Language Representation in Public Areas: A Case Study of Diamer District, Gilgit-Baltistan, within the Framework of Pakistan

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Abstract

Over the past fifteen years, the study of linguistic landscapes has gained significance, particularly in multilingual regions where dominant languages often overshadow indigenous ones, making their survival challenging. This research focuses on the linguistic landscape of District Diamer in Gilgit-Baltistan, a region renowned for both its cultural diversity and breathtaking natural beauty. To analyze the presence and use of different languages in public spaces, the study examines 150 images of road signs, hotel and guesthouse boards, business names, and directional signs. Through this exploration, the study sheds light on how languages coexist, interact, and compete in the daily lives of the people in this linguistically rich region. In addition to collecting photographic data, informal interviews were conducted with local shop owners and tourists to learn about their perspectives on the linguistic landscape of Gilgit-Baltistan and its relationship to the language ecology of the area. The linguistic landscape of District Diamer Gilgit-Baltistan does not show the same richness and diversity typical of that region's linguistic ecology, according to an examination of data based on images. Chinese coexists alongside English and Urdu as the two most common languages in GB, although Chillas and Diamer also speak these two languages in public. None of the texts that are displayed in the region's public areas employ any indigenous language, despite the study's findings revealing various patterns of language use that make up the linguistic landscape of GB. The study's findings highlight a concerning absence of regional languages in Great Britain's linguistic landscape, underscoring the need to promote indigenous languages in public spaces. This research aims to raise awareness among local communities, encouraging them to play an active role in shaping their linguistic environment. Additionally, it seeks to draw the attention of government authorities to the urgency of preserving and promoting indigenous languages by ensuring their visibility in public domains. By fostering a more inclusive linguistic landscape, this initiative can contribute to the revitalization and sustainability of regional languages.

Keywords: Linguistic Landscape; Public Space, Indigenous Languages; Language policy.

Introduction

To establish a certain linguistic landscape territory, Linguistic Landscapes (LL), as defined by Landry and Bourhis (2020), are studies that look at the language used in public signage, advertising

billboards, street and place names, and commercial shop signage on government and public buildings. Since then, academics have used the phrase "linguistics landscape" (LL) as a foundation for defining and comprehending the idea of the linguistic landscape. According to Shohamy and Gorter (2018), linguistic landscape study has recently yielded numerous striking depictions of the multilingual character of "contemporary cityscapes." The idea of the linguistic landscape has typically been illustrated by imagery, name, symbolism, or signage, such as that found in restaurants, stores, banks, post offices, and other establishments, as well as through graffiti and other items that are "printed" as part of a city's signage (Landry & Bourhis, 2021).

Furthermore, since the LL concept was first proposed in 12015, a sizable number of investigations have been carried out throughout numerous countries. Multilingualism (Dégi, 2015; Muth & Wolf, 2019), language diversity (Dixson, 2020), language policy (Takhtarova, 2021; Wang, 2022), ethnography (Blommaert & Maly, 2020), and Ethnolinguistic (Botterman, 2021) are only a few of the various perspectives that have been examined in several research. However, the majority of these studies have mostly concentrated on the characteristics of the language landscape concerning readership and visibility (both top-down and bottom-up). In actuality, the linguistic landscape is a multilingual phenomenon that may be examined from different angles, including translation. This is so that we may better grasp the nature of language cohabitation in public spaces by using the multilingual dimension that the linguistic landscape affords, where several languages are displayed (Blommaert & Maly, 2023).

According to Cronin (2021), the multilingual and multiethnic spaces we today encounter in urban environments are primarily spaces of translation. This is so that individuals from many languages and cultures can converse and share ideas in these settings. Few studies, nevertheless, have looked at the function translation plays in the linguistics landscape, which shows how languages coexist side by side in places like public signage.

The language of street names, place names, commercial store signs, public signs on government buildings, advertising billboards, and public road signs "combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory," claim Landry & Bourhis (1997) (p. 25). Any region's linguistic landscape reflects not only the dominance of one or a few languages, but also the marginalization of other languages that are not given enough space there, which is a sign of linguistic inequality in multilingual environments.

According to Morrison (2007), Linguistic landscape studies concentrate on language use in public settings, whether it be official or informal. Linguistic landscape studies give a precise image of a nation's implicit and explicit language policy as well as how it influences the linguistic preferences of its citizens since they examine both official and informal language use in public settings. As a result, when particular languages are projected in public areas, people's attitudes and behaviors toward them may change. People start to feel that they should learn to read in these languages that are used in public places since it may be very annoying to not be able to understand material there, particularly when it comes to directions and instructions for the road. Being literate in the language or languages that make up a region's linguistic landscape is empowering.

The goal of the current study is to close the current gap. The study's distinctiveness stems from its attention to the language landscape of Great Britain as well as its consideration of the reactions of residents and visitors to the area's current linguistic landscape. The goal of the present research is to analyze the linguistic landscape of District Diamer region, Gilgit-Baltistan, to look at which languages dominate the landscape of the areas that part of this region.

Research Objectives
- To identify the dominant languages shaping the linguistic landscape of various areas within District Diamer, Gilgit-Baltistan.
- To examine the ways in which different languages are utilized in public spaces across the region.
- To explore the underlying factors influencing the visibility and projection of specific languages in the linguistic landscape.
- To analyze the perspectives of both local residents and tourists regarding the linguistic landscape of the region.

Research Questions
1. Which languages dominate the linguistic landscape of District Diamer, Gilgit-Baltistan?
2. In what ways are these languages utilized in public spaces across the region?
3. What factors contribute to the visibility and projection of these languages in the linguistic landscape?
4. How do local residents and tourists perceive the linguistic landscape of District Diamer?

Literature Review

The presence and predominance of languages on official and commercial signage within a certain territory or region is referred to as the linguistic landscape (LL). The goal of this definition is to be inclusive and wide (Landry & Bourhis, 2020). The idea of LL, which is characterized as a collection of visual representations of languages used in bilingual or multilingual cultures, has also been examined by other scholars (Shohamy & Gorter, 2021).

In the linguistic landscape, signage has been categorized into a variety of categories, including "private" and "public," "unofficial" and "official," "top-down" and "bottom-up," "public" and "private," and "unofficial" and "private" (Landry & Bourhis, 215; Backhaus, 2020). These words apply to the same definition of signage, which is produced by private or community groups, including store owners, and by government bodies. The linguistic landscape is a system of written signage used in the public domain of an urban context, as can be seen from the definition given above. The linguistic landscape offers information beyond only where and what languages you should be able to communicate in. It also answers these questions quickly. It presents a fresh perspective on the rivalry and coexistence of numerous languages, as well as how they interact and cause problems for one another in a given setting (Backhaus, 2021).

Furthermore, LL carries out two main tasks: symbolic and informational tasks. According to Kasanga (2022), the languages used on public signage either show which languages are already relevant in the area or provide an indication of which languages are becoming relevant there. This means that the density or degree of presence exhibited by a language within a linguistic landscape can serve as an indicator of that language's significance, strength, and relevance in society.

In a similar vein, Shohamy and Gorter (2021) stated that LL accurately and depicts multilingualism in the eyes of the community. As a symbolic tool, it can also serve as a guide to the patterns that are now occurring in certain social groupings, local communities, geographic areas, or even entire nations. However, the groundbreaking study on ethnolinguistic vitality and signs in Canada conducted by Landry and Bourhis (1997) helped to popularize the rapidly developing subject of linguistic landscape research. Through an analysis of linguistic indicators in public areas, their study aimed to establish a connection between ethnolinguistic vibrancy and linguistic landscape. The goal of Landry and Bourhis' research on Canada's linguistic landscape was to gauge the ethnolinguistic vitality of the Anglophones and Francophones; nevertheless, the field of linguistic landscape research encompasses much more than simply this.

Language landscapes have been studied from a wide range of angles in various multilingual contexts all over the world. In his discussion of linguistic landscape as a novel method for analyzing multilingualism, Gorter (2019; 2021) has put out a number of useful methods. While some LL studies have been conducted to trace the process of language change that has occurred in the linguistic landscape of certain regions over time, other researchers interested in linguistic landscape studies, such as Blommaert, 2023; Blommaert & Maly, 2019; Stroud & Mpendukana, 2019, have experimented with ethnographic linguistic landscape analysis.

Since these studies are longitudinal in nature, they shed light on how minority languages fight for survival by establishing a presence in public spaces and how, as time goes on, their status may change due to changes in language policies, which in turn affects how people view and use these languages (Blommaert, 2023). Case studies on the language environment of multilingual colleges have emerged as an intriguing area of research in addition to comparative studies. A case study by Wang (2021) that looks at the language signage put up on the Kyushu University campus in Japan serves as one illustration. Wang (2022) has not only examined the linguistic signs that are readily apparent on campus, but he has also considered students' opinions about the employment of Japanese and English signs that make up Kyushu University's LL by utilizing a closed-ended questionnaire.

Previous LL studies (Octavianus, 2019; Sari and Savitri, 2021; Wijaya, 2021) and other studies that addressed similar topics included language identity displayed in public space (Blackwood et al., 2021; Stroud, 2022), language use in public space for commercial purposes (Hornsby, 2023; Van Mensel et al., 2024), and naming shops from an LL perspective. In particular, this study uses language mapping to attempt to address every issue at once. This research therefore represents an innovation in the field of linguistic landscape study, since it makes use of applications as tools for gathering and mapping language use, followed by an explanation of the scenarios or geographical variables that may influence language use in public spaces based on the maps. It addresses the claims made by Gorter (2021) that the linguistic landscape is a method for characterizing the linguistic circumstances in a place and Stroud (2019) that LL is actively employed by people or communities (groups) to foster local engagement and produce new feelings and conditions in a particular geographic area.

There is a dearth of research on the linguistic landscape of Pakistan, despite the fact that many studies have been conducted on the linguistic landscape of multilingual cultures worldwide. So far, Manan, David, Dumanig, and Channa's (2020) study is the only one that is relevant in the Pakistani setting. Using 825 images and 30 interviews with Quetta's business owners, this study focused on the language environment of the city. There are no noteworthy linguistic landscape studies accessible in the Pakistani context, with the exception of this one by Manan et al. (2021), which focuses on the linguistic landscape of Quetta, one of the major cities of Balochistan.

Language Policy and Historical Background

In Pakistan, the English language has a history rooted in colonization and is deeply ingrained in numerous societal domains. According to Coleman (2021) and Wedell (2022), English serves three main purposes: functional, utilitarian, and practical. These functions are evident in nations working hard to update their scientific and technological infrastructure, with positive, negative, and neutral implications, respectively. In multilingual settings such as Pakistan, English fulfills two primary functions: it is acknowledged as an official language and is used as a medium of communication by the general public (Kachru, 1985).

Furthermore, the English language is one of the legacies Pakistan acquired from the subcontinent's split. The British colonists, who ruled the subcontinent for over a century, employed this language.

Before gaining independence, Pakistan was part of the subcontinent (Coleman, 2022). Wedell (2023) notes that the region was ruled by both Muslims and the British throughout the Mughal Empire. Islamic rulers guided the development of Islamic traditions and culture. During the Mughal Empire, Persian was the official language used to discuss matters pertaining to state politics, business, and other modern issues (Mehboob, 2021). The British imposed English on the Indian subcontinent in the name of civilization, even though the natives did not perceive the need for a change in language (Mehboob, 2024).

The British language policing, which sought to influence Indian behavior regarding language acquisition, learning, structure, and functional allocation, was solely responsible for this linguistic change (Cooper & Cooper, 1989). The British made numerous changes to the subcontinent while they were in charge. Many sociolinguists have attempted to explain why English maintains its high standing even after the subcontinent was split into India and Pakistan (Blommaert, 2023).

Moreover, Mehboob (2022) observes that language is elevated above all others by political power, particularly military force. A sudden change in a mother language will also cause a change in a society's overall hierarchies. The language shift in the subcontinent happened in 1835, indicating how the general public saw English, which in turn caused the power structures to change.

According to Manan et al. (2021), this divide led to the implementation of the three-language policy. Urdu was declared the national language and English the official language under this program. Additionally, it assigned a provincial language to each of Pakistan's provinces, with Sindhi designated for Sindh, Balochi for Baluchistan, Pashto for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Punjabi for Punjab (Zaidi & Zaki, 2023). However, in 1948, the two-language policy replaced the three-language plan, designating Urdu as the official national language and English as the secondary language. It is anticipated that in the next ten years, Urdu will surpass English.

Currently, English is the language of instruction in educational institutions, and people in high and significant government posts must be proficient in the language. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan's 1973 Constitution, which clearly declares in Article 251 that Urdu is the official language and English is the national language, was the first constitution to be accepted nationally.

In 2023, the highly regarded Supreme Court of Pakistan sent a notice to all government agencies instructing them to use Urdu in all official documents and public spaces. However, Zaidi and Zaki (2022) determined that these directives are largely ineffective. This policy is merely a rule intended to distinguish between the knowledgeable and the ignorant. Proficiency in English among Pakistanis remains an indication of dominance and the status quo.

Methodology
This research employed a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach includes a number of aspects, according to Moleong (2024), including data collection, analysis, and descriptive findings presentation. Seliger and Shohamy (2021) defined descriptive research as a collection of techniques used to describe, characterize, or explain spontaneously occurring phenomena without requiring the manipulation of experimental conditions. The framework proposed by Trumper-Hecht (2010) was used to conduct this qualitative case study. The exploratory purpose aims to investigate a new or understudied area. This type of research seeks to uncover patterns, ideas, and insights rather than to test hypotheses or make predictions Zaki (2022).

Convenient sampling involves selecting subjects that are easiest to access. It is a non-probability sampling technique often used in exploratory research where the primary aim is to get a quick approximation of the reality (Mahboob, 2021).

Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It is particularly suited for qualitative research as it allows for rich, detailed, and complex accounts of data

The triangulation method was used to gather the data. The basic data consisted of 150 photos of the linguistic signs that were located on sign boards in various parts of Gilgit Baltistan. These signs bore the names of hotels, restaurants, shops, ads for various brands, and official directives. The entire region of Gilgit Baltistan offers an ideal setting for linguistic landscape research because of the diversity of linguistic groups living there and the constant exposure of the people to both domestic and foreign tourists. Some parts of Gilgit Baltistan, particularly the ones that are regularly visited by tourists from across the world, were chosen for the study with this rich linguistic heterogeneity in mind. Districts Diamer, Chilass, Darail, Khanbari, Babusar, Thack Nayaat, Thoor, Khaneer, Botogha, and Thack Loshi are among the places from which the data were gathered.

In addition to gathering photographic data, several of the neighbourhood shops conducted informal interviews to learn about their perspectives on the linguistic environment of their area. Additionally, a few of the local tourists conversed casually with one another to find out how they felt about the linguistic landscape that was evident in those places.

Data Analysis and Discussion
The 150 photos that are displayed in Gilgit Baltistan's public areas were analyzed for this study's data, which was also derived from casual interviews with visitors and local business owners. The data analysis using images indicates various language use patterns that make up the region's linguistic environment. The opinions of the respondents are also critically scrutinized and discussed in conjunction with the investigation of these patterns.

English text in English orthography
The dominant language in Gilgit-Baltistan is English. The images gathered for this research show how English is used both formally and informally. English is extensively utilized in both official and informal signage, as shown by the names of stores, lodging facilities, dining establishments, and guest houses located across Gilgit-Baltistan. In the area, there are numerous establishments with names like *Lucky Shoes, Paradise Bakery & General Store, Lucky Shoes, Super City Bakers, Aroma Restaurant, Gun Smoke Restaurant, Hilltop Hotel, River View Hotel, Eagle's Nest Hotel,* and *Safe Heaven Guest House*. In addition to store names, official Gilgit-Baltistan directives are written in English outside the forts. For example, there is a sign outside *Altit Fort's royal gardens* that reads, "Smoking is prohibited on the premises of *Altit Fort*." Similar to this, *Deosai National Park* and a signboard also list several forbidden activities. The language of both signboards is English.

The prevalence of English in public areas throughout Gilgit-Baltistan is indicative of both globalization and the socioeconomic benefits that come with speaking the language. English is a powerful barrier that prevents speakers of indigenous languages from transmitting their "cultural capital. The predominance of English in public areas in Gilgit-Baltistan, a country that depends heavily on tourism for its income, indicates that the language is valued as the socioeconomic capital of the area. The point is reinforced by casual conversations with a few of the local store owners in Babusar and Chilass, since they all have a same understanding of what English is. They view the use of English as a marketing ploy that draws in both domestic and foreign visitors.

The widespread usage of English in Gilgit Baltistan is evidence of the high regard in which the language is held both nationally and locally in Pakistan. Like other South Asian post-colonial

nations, Pakistan has a strong English-speaking heritage despite being an independent nation with a diverse population.

In Pakistan, there is no ban on the usage of native languages in public areas; yet, local languages are rarely projected in any public area. Pakistan's language policy is formulated in a way that precludes speakers of indigenous languages from being encouraged to advance their language. It wouldn't be an overstatement to say that covert language policies have a significant impact on how people think, particularly when linguistic awareness is lacking, as appears to be the case with Pakistani people. The majority of people in Pakistan use English, which is promoted as the answer to all of their problems, to the fullest extent possible in an attempt to identify with the socioeconomically privileged group because they are unaware of their linguistic rights and are subjective by ordinary languages.

English text in Urdu orthography
In Pakistan, people no longer view English as a foreign language because it is so commonly used in public settings. The use of Urdu orthography (*nastaaliiq* script, also known as the Persian-Arabic alphabet) for writing English is one indication that it is not regarded as a foreign language. It is frequently found in notifications, signboards, and advertising published in print and electronic newspapers and magazines.

In public venues across GB, it is common to see English text written in Urdu spelling, also referred to as the "Urduvized version of English" .The "Urduvized version" of English is mostly composed of bilingual Urdu/English text in Urdu orthography that projects assimilation at the orthographic level, based on data gathered in the form of photos. The following are a few instances of English terms written in Urdu: *"exclusive deal," "speed bump," "pricing," "convenience store," "picture studio," "copy service," "protected area," "lodging," "outdoor camping," "merchants," and "primary distributor."*

Although mispronouncing English words results from using English in Urdu orthography, this practice is widespread in Pakistan and is not exclusive to the linguistic landscape of Great Britain. The majority of English words written in Urdu script are regarded as either borrowed words or loan words; the former are fully assimilated at the morphological, phonological, and orthographic levels, while the latter are only partially assimilated. It is not uncommon to see English words written in Urdu spelling in public areas in GB, as this is a widespread trend in Pakistani print and electronic media.

When asked about their thoughts on the usage of Urdu spelling for English phrases such as "government," "property," "hotel," and "guest house," several local tourists thought the words were Urdu. Nonetheless, the practice of writing them in Urdu spelling was accepted by the local tourists who thought of them as English words. One local visitor explained that one rationale for writing English in Urdu orthography is to make the text easier to read for people who are literate in Urdu but do not understand English. It is essential to make clear that one language's sound system cannot fully convey another language's sound system.

Urdu Text in Urdu Orthography
In Gilgit Baltistan, using English written in Urdu is not the only thing that happens frequently in public areas. Urdu text written in Urdu orthography is also apparent there and contributes to the region's linguistic landscape. Even yet, its usage is less widespread than that of English. One could argue that Urdu's status as a national language is in jeopardy given how little it is used compared to English's extensive usage. Despite Pakistan's 1973 constitution's assurances to the contrary, English continues to hold a significant amount of authority, especially in public areas. The minimal

usage of Urdu in public areas is symbolic and runs against to Pakistan's language strategy, which seeks to encourage Urdu. Not only is there a difference in practice between the official language policy and the usage of Urdu in public areas, but there is also a difference in Pakistan's language and education policies. Despite Urdu's designation as Pakistan's national official language, there is still disagreement over the language to be taught in elementary, secondary, and university education. Despite the official declaration of English being the primary language of teaching in Pakistani higher education, Urdu/English code-switching is a prevalent practice in most university classrooms across the nation. Language signs in public areas across the nation also frequently display the same dual nature.

When asked about their opinions on the use of just Urdu in texts of this type, shops and locals expressed concern that the text would become less readable due to people's ingrained habit of reading English terms in Urdu. It's actually true that young readers who are unfamiliar with numerous Urdu vocabulary will find it challenging to read any work that solely uses Urdu words, according to one of the local tourists. This tourist's explanation for using English words in Urdu text in public areas when there are Urdu translations available is concerning and should cause people in general and language and education policymakers in particular to pause. Because it is difficult to comprehend a work written entirely in Urdu, there appears to be a severe gap in the country's language and education policies. This raises concerns about the quality of Urdu language instruction provided in the nation as well as a certain level of indifference toward the language.

Urdu-English Bilingual Text
Around the world, bilingual and multilingual communities frequently engage in bilingual speech. Not only is bilingualism being used more frequently in written communication, but it is also being used in spoken conversation. When using bilingualism, the same content is frequently presented in many languages to make the text readable for people who might not be proficient in one of the major languages or who might find it difficult to comprehend. While it is true that these bilingual texts are uncommon in public settings, there are several niche locations where one can come across examples of this Urdu / English bilingual literature. For example, in Diamer (Chilass), there is a wall in the main market with racks where individuals can place clothing, shoes, or other necessities to help the impoverished who lack the means to meet their basic needs. The wall is bilingual and has two titles: "Wall of Kindness" and "diva-e-maharani," which is its Urdu equivalent. Another instance of bilingual writing in Urdu and English can be seen outside the Shangri-La Resort in Babusar. There, two notice boards with identical directions in both Urdu and English are posted on the wall. The notification in Urdu does, however, stand out for using several English vocabulary terms in Urdu spelling. "Ticket," "barrier," "property," "driver," and "badge" are a few examples.

Chinese Text Written in Chinese Characters
The linguistic variety of Pakistan is threatened by more than just English. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, or CPEC, is perceived as another significant obstacle that may influence Pakistanis' linguistic preferences shortly. One of these challenges is the Chinese language. Signboards in Chinese, in addition to English and Urdu, may be seen in many parts of Gilgit, from Hunza to Khunjerab, providing proof of this new development. There is a wide range of countries represented in the tourist population in these places. The region's natural beauty and the fact that there are massive mountains all around it draw tourists from both within and outside the country, particularly from Europe, where most of them come to hike, trek, and go mountaineering. Even though there aren't many Chinese visitors to Great Britain, the language is starting to surface in public areas. Its inclusion in Gilgit-Baltistan's linguistic landscape is justified by the fact that Chinese labourers and engineers are working on building roads and tunnels in the area, demonstrating how the CPEC is fostering closer links between China and Pakistan. However, since

the Chinese language is rapidly emerging as a significant linguistic and cultural capital, particularly in Gilgit-Baltistan, the ties that speakers of indigenous languages have with their mother tongue may become weaker as a result of these increased ties. Chinese has started to appear in Chilass s official and informal public spaces as a result of Babusar residents travelling to China for business due to the country's proximity to Chilass and the ease with which they can enter China without a visa.

Chinese does not, however, entirely dominate GB's linguistic landscape, in contrast to English. Furthermore, the Chinese writing that is displayed in the region's public venues is projected alongside either Urdu English, or both. It is not written in isolation. The banner of the "China Gate Restaurant" is an example of an English-Chinese bilingual text; it also includes the Hanzi (Chinese characters) translation of the restaurant's name, "*Zhongguo men Indian*," in Chinese. An additional illustration would be the official sign board that provides details on the Rakaposhi Glacier View Point. Information is shown on the signboard in both Chinese and English. Another official bilingual text in English and Chinese is painted on the wall outside the seven tunnels. It reads, "Long Live Pak-China Friendship," which is translated as *"Zhong-Baj youyi wansui*" in Chinese. The text is written in Chinese characters rather than Pinyin, which is a phonetic transcription of Chinese that I have included here for those who are unable to read the Chinese characters.

Findings
The study's conclusions clearly show that non-indigenous languages predominate in Gilgit-Baltistan. The study's findings make it clear that English dominates the region's linguistic landscape, followed by Urdu and Chinese. On sign boards, these three languages are shown in various ways in both official and informal capacities: as monolingual English texts, trilingual Urdu-English-Chinese texts, bilingual Urdu-English texts, and bilingual English-Chinese writings.

The usage of Chinese and English in public places is a flagrant disregard for Pakistan's declared language policy, which designates Urdu as the country's official language. Despite being spoken in public areas throughout Gilgit-Baltistan, Urdu is not as often used as English is in this area. Aside from this, no signboard in the region carries any information in any of the native languages. The fact that multiple dialects of English, Chinese, and Urdu may be heard in public areas across Gilgit-Baltistan is evidence that both inhabitants and visitors value these languages.

The majority of local business owners and visitors to the region have positive opinions about the languages that predominate in the linguistic landscape of GB, but they also seem unconcerned about the projection of the indigenous languages that are spoken in Gilgit-Baltistan. With the exception of one traveler who voiced his displeasure with the use of Chinese in Chilass public areas due to his personal animosity for both Chinese people and Chinese culture despite my informal interactions with other travellers, it seemed that they were not bothered by the use of Chinese in public areas.

Indeed, two tourists from Pakistan who could read Chinese expressed their happiness that there was Chinese signage around. Except for one traveller, none of them saw the necessity to include native tongues in the region's linguistic environment to promote them. Both the shops' and the local tourists' comments must be taken seriously because they reveal a lack of language understanding in Pakistan, necessitating a national awareness effort.

Conclusion

In multilingual contexts, it is customary practice to give one or a few majority languages the upper hand at the expense of marginalizing the voices of indigenous minorities in public forums. The examination of the data available on the linguistic landscape of GB makes it clear that Urdu and English dominance will soon have an impact on the indigenous languages spoken in various regions of Gilgit, particularly in Chilass and Babusar. Furthermore, Chinese is another language that is starting to become more prevalent in this region's linguistic environment. This is particularly the case in Hunza, where Chinese is used both in official and informal contexts.

The linguistic environment of the Chilass and Babusar Pass basins includes Chinese, which serves as a symbolic reminder of the British Empire's eventual invasion of the Indo-Pak subcontinent after it gained influence through the East India Company. The Indo-Pak subcontinent was freed of British domination in 1947, but the British language continues to be dominant throughout the region. In the future, if the indigenous languages are not supported, we can expect to witness the same kind of linguistic imperialism through the use of the Chinese language. This is concerning because the Chinese language is not only becoming more and more prevalent in Gilgit and Gwadar, but it is also occasionally seen in a few public areas in Islamabad.

In the entire region, there are very few stores whose names are written in any of the Gilgit dialects. There is no literature in indigenous languages in forts or museums that cater to tourists in that area, nor is there any signage in those languages displaying the names of stores or motels. Language commodification can be significantly influenced by efforts to alter the language environment, and these efforts must be conducted on both an official and informal level.

Recommendations for Future Research

A significant constraint of the research is its exclusion of data from certain Gilgit-Baltistan districts. Due to financial limitations, I was unable to visit every part of Gilgit-Baltistan during my self-sponsored research. The results of this study on the linguistic landscape cannot be applied to the entirety of Gilgit-Baltistan because the data were only gathered from a small number of those places. My stay in Gilgit-Baltistan was similarly shortened due to financial constraints, which reduced my opportunities to socialize with locals and other visitors. I could have interacted with more people including foreign visitors had I stayed longer, which would have allowed me to gather valuable data based on a range of viewpoints. In the future, a comprehensive study encompassing all regions of Gilgit-Baltistan could be conducted to provide a comprehensive understanding of the linguistic landscape of the region. It is also possible to conduct nationwide research to document the linguistic environment of Pakistan's many regions, with an emphasis on a comparative examination of the language or languages spoken in public areas.

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