

# Multilingual Landscape Of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa And Manifestation Of Writing System Mimicry

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## Abstract:

The linguistic landscape (e.g., signboards & billboards) displays disparity between the selection of lexical forms, writing systems, and scripts. Therefore, this research intends to explore different patterns of writing system mimicry that appear in the multilingual landscape of Mardan and Nowshera districts, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) Pakistan. A qualitative and quantitative analysis of purposively selected 686 photographs were conducted. The study has uncovered four patterns of writing system mimicry, including English in the abjad writing system, Urdu in the alphabetic writing system, Pashto in the alphabetic writing system, and mixed writing systems. This mimicry leads to the death of a language and its writing system. Additionally, these four patterns are compared statistically. The results reveal that signs are chock-full of abjad-written English terms. It connotes that local people are aware of English vocabulary but are unfamiliar with the script. This discrepancy between the writing system (script) and vocabulary selection affirms either a lack of national and regional languages' linguistic knowledge or a personal inclination toward English. It symbolizes English imperialism in Pakistan. The study validates the assumption that English is the linguistic capital, as linguistic landscape actors prefer to employ it with a local flavor.

Keywords: Landscape; Alphabetic; Language Death; Linguistic Capital; Multilingual Landscape; Writing System Mimicry.

## 1. Introduction

Pakistan is amongst the most populous countries in the world, having rich linguistic and cultural diversity. It is split into four provinces: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), Punjab, Sindh, and Baluchistan. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province lies along the Afghanistan–Pakistan borderline in the north-western portion of Pakistan. It is further categorized into 35 districts and seven divisions. Peshawar (provincial capital), Mardan, and Nowshera districts are considered as the nose of this province. Mardan is the second most densely inhabited city after Peshawar, and Nowshera comes in as the 9th (Figure 1).

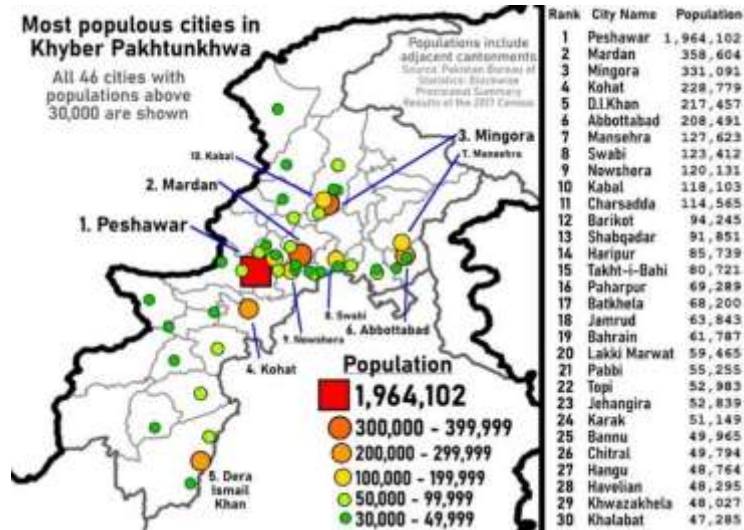


Figure 1. Most Populous Cities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), Pakistan

Source: (Google maps)



Figure 2. Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), Pakistan

Source: (Google maps)

Mardan and Nowshera are two geographically adjacent districts (Figure 2). The former district is comprised of five tehsils: Katlang, Ghari Kapura, Mardan, Takht Bhai, and Rustam. Similarly, Nowshera, Jehangira, and Pabbi tehsils are three administrative

divisions of the Nowshera district. According to the 1998 census, Pashto is the first language of 91% of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's population. It is spoken by 92.82% and 98.25% of the inhabitants in the districts of Nowshera and Mardan, respectively. According to the 2017 census, Pashto is the second predominant language after Punjabi (38.78%), and 18.24% of Pakistan's population uses it for daily communication. Urdu is the national language of Pakistan; thus, used as an inter-ethnic lingua franca. Urdu and Pashto are the first and second languages spoken by those ethnic groups who speak other languages in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). Yidgha, Saraiki, Kalami, Kohistani, Hindko, and Khovar are some other languages having considerable speakers.

The term 'linguistic landscape (LL)' is a broad category that encompasses terms like 'schoolscape', 'cultural landscape', 'castlescape', and 'heritagescape'. It refers to all semiotic signs visible in outdoor and indoor settings. In addition to engraved, printed, written, and sprayed visible languages, LL covers logos, and other symbolic signs. These fixed and dynamic signs constitute the linguistic landscape of a region or territory. As a result, these signs depict implicit ideologies of community members.

According to Gorter (2006), the usage of engraved, written, or carved languages in publicly shared spaces is the point of consideration of linguistic landscape studies. The research of Landry and Bourhis (1997) has made a significant addition to LL studies. It is widely regarded as the most crucial and influential foundational study. They have examined the linguistic landscape of Quebec using the ethnolinguistic vitality model. The concept of ethnolinguistic vitality was introduced by Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor (1977, as cited in Yagmur and Kroon, 2003). According to them, the ethnolinguistic vitality of a group refers to what causes them to respond as an active and distinct collective unit in intergroup circumstances. This study asserted that LL studies focus on LL actors' ingroup and outgroup associations. They were pioneers to use the term 'linguistic landscape'.

The concept of linguistic landscape (LL) is lucidly defined as follows:

"The language of public road signs, place names, advertising billboards, public signs on government buildings, street names, and commercial shop signs integrate to make up the linguistic landscape of urban agglomeration, area, or territory". (Landry and Bourhis 1997, 25)

A series of linguistic landscape-related workshops have contributed to the immense appearance of LL studies. These workshops, according to Gorter (2013), began in Tel Aviv in January 2008, then in Strasbourg (2010), Namur (2013), Siena (2009), and Addis Ababa (2012). It gathered a group of researchers interested in multilingualism studies. Shortly after the end of these seminars, several scholars concentrated on

public signs and publications appeared in prestigious journals, e.g., the International Journal of Multilingualism, Landscape, and others.

A writing system is one among different aspects or dimensions of linguistic landscape studies. It is a set of graphic and visual symbols that are utilized to decode language and is linked inextricably to script and orthography. Coulmas (2003, 35) described script as “the graphical or physical form of components of writing system (e.g., characters or letters)”. For instance, Urdu and Pashto share the abjad writing system but use different scripts, Nastaleeq and Naskh, respectively. According to him, orthography is “the conventional variety of a given, language-specific writing system” (Coulmas 2003, 35). It is a collection of rules, including capitalization, punctuation, word-break norms, hyphenation, spelling, etc. The term ‘writing system’ has two types and meanings: general types of writing systems and language-specific writing systems (Coulmas 2003). In the most basic sense, the alphabetic, logographic, and syllabic are three general writing systems. On the other hand, languages may have their own distinctive writing systems. Both these viewpoints are valid since a writing system can be specialized to a language, but it can also be used for several languages. For instance, languages that use the abjad writing system include Urdu, Persian, Hebrew, Pashto, Arabic, etc. Similarly, a number of languages, e.g., Italian, Korean, English, and Russian, use the alphabetic writing system. On the other hand, a writing system can be language-specific, such as the Dutch writing system. As a result, various writing systems exist corresponding to separate or multiple-written languages.

The term ‘typographic mimicry’ was proposed and invented by Coulmas (2014). According to him, this typographic mimicry, or pseudo-script, is meant to demonstrate foreignness. Typography refers to the style and techniques used to make written words or texts easier to read. For instance, typeface selection, leading (line-spacing), tracking (letter-spacing), and kerning. Sutherland (2015) developed the writing system mimicry model based on the term, typographic mimicry, coined by Coulmas (2014).

Researchers have utilized different models and theoretical frameworks to explore LL based on their perspectives and levels of interest. Several issues, such as language policy, mobility of languages, ethnolinguistic vitality, revitalization of castles, writing system mimicry, heritage conservation, the relative position of languages, and translation errors were investigated by researchers, namely Landry and Bourhis (1997), Hult (2003), Gorter and Cenoz (2006), Huebner (2006), Gorter (2006) Alomoush (2015), Runge (2019), Kandel (2019), and Strandberg (2020).

Hult (2003) explored two Swedish cities' shopping streets based on a language ecology perspective. According to this investigation, English is viewed as an emblem of worldwide communication in Sweden. Consequently, English emerged as the dominant language. Huebner (2006) centered on multilingual signs of 15 Bangkok neighborhoods, examined issues related to dominance and the mixing of languages. According to him, English has supplanted Chinese as the major language in Bangkok. In terms of syntax, lexis, pronunciation, and orthography, English has influenced Thai. They study investigated both private and public signage, and discovered that private signs use a wider range of languages than public signs. Barni and Bagna (2009) used a software tool, i.e., MapGeoLing software, to explore the linguistic landscape of Italy. Alomoush (2015) investigated multilingual signs in six of Jordan's metropolitan areas: Aqaba, Al-Karak, Amman (the capital), Al-Salt, Zarqa, and Irbid. According to the data, there were two favored codes, including Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and English. This study has identified three patterns of writing system mimicry: Arabicized English (AE), Classical Arabic (CA), and Romanized Arabic (RA). The second pattern serves religious purposes. On the other hand, the other two reflect glocalization in six major cities of Jordan. Ramzan et al. (2023) have claimed that in written communication, grammar plays a vital role in ensuring that messages are conveyed clearly and effectively. Further, Ramzan et al. (2023) have suggested that motivation in English learning determines vigilant proficiency in ESL learning. Furthermore, Ramzan et al. (2023) have confirmed that social media helps facilitate the exchange of ideas, insights, and knowledge, fostering a dynamic and stimulating academic environment. By adding more, Ramzan et al. (2023) have elucidated that the English language holds significant importance in today's global society, serving as a vital tool for communication, business, academia, and mor

Five significant ring-shaped strongholds have thus been identified in Denmark. Runge (2019) described a few of the revitalization processes used to improve the visualization of the ring-shaped stronghold and its landscape setting, which was constructed during the Viking Age. It is situated in the proximity of Odense, Nonnebakken. This research has addressed the fortress's various dimensions, history, and utility. As a result, it aided in the transformation of the Odense ring castle from a long-lost and nearly forgotten archaeological site to one of Funen's most famous. This fortress has given a new life to the modern landscape of Odense. Kandel (2019) probed the linguistic landscape of multilingual Nepal. He contended that the relative position of languages aids in studying language policy, minority languages, multilingualism, and linguistic diversity. Despite Nepal's new constitution (2015), he concluded that both monolingual and multilingual signs used English extensively. It

appeared as a co-official language in Nepal; as a result, this investigation suggested that multilingual policy is a pressing need of the time. Strandberg (2020) looked at how Nordic linguistic markers are used in the global product labelling and marketing business. This study has qualitatively analyzed writing system mimicry in connection to Nordic countries' orthographic traits. He described three patterns by scrutinizing various companies' product labels and logos. Some brands misrepresented words or phrases using extra alien features, while others preserved Nordic linguistic characteristics. In the third pattern, foreign language phrases mimicked Nordic graphemes to demonstrate globalism. This phenomenon was described as 'faux Nordic'.

In the same way, many related articles were published in the 'Landscape' journal's special issue (2019). It includes a number of case studies that show how the castle landscape is closely associated to heritage conservation and restoration. Various studies have been conducted, including those by O'Keeffe (2010), Kerr (2019), and Banerjea et al. (2019), and laws regarding heritage conservation and monument protection have been legislated. Estonia enacted a heritage conservation legislation in 2019, and Poland passed one in 2003. These laws have been passed to stimulate others, such as possessors as well as owners of buildings and monuments, local and state government authorities, to protect and preserve historical and cultural buildings. 'Castlescape' is a concept introduced by Banerjea et al. (2019). They used geoarchaeology to explore castlescapes in the Eastern Baltic and Spain from the standpoint of heritage conservation. They argued that "geoarchaeological and paleoenvironmental information concerning sediments, petrography, and soil aids others in modifying or renovating castles" (Banerjea et al. 2019, 193). In other words, it had an impact over heritage management decisions. Although the surrounding areas, such as agricultural fields and other structures, are not part of the monument, they are still included in the castlescape.

Kerr (2019) examined the cultural landscape of Dún an Óir, Ireland, by bridging the past and the present. Similarly, just a few research works have been carried out in Pakistan. The linguistic landscapes of government and private schools in the Bahawalpur district were compared and contrasted by Nasir, Lodhi, and Anwar (2019). Inside these institutions, they have explored different communicative functions of signs, i.e., teaching aids, teaching values, classroom management, decoration, school management, promotion of languages, announcing collective events, and intercultural awareness. Commercial shop signs have been used as a unit of analysis by Nikolaous and Shah (2019) to explore the linguistic landscape of Swat.. Shahzad, Hussain, Sarwat, Nabi, and Ahmed (2020) focused on motorways and roads to examine various languages used on traffic signboards. Ramzan and Khan

(2019) have suggested that stereotyped ideological constructions are enhanced by nawabs in Baluchistan. Further, Ramzan et al.(2021) have indicated that there is a manipulation and exploitation of the public in the hands of politicians and powerful people. Khan et al.(2017) have expressed that print media acts as a tool in the hands of capitalists. Bhutto and Ramzan (2021) have claimed that there is a collusive stance and pacifier agenda of media wrapped in the strategy of power. Nawaz et al.(2021) have said that power is striving for negative them and positive us.

The multilingual stationary signs of the Nowshera district were a piece of heed for Mahmood, Shah, Qureshi, and Sultan (2021). They focused on writing techniques and revealed five strategies: duplicating, fragmentary, transliteration, overlapping, and complementary. In terms of these strategies, they examined both official and non-official signs. All of these investigations have looked into the uniqueness of English's widespread appearance in the linguistic landscape of Pakistan. Despite being a foreign language, it is employed extensively. The alphabetic writing system is used in English, while English lexical terms prevalently appear in the abjad writing system and two scripts: Naskh and Nastaleeq (a combination of Naskh and Taleeq). Signs indicate a discrepancy in the selection of vocabulary terms, scripts, and writing systems, but this aspect has received less attention. As a result, the present study was conducted to explore the multilingual landscape (ML) of Mardan and Nowshera districts, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), in relation to writing system mimicry. Sutherland's (2015) perspective has guided the analysis.

The current research addresses the following research queries:

- i. How is writing system mimicry employed in the multilingual landscape (ML) of the Mardan and Nowshera districts?
- ii. What is the frequency of different patterns of writing system mimicry used in the multilingual landscape (ML) of Mardan and Nowshera districts?

## **2. Materials and Methods**

Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed research are the three broad research areas. These research approaches are carefully chosen based on the research questions, the nature of the study, and the theoretical frameworks of the study. Quantitative research is based on numeric data that is analyzed statistically. On the other hand, qualitative research focuses on understanding a phenomenon and its in-depth analysis in its natural setting. Quantitative data is typically descriptive data, while qualitative research looks at patterns in numeric data. Mixed research involves the use and mixing of both qualitative and quantitative approaches in a study. It refers to studies that utilize both qualitative and quantitative methods, integrate findings, and draw inferences from both to better understand a research problem (Creswell and Plano Clark 2017).

The present study has employed a mixed-method because both research questions are analyzed using two different approaches: qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative approach is used for the first one, while various patterns of writing system mimicry are compared statistically in the second question.

### 2.1 Research Site

This research work is conducted in two major districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), including Mardan and Nowshera. Peshawar is the first largest city in KPK, while Mardan comes in as the second. Second researcher lives in Nowshera; as a result, she has chosen these two mutually adjacent districts. Secondly, these are accessible venues due to inadequate financial resources. Thirdly, being female and living in a quite restricted environment, she could not just wander around snapping pictures. Therefore, she hired an individual who assisted her in data collection. He shot approximately 1000 photographs, some of which were blurred, torn off, and monolingual. Therefore, the researchers picked out 686 multilingual signs that were comparable to research objectives.

### 2.2 Criteria/Units of Analysis

The study has overlooked mobile objects and monolingual signs. A total of 686 stationary multilingual signs were collected through the purposive and convenience sampling techniques. Backhaus (2006) and Landry and Bourhis (1997) have different views regarding elements of the LL. The present study is adhered to Landry and Bourhis's (1997) constituents. LL elements comprise "public road signs, place names, advertising billboards, commercial shops' signboards, signs exhibited over government buildings, and street". (Landry and Bourhis 1997, 25).

The following two tables (Table 1 and 2) display the statistical details of multilingual signs (Table 1) and different types of signs that have been gathered from various localities (Table 2).

**Table 1: Detailed information of signs**

S. No.	Types of signs	Number of signs	Percentage
1.	Retail stores	13	1.89
2.	Cafeterias	20	2.91
3.	Hotels and restaurants	34	4.95
4.	Hospitals	2	0.29



5.	Educational institutions	27	3.93
6.	Religious institutions	9	1.31
7.	Medical stores	30	4.37
8.	Cloth shops	162	23.6
9.	Jewelry shops	70	10.2
10.	Bakeries	25	3.64
11.	Mobile shops	60	8.74
12.	Paints and hardware stores	15	2.18
13.	Book stores	50	7.28
14.	Electric/electronic appliances	40	5.83
15.	Pharmacies	20	2.91
16.	Laboratories	25	3.64
17.	Mosques	3	0.43
18.	Banks	6	0.87
19.	Wedding halls	5	0.72
20.	Furniture showrooms	12	1.74
21.	Miscellaneous	58	8.45
Total		686	

Source: Mahmood 2022

S. No.	Forms of signs	Number of signs	Percentage
1.	Posters	10	8.45
2.	Roads signs	143	20.84

3.	Signboards	293		37.46
4.	Billboard advertisements	166		22.44
5.	Graffiti/ Wall chalking	74		10.78
Total			686	

**Table 2: Manifested sign categories**

Source: Mahmood 2022

**2.3 Theoretical Framework of the Study**

The study explores the manifestation of writing system mimicry, in terms of its different patterns, in the multilingual landscape (ML) of Mardan and Nowshera districts. Sutherland's (2015) perspective of writing system mimicry has guided the data analysis.

A writing system is a collection of visual symbols that are used to represent language in a systematic manner. The term 'mimicry' refers to an act of imitating something or someone. Sutherland (2015, 105) has analyzed mimicry of different writing systems and termed it as 'writing system mimicry'. He defined writing system mimicry as follows:

"The use of graphemes and/or design features of an imitated writing system onto a base writing system, so that the base writing system somewhat resembles the mimicked writing system while maintaining readability". (Sutherland 2015, 150).

There can be different purposes, and likewise, different dimensions of writing system mimicry. This study focuses on the mimicry of scripts and writing systems in relation to lexical terms and different languages. Linguistic landscape signs show a disparity between the selection of vocabulary terms and the use of writing systems. English lexical terms are employed widely in the multilingual landscape of Pakistan. For instance, shop, jewelry, belt, center, sweet, medical, silk, and tuition are all English lexical terms but appear in the abjad writing system and the Nastaleeq script. It demonstrates the hegemony of English. The next section covers four different patterns utilized by sign developers.

**3. Data analysis and results**

A total of 686 multilingual signs were used as the unit of analysis. The first question was analyzed qualitatively, whereas a quantitative approach was employed for the second one.

Question 1. How is writing system mimicry employed in the multilingual landscape (ML) of the Mardan and Nowshera districts?

Sutherland's (2015) perception about writing system mimicry has led the data processing for this query. Multilingual signs have

been examined in relation to mimicry of writing systems, scripts, and languages. Different patterns of writing system mimicry are outlined in the following section.

### 3.1 English in the Abjad writing system

The Roman alphabet is the world's most well-known alphabetic writing system. Unlike the abjad writing system, which joins letters to form words, letters are written separately in the alphabetic writing system. Urdu uses the Nastaleeq script. The abjad writing system works in the opposite direction to the alphabetic writing system, from right to left. Languages that employ the alphabetic writing system, such as Italian, English, and Russian, use the left-to-right direction. Urdu is written in an Arabic script with a few Persian letters injected for extra sounds. Hence, Urdu utilizes the abjad writing system and the Perso-Arabic script.

The following figures (3 and 4) are illustrations from the research corpus, where English terms appear in the abjad writing system and the non-Roman Urdu Nastaleeq (a combination of Naskh and Taleeq Arabic scripts) script.

Figure 3 displays the signboard of a jewelry shop which is entitled as 'نیوبشیر جیولری ہاؤس' (New Bashir Jewelry House). The signboard is chock-full of abjad-written English lexical terms; for instance, نیو (new), جیولری (jewelry), ہاؤس (house), and پروپرائیٹر (proprietor). The conjunction that joins the names of proprietors is also an example of writing system mimicry. Although the pronunciation of these words has not been affected, the writing system has been modified from alphabetic to abjad. Similarly, linguistic landscape actors have chosen the Nastaleeq script rather than the Latin one.



Figure 3: Jewelry House (Shop signboard)

Source: Nowshera Market

Figure 4 is a graffiti for 'سٹار ٹیوشن اکیڈمی' (Star Tuition Academy). Mimicry is apparent in its title as well as in other secondary details. This academy offers the English language (انگلش لینگویج) and computer classes (کمپیوٹر کلاسز) to students (طلبہ و طالبات) of D.I.T (Department of Information Technology). The terms, such as انگلش (English), ٹیوشن (tuition), ایوننگ (evening), اکیڈمی (academy), and لینگویج (language) all belong to the English language; however, these are penned in the abjad writing system using the Nastaleeq script.



Figure 4: Star Tuition Academy (Graffiti)

Source: Nowshera-Mardan Road

### 3.2 Urdu in the Alphabetic writing system

All 28 letters of Arabic and a few additional letters are part of the Urdu alphabet, whereas Roman/Latin letters are employed by the English language. Urdu terms occur in the alphabetic writing system of English, just like English in the abjad writing system and Pashto in the alphabetic writing system. The alphabetic writing system and Roman/Latin script of English are used by sign makers to write Urdu.

The following two figures (5 and 6) are different examples, where Urdu appears in the alphabetic writing system of English which are illustrations of mimicry. Figure 5 depicts it in the primary text, whereas it occurs in the secondary text in Figure 6.

Shama cooking oil's billboard advertisement is illustrated in Figure 5. Even though Shama (شمع) is an Urdu word, linguistic landscape actors have used Roman letters and the alphabetic writing system to name cooking oil as 'Shama cooking oil'. The term 'Shama' (شمع) refers to 'candle' in English. In this way, they have changed the script from Nastaleeq (a combination of Naskh and Taleeq Arabic scripts) to Roman and the writing system from abjad to alphabetic.



Figure 5: Shama Cooking Oil (Billboard Advertisement)

Source: Nowshera Market

Figure 6 is the billboard advertisement for Pepsi. Mimicry is noticeable in its secondary text rather than the primary text (name of the product); therefore, this sign is different from others. A primary text is an information about the shop's name and, in many cases, its type. On the contrary, the secondary texts refer to the address, product details, quality attributes, other special offers, etc. The secondary text 'دل مانگے ابھی' is an Urdu phrase, but it is transcribed in the alphabetic writing system as 'Dil Maange Abhi'. It is an example of writing system mimicry because the expression appears in the alphabetic writing system

and the Roman script rather than the abjad writing system and the Nastaleeq script.



Figure 6: Pepsi (Billboard Advertisement)  
Source: Mardan City

### 3.3 Pashto in the Alphabetic writing system

The Pashto alphabet is a combination of 3 letters of Urdu and Persian, all 28 letters of Arabic, and 13 additional letters. The script and writing style of Pashto is a modified version of the Arabic script that is used by various languages, such as Urdu, Punjabi, Kashmiri, Balochi, Lurish, Balti, Sindhi, Rohingya, etc. The English alphabet, which is written in the Roman script, is the bedrock of the English writing system. On the other hand, Pashto uses the abjad script and the Naskh style of writing. The next two figures (Figure 7 and 8) are examples where Pashto terms are mentioned in the alphabetic writing system of English and the Roman script.

Figure 7 illustrates Korba restaurant's billboard advertisement. The term 'Korba' (کوربه) means 'host' (the one who attends or receives others as guests). This billboard advertisement has employed three scripts, Latin, Naskh, and the Nastaleeq, whereas two writing systems are used: alphabetic and abjad. These aforementioned writing systems, along with the former two scripts, convey primary information. For instance, the name of the restaurant, address, the name of the program, the channel name, etc. Furthermore, additional details are provided through the abjad writing system and the Nastaleeq script. Korba (کوربه), a Pashto word, is written in Roman letters, which uses different script and writing system than Pashto. The color and font selection signifies the emblematic status of English in Pakistan.



Figure 7: Korba Restaurant (Billboard Advertisement)  
Source: Nowshera-Peshawar Road

A roadside hotel's signboard is typified in Figure 8. It has presented its name in both Roman letters and in the Naskh script, employing the alphabetic and the abjad writing systems, respectively. The abjad writing system and the Naskh style is adopted for its Pashto version (المدينه چرغه هاؤس), while the alphabetic writing system and the Roman script for its English name (Al-Madina Chargha House). Chargha (چرغه), a Pashto word, means 'chicken'. This term is also rendered in Roman letters and script. Romanization refers to the conversion of writing from different writing systems to the Roman (Latin) script. Hence, the restaurants' title is Romanized in this sign. It elucidates writing system mimicry where LL actors mimic the Latin script. Similarly, they mimic the Nastaleeq script and the abjad writing system for different available dishes. Mutton karahi (مٹن کڑاہی), chicken karahi (چکن کڑاہی), and chicken chapli kabab (چکن چپلی کباب) are just a few examples.



Figure 8: Roadside Hotel (Signboard)

Source: Nowshera City

### 3.4 Mixed writing systems

English and Urdu languages incorporate different writing systems (e.g., alphabetic and abjad), but sometimes it happens that various systems are merged within one word. The following two figures illustrate mixed writing systems.

Figure 9 is divided into three sections: left, center, and right. Its right margin is an example of the abjad writing system utilizing English terms. On the other hand, its left margin has employed the Urdu word 'Mazbaan' written in Roman letters. Additionally, the sign makers have integrated two quite different writing systems by fitting in the term 'mezbaan' in its center.



Figure 9: Mezbaan Hotel and Restaurant (Signboard)

Source: Mardan City

Similarly, Figure 10 also embodies the abjad and alphabetic writing systems. These two writing systems are blended together

in its primary text. It has been done by incorporating the term ‘Riwaḡ’ in its title as ‘Riwaḡ Wedding Hall’.



Figure 10: Riwaḡ Wedding Hall (Signboard)  
Source: Nowshera-Mardan Road

Question 2. What is the frequency of different patterns of writing system mimicry used in the multilingual landscape of Mardan and Nowshera districts?

The analysis of 686 multilingual fixed signs was led by Sutherland (2015). The first question has revealed that writing system mimicry exhibits itself in four patterns: English in the abjad writing system, Urdu in the alphabetic writing system, Pashto in the alphabetic writing system, and mixed writing systems. In this question, the percentages and frequencies of the occurrence of patterns are compared statistically.

Table 3 and Figure 10 show four patterns of writing system mimicry that have been uncovered in this study. These represent the number of signs, patterns, and percentages. These demonstrate that the multilingual landscape of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa contains a plethora of abjad -written English words and expressions. The statistics display that Urdu and other regional languages rarely appear in the alphabetic writing system than the first category.

**Table 3: Patterns of writing system mimicry**

S. No.	Patterns of writing system mimicry	No. of signs	Percentages
1.	English in the Abjad Writing System	482	70.2

2.	Urdu in the Alphabetic Writing System	187	27.2
3.	Pashto in the Alphabetic Writing System	14	2.04
4.	Mixed Writing Systems	3	0.43

Source: Mahmood 2022

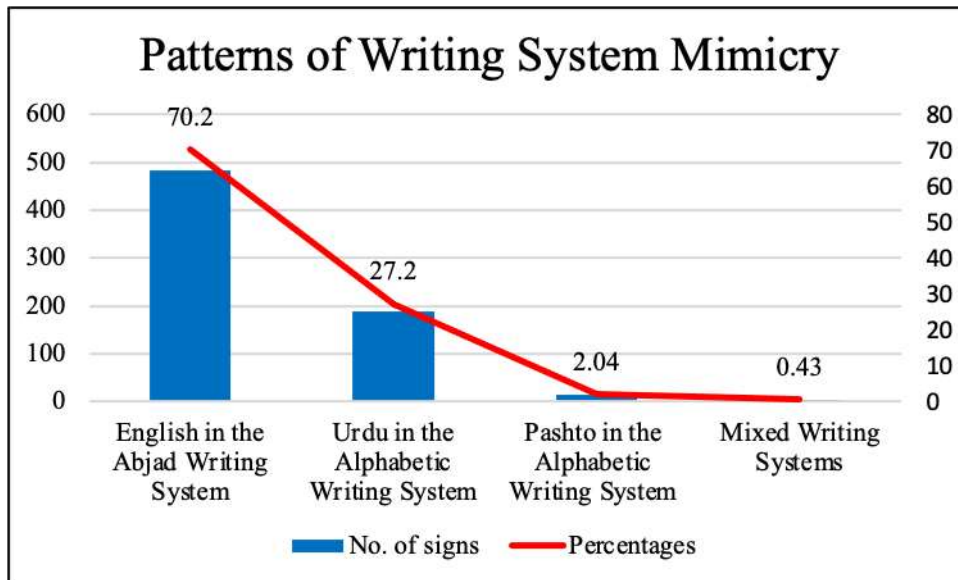


Figure 11: Comparative Analysis of Various Patterns of Writing System Mimicry

Source: Mahmood 2022

#### 4. Discussion

The study was intended to explore how writing system mimicry manifests itself in the multilingual landscape of mutually adjacent districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Mardan and Nowshera. Sutherland's (2015) model of writing system mimicry has directed the processing of 686 photographs. The study has analyzed mimicry with respect to two writing systems (e.g., alphabetic and abjad) and three scripts, including Naskh, Nastaleeq (a combination of Naskh and Taleeq Arabic scripts), and Roman. Different patterns of writing system mimicry have been highlighted in the first query. After that, in the next section, these are compared statistically. As a result, this study has employed a mixed-method approach.

Four patterns of writing system mimicry have been featured, including English in the abjad writing system, Urdu in the alphabetic writing system, Pashto in the alphabetic writing system, and mixed writing systems. Additionally, the analysis and results reveal that the multilingual landscape is chock-full of



abjad-written English terms. The overuse of English expressions exposes the hegemonic ideology of linguistic landscape actors. Despite their lack of education, they unconsciously promote it by convincing others that their national and regional languages are inexpressive and inferior. It symbolizes the English language's linguistic imperialism in Pakistan.

The study validates the assumption that English is the linguistic capital, coined by Pierre Bourdieu, as designers prefer to employ this foreign language over other local languages. It shows that locals are aware of English vocabulary but are unfamiliar with its script and writing system. A written language preserves history, culture, and literature by employing a specific writing system. A language loses its essence when it is written in an alien writing system and script: it could result in the demise of the language and its writing system. For instance, when Urdu terms are transcribed in the alphabetic writing system, the abjad writing system may eventually die out, and vice versa. As a result, this study suggests that educational reforms and public awareness campaigns would help to alleviate the pervasive use of writing system mimicry in Pakistan.

The current research was carried out in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), one of Pakistan's four provinces. Hindko, Punjabi, Yidgha, Saraiki, Gawri, Kohistani, and Urdu are minority languages in this province, with Pashto being the most extensively spoken. According to the 1998 census, Pashto is the first language of 91 percent of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's populace. On the contrary, the findings show that sign developers, regardless of Pashto, prefer to employ national and foreign languages. Pashto emerged as the third most prevalent language after English and Urdu. Various Pashto terms, such as چرگان (chickens), ارزان (to sell something on cheaper rates), کوربه (host), ترسکون (tasty), have been used in this study. Similarly, expressions like د خدا پر په امان (Good bye or May Allah protect) and هاشنغرته په خیراغلے (welcome to Hashnagar). Pashto, Urdu, Arabic, Chinese, and English all featured in the multilingual landscape.

Kandel (2019) and Huebner (2006) have explored the linguistic landscapes of Nepal and Bangkok, respectively. These investigations have found that English emerged as the predominant language, irrespective of constitutions and official documents. Therefore, the results of these two investigations are remarkably comparable to those of the current study. English is the language of commerce, technology, trade, and science. It is practiced as an official language in 27 non-sovereign states and 59 sovereign states, with a total of 1.132 million speakers. Thus, the concept of "one state, one language" has become outmoded in the twenty-first century (Cenoz and Gorter 2008, 270). Similarly, Pakistan is a multilingual country. Hence, English is also actively used in the multilingual landscape Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK).

The persistent use of English terminologies has discombobulated the identification of Urdu as the documented official and the country's national language. The language policy issue has been addressed by various documents, such as government authorities' pronouncements in the assembly and constitutions (e.g., 1956, 1962, and 1973). The current scenario shows that Urdu is the *de jure* official language while English is the *de facto* official language of Pakistan. English has been adopted as the language of trade, business, and international correspondence by a wide range of communities and countries, and it is thus acknowledged as the world's *lingua franca*. English is also labelled as a 'killer language' and 'linguistic genocide' because it belittles the use of minority and regional languages (Phillipson 2001; Mufwene 1994, as cited in Alhaider, 2018, p. 77). Local people and elite class inhabitants are disseminating English at the expense of their regional languages. As a result, many indigenous languages are rapidly becoming extinct.

### 5. Conclusion

The current study was conducted to investigate the manifestation of writing system mimicry in relation to the district Nowshera and Mardan's multilingual landscape. Sutherland's (2015) writing system mimicry model has led the analysis. This study was grounded on the mimicry of scripts, terms, and writing systems concerning different languages. Linguistic landscape signs show the disparity between the selection of vocabulary terms and the use of writing systems. Therefore, four patterns of writing system mimicry have been revealed: English in the abjad writing system, Urdu in the alphabetic writing system, Pashto in the alphabetic writing system, and mixed writing systems. The multilingual landscape of Pakistan frequently uses abjad-written English words; as a result, it was the most noticeable pattern among the other three.

Inadequate financial resources, being a girl, and living in an extremely confined environment are three primary limitations of the study. Consequently, the researcher could not collect data from all districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), Pakistan. The investigation has uncovered a disparity in the use of writing systems (scripts) and language selection. It is attributed either to a lack of Urdu vocabulary or an individual preference for English. Usually, phrases appear to be in Urdu, yet they are replete with English terms. It connotes the English language's symbolic prominence above other local languages. Various English terms, such as 'house', 'pants', 'paint', 'center', 'furniture', 'shop', 'store' etc., are customarily utilized; they are rarely considered foreign words. According to the findings, English phrases occurred frequently both in the abjad writing system and the Nastaleeq script of Urdu. As a result, the first pattern has triumphed over the other three.

Additional research is needed because a single study cannot cover all aspects of writing systems mimicry and linguistic landscape studies. A study can explore writing system mimicry in logo designs of national and multinational companies, organizations, and associations. Different languages are used in schools and are displayed in the form of charts, diagrams, signs, symbols, etc. These displayed signs within the premises of schools are termed 'schoolscapes'. Future researchers may explore 'schoolscapes' in relation to teaching techniques and students' learning outcomes.

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## **Appendices**



English in the Abjad Writing System





Urdu in the Alphabetic Writing System



Pashto in the Alphabetic Writing System



Mixed Writing Systems