. The mixed method was applied to survey the schools and the findings revealed very positive attitudes of Chinese students towards English in linguistic landscape, but distinct level of learners demand to work more on LL for better learning. Alfaifi (2015) investigated the influence of LL on the areas of Khamis Mushait, Saudi Arabia, tourist destination (TD), commercial zone (CZ). His study aimed to examine the use of English and Arabic language on the two locations of tourist destination and commercial zone. More than 200 photographs were taken from both areas but only 150 photos were analyzed through the quantitative method similar to Ben- Raefel (2006) and Backhaus (2007). The findings of the study showed that Arabic language is more dominant in tourist destination (TD) and due to the globalization English has great impact over the areas of commercial zone (CZ) but still Arabic language seem more dominant on (CZ) of Saudi Arabia.

2.1 The study of Linguistic landscape in Pakistan

Manan and Channa (2017) investigated on “The glocalization of English in the Pakistan linguistic landscape.” The study focused on the linguistic landscape of Pakistan’s particular area Quetta, they explored the usage of languages and the ubiquities usage of English in localized non-Roman script. As English remained foreign language for many parts of Pakistan, however it covered most of the signboards of Pakistan. Researchers used framework of Gorter and Cenoz (2008: 343) for the analysis of linguistic landscape. They used multiple data collection instruments such as conducted the interviews of businesspeople and captured the pictures of signboards and billboards. The results showed the great impact of Englishized Urdu and Urduized English on the linguistic landscape of Quetta, Pakistan where the local and indigenous languages impact was missed and absent on the signboards.

Kirk (2018) researched to examine the impact of linguistic landscape on the interplay between multilingualism, orthographic shifts, the urban built environment, and cinema going practices in Lahore, Pakistan. As Urdu is national language and English is international or official language of Pakistan, these languages have great influence in education and considered prestige languages in Lahore, while their own language Punjabi is considered the language of rustic crudity. So, the linguistic hierarchy is clear display in the cinemas of Lahore that show the attitudes of people towards English, Urdu and Local Punjabi films. In India, English and URDU films are shown in elite and posh cinema theaters like all the newly multiplexes while Punjabi and old Urdu films are displayed in old theaters for working-classes. Apart from cinematic trends, the study aimed to find out the influence of languages on the sign boards and advertisement pamphlets of those areas like whether the signs had Urdu, English, Punjabi or Romanized Urdu or Punjabi or any other language, What kind of information is delivered in what language and why? Hence the study reveal the relationship of public and the built environment of cinemas as well as the role of languages which showed the attitudes of public with the connection of the languages and their relation in social spaces like the enjoyment of the films.

Research Questions

For a better understanding of research problem, the present research focus to address the following questions:

1. What is the role of languages in the designs of local and public signboards of Larkana city in the presence of the dominance of English language?
2. What is the impact of linguistic landscape on the local residents of Larkana city?

3. Research Methodology

According to the nature of research objectives and questions, the researcher has used the qualitative approach in the present study. Creswell (1994) maintains that qualitative research offers the natural phenomena to the researcher that helps to access and interact any participant individually and easily. Qualitative research contains interviews, unstructured interviews, semi- structured interviews, group interviews, observations and documentary material etc. The present study has used semi structured interviews. Donryei (2007) maintains that semi-structured interviews are always adopted to measure the gap between the extremes of structured and semi-structured interviews.

3.1 Sampling and Participants of the study

The present research used purposive sampling to opt the participants for the study. Berg (2001) maintains that the purposive sampling helps the researcher in selecting the participants according to the knowledge and experience of the participants which aid to serve the purpose of the study. The participants were in service as local shopkeepers, it local residents of holding the designation of owners of restaurant, baker or mart or any academic institution. All the participants were chosen from the posh area/ colony of Larkana, it is known as Sachal Colony. The interviews were conducted from Total 5 local residents of the colony. Their age was from 23 to 50 years. All the participants were experienced about their business and each participant had different experience of marketing with the experience of the age differences.

3.2 Data Collection instruments

The data is collected for the present study through single source: The semi-structured Interviews. An interview protocol is designed for the easiness and confidentiality of the participants. The interview protocol form has two sections, in section (a) all the security and confidentiality would be assured to the participants and Section (b) contained all the questions related to the influence of Linguistic landscape and their importance on the business of local people of local area of Larkana. After the consent of the participants the interviews are conducted. McNamara (1999) maintains that interviews are good source to collect exact experience of any participants. Total seven questions are asked from each participant individually. All the interviews are recorded in the written form and in smartphone Vivo V20. All the responses of the participants are analyzed through thematic analysis.

4. Findings and Discussion

Bckhaus (2007) maintains that the most significant role of linguistic landscape studies is to indicate the representative value of languages on signboards of public spaces. Connectively, all five Participant's interviews are analyzed and distributed into the themes and their responses are recorded from them. Hence, the result of the shopkeeper's and business people's views represent preference of official language for the easiness of diversities, for better business and marketing, to compete the modernization and influence the local masses of Larkana city. Language plays very important role in every day's life. People always have emotional attachment with languages. Language represents culture and cultures are the significant asset of any nation. But in today's modern world multilingualism becomes so common. The usage of single language is found in particular countries and nations. Moreover, multilingualism is found dominant in many countries. Multilingualism is widespread interaction among the communities; it is the cause of world globalization. Understanding the concept of linguistics landscape of Larkana city in the context of Sociolinguistics, it is very necessary to understand the preferences of languages on the sign boards of Larkana. As Pakistan is the multilingual country, every city of Pakistan has multilingual discourse. Alike, Larkana city bears multilingualism, and the signboards have also the impact of multilingualism. The usage of multiple languages on the sign boards is very common in Larkana most of the participants agreed. They said that they know the importance of official language in Pakistan. Using official language for their business or on advertisement of their shops increase the chances of their business, it also attracts the local people towards their business. Most of the participants agreed that multilingual or bilingual languages on their sign boards always help them to earn good profit due to good publicity therefore they always prefer multilingual sign boards instead of monolingual sign boards.

Sign boards are very important for any business. And the language on the sign boards has the equal importance to the enhancement of any business. I (we) know the worth of languages at connecting and advertising the sign boards. The pure local language of our area does not provide standard name to our shops, institutes, marts, bakers or hotels but mixing up both local and official languages provide standardized name to our businesses. To compete the world of modernization and the world of competition the official language is necessary to use in business and market place. Because English is Lingua Franca, it helps to compete the world outside.

Most of the participants favored the diversity of languages they believe that diversity or multiple usage of languages create easiness, connectivity among common masses. They said that Larkana city is multilingual city people have multiple mother languages. When they see their mother languages on sign boards they feel more connected emotionally. They get more attracted towards our shops or any advertised business. Therefore we use multiple languages on sign boards. We know that People like the diversity and we know the worth of languages, the worth of official, local and national languages. For the sake of easiness we all business people prefer multiple languages on the signboards, we also believe in standardization and globalization, we prefer to provide easiness for common people therefore we opt multilingualism on the sign boards and the usage of official language also increases profit and speedy publicity among the public.

The 21st century is the era of modernism. Modernism has transformed the competitive marketing strategies in every kind of business, and language plays Vitol role in the marketing and publicity of any business. All ten participants agreed about the influence and impact of official language on business. I (we) choose language for

signboards after a complete planning, if we need to increase business, sell and marketing in anything we use official language on the sign boards for our shops, schools, restaurants, marts and bakers. Because this language attracts more customers and it helps to get profit financially. In today's modern era mostly people are known to official language of Pakistan therefore we make the sign boards in bilingual languages in this way we enhance the competition in the market which leaves the great influence on people with diversities. Undoubtedly, multilingualism is spread everywhere globally, where meanwhile Linguistic landscape studies provide an obvious introspection into linguistic phenomena, and also helps to investigate the insightful connection of people and languages in better way than any other method of study.

5. Conclusion

This study is designed to contribute in the field of linguistic landscape. Most importantly, the study focuses to contribute in the context of Pakistan. The findings of the study indicate that the local shopkeepers and business people of Larkana city give more preference to multilingual or bilingual signboards instead of monolingual signboards or they avoid the usage of local language on signboards. Very few signboards are found in pure local language of Sachal Colony area. While, English having the status of official language in Pakistan, seem more dominant and visible on the signboards of Sachal Colony Larkana. Although the local people are not much acquainted with English properly / completely still it is used everywhere on the signboards. Because the local shopkeepers and business people prefer English for better sell and marketing of their business. Thus, concluding the results of the study, the mindset of local people towards English as International language/ Lingua Franca/ Market Language. This mindset encourages them to use Romanized Sindhi Language or Bilingual language instead of using the only local language of that area. All these factors impact socio-psychological mindset of common people that cause the absence and replacement of local and indigenous languages of the area.

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