

**Language on the Move: The Linguistic Landscape of Peshawar**Anum Yousafzai<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Amjad Saleem<sup>2</sup>

Original Article

1. Lecturer Higher Education Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa  
Email: anumyousafzai365@gmail.com

2. Assistant Professor, Department of English & Applied Linguistics, University of Peshawar,  
Pakistan. Email: amjad.saleem@uop.edu.pk

**Introduction**

*Linguistic Landscape studies symbolic signs in public sphere. Since every language has its distinctive sociocultural features, symbolic signs offer a multitude of explanations and interpretations. Public transport is one of the modern facilities available to the public at large and is an essential part of our living experience. It is a means of travelling used by general public that operate at a scheduled time and charges a certain fare. Signs on vehicles are symbolic of how the drivers identify with certain cultural themes and how these signs are representative of public sentiments. These expressions are empowered by the culture and influenced by the recurrent ideas in social, political, or religious sphere. This study explores the Linguistic Landscape (LL) of Peshawar city by analysing written signs on the public transport of the city; the study focuses on how mobile signs or signs-on-the-move contribute to the construction of the symbolic identity of Peshawar. Three hundred written signs were collected from taxis/cabs, rickshaws, buses, coaches—plying on main routes i.e. University road and General Trunk Road (GT Road). Data were analysed in relation to the symbolic functions of language on public display to answer the research questions of the study. The analysis revealed that while Pashto is the most dominant language in the complex linguistic landscape of Peshawar, Urdu, English and Arabic were present to varying degrees, contributing to the sociolinguistic make-up of the city. Hindko, however, was missing from the scene. The study concludes that signs on public transport of the city. Hindko, however, was missing from the scene. The study concludes that signs on public transport of the city are indicative of the complex multilingual nature of city.*

**Keywords:** Linguistic Landscape, Cultural Themes, Interpretations, Multilingual

**1. Introduction**

From the text written on what we wear, to the labels on home appliances and electronic gadgets, to the written signs on billboards and signboards, language is an essential part of our living reality. Shohamy and Gorter (2009) observe that people “hang signs, display posters, design advertisements, write instructions and create websites. It is also people who read, attend, decipher and interpret these language displays, or at times, choose to overlook, ignore or erase them” (p. 1). People see these signs around them and consciously or unconsciously absorb the information specified therein. This public display of language has aroused scholarly interests in studying the meanings, purposes, and functions of language in public spaces. Unlike natural landscape, linguistic landscape is an entirely human-made phenomenon that tells us about the socio-political and socio-linguistic history of a locality and helps us determine a comprehensive picture of the social reality. Ben-Rafael et al (2006) support this stance by stating that signs on public display

mark territorial boundaries resulting in inclusion of language communities in the linguistic landscape of an area.

Linguistic landscape investigates public space comprises visible written signs outside private homes, ranging from road signs to names of streets, shops, and schools (Shohamy, Ben-Rafael, and Barni 2010). Such signs are meant for public viewing at large – signs on roads, streets, shops, offices, stores, billboards, parks, town squares, public libraries, public transport, etc. It is in these places that the linguistic situation of an area is not only clearly manifested but also projects and represents the identity of that area, indicating how linguistically divergent groups (co) exist. Ben-Rafael et al. (2006) argue that such spaces carry sociosymbolic importance, since they identify with certain communities and regions. Backhaus (2007) argues that LL reveals ethnic identity through two vital markers: language and place. People indirectly assert their existence by occupying a space through display of their language. Thus, the language displayed in such space serves an emblematic function, asserting the dominance and prestige of certain languages and language communities (Spolsky & Cooper 1991).

Pakistan is a multilingual country and is home to a variety of languages. According to Ethnologue (2016), 74 languages are being spoken across Pakistan. All major cities of the country provide a rich tapestry of multiple languages. Peshawar, the capital city of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, is one of the oldest cities of the region. Being an urban space full of economic opportunities, the city attracts people from rural and urban areas across the province and the country, as well as from the ethnically and culturally affiliated neighbouring country, Afghanistan. The city had been the center of tourists' attraction of the Hippies in the past, and it still holds its historical importance for many people around the world. Since Pashtuns are the largest ethnic and linguistic population of the city, Pashto is the dominant language while Hindko, Urdu, Persian/Dari are some other languages spoken in Peshawar. And like the rest of the country, English is the official language. The present study focuses on the dynamic nature of Peshawar in relation to mobile signs or signs on the move by examining written text on vehicles plying the roads of Peshawar to explore the symbolic construction of the city.

## 2. Literature Review

Linguistic landscape has extended its focus from Landry and Bourhis' (1997) traditional approach of space as a fixed and static thing to space as something dynamic and adaptable. Marten, Mensel, and Gorter (2012) calls Landry and Bourhis'(1997) approach outdated in an era where technological advancements breed video walls, digital screen displays, and other dynamic visual representation. They also argue that text on non-static objects, for instance vehicles and accessories worn by people such as clothing and bags should not be exempted from LL investigation. Bloch (2000) refers to such signs as mobile discourse, whereas Barni and Bagna (2016) identify this form of LL as transitory linguistic landscape. Taking space as something varying and fluid, Moriarty (2014) and Pennycook (2010) maintain the same view that space is dynamic and that language in public space should be seen and studied at one given moment in time. Sebba (2010) supports the addition of transitory and mobile signs in the analysis of linguistic landscape of an area. Thus, language on vehicles, stickers, pamphlets, banknotes etc. makes part of LL research which contribute to the depiction of an area as much as static signs do. Consequently, scholars have probed into labels, pamphlets, flyers, handbills and tissues (Scollon 2002), stamps, tickets, bills (Sebba 2010), banknotes (Hawkins 2010), restaurant menus (Kasanga 2012), graffiti (Rozenholc 2010), and even T-shirts (Coupland 2010). The LL of a locality includes not only written text, but also any other language medium that transmits meaning in public space, such as pictures,

moving signs, and even sounds and people. Thus, as observed by Shohamy and Waksman (2013), a public space is not something still and stagnant; it is rather a dynamic and evolving place which is “constantly being constructed, de-constructed, and re-constructed” (p. 110).

Assri (2021) analyzes signs used by people in demonstrations against the killing of George Floyd in the United States. Assri argues that since signs employed in protests express intentions, identities, and attitudes towards an issue, they are a form of discourse and thus play an important role in constructing the symbolic picture of an area. Similarly, Barni and Bagna (2016) investigated the Italian immigrants’ demonstration signs – written words on signs, shirts, symbolic images and colours, and slogans and chants during the protest – for LL analysis. Their analysis shows that the signs used by immigrant protestors do not account for their identity because of the prevalence of monolingual ideology in Italy, which necessitated the use of Italian language in protest signs rather than the immigrants’ mother tongues. Although protest signs have been examined from LL perspective as signs on the move, language on the vehicles – a real and solid manifestation of language – has not received much recognition within the field. Amoh (2018) examined the inscriptions on vehicle in the LL of Ghana and found the presence of Twi (Ghanaian’s language) and English dominant in those inscriptions. A similar study in Ghana (Taluah and Musah, 2015) explored the impact of such inscriptions as a channel of growing communication. Similarly, El-Nashar and Nayef (2016) investigated vehicle graffiti in Egypt and showed the presence of philosophical, political, and social expressions used in the graffiti.

Pakistani public transport is famous for its vibrant and colourful signs. Along with exotic imagery on public vehicles, written text has also become a form of art on all types of vehicles across the country. The text on vehicles varies from serious messages of religious and political nature, to jokes, love notes, name tags, and advertisements. Like the colourful art on public transport, these written messages on vehicles are a fusion of languages and discourses. Rahman (2010) showed that language displayed on trucks was full of amorous themes. He reasons that people object to romantic paintings on vehicles, but not to romantic text inscriptions. Rahman (2013) studied the public display of language on rickshaw, another popular means of transportation in Pakistan and argued that Rickshaw is a source of “mobile advertisement which gives far greater visibility to whatever message is being disseminated among the public” (p.7). Likewise, Bilal and Shehzad (2019) explore the use of language on Pakistani public transport in the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad and observe that emotive language is one of the most dominant linguistic features found on these public vehicles. Furthermore, the dominant themes of upward mobility, moral qualities in a person’s character, and other socio-economic problems were presented through those signs, through the extensive use of metaphors, euphemism and personification.

Yousaf (2019) argues that generalized and stereotypical identity of the Pashtuns as warriors were created by the British colonizers during their stay in the Pashtun tribal areas is at work since then. Moreover, Rahman (1995) takes the fundamental codes of Pashtunwali as vital to the presentation of Pashtun identity in the world. These codes are summed up as vengeance (*badal*), hospitality (*melmastya*), and forgiveness (*nanawati*). He argues that in addition to these codes, the language itself, i.e. Pashto is an identity marker of Pashtun ethnicity. He argues that Pashtuns take pride in portraying themselves through Pashtunwali and their language i.e. Pashto.

The present study focuses on the transitory and dynamic nature of the space i.e. Peshawar city, where LL is constructed through mobile signs, and investigates what these signs mean as far as the sociolinguistic make-up of the city is concerned.

### 2.1 Data Collection

The major transportation route passing through the city i.e. Grand Trunk Road (G.T. Road) was the main site of data collection. The busy G.T. road connects the city to National Highway on the one end, and Khyber Pass on the other. Non-static signs i.e. mobile signs on public transport, such as taxis/cabs, rickshaws, buses, coaches from different roads of Peshawar, especially the Grand Trunk Road (GT Road), and from the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) were collected through purposive sampling technique. Three hundred written signs were collected in the form of photographs, taken with the help of a smartphone camera.

### 2.2. Theoretical Framework

Landry and Bourhis's (1997) theoretical framework of symbolic functions was used with a focus on examining the symbolic functions of the signs to probe into the (in) visibility, vitality, and inclusion of language(s) in the LL of a place in relation to Goffman's (1963) self-presentation perspective of social experiences and Shohamy et. al's (2010) collective identities in the era of globalization and multiculturalism. Goffman (1963) examines the assertion of ethnic communities in public spheres and the preference of certain code choices by people. Shohamy et. al's (2010) perspective on collective identities in the era of globalization and multiculturalism investigates the participants' identities, whether regional, ethnic, or religious, and how they convey meanings in terms of identity marking. Collective identity approach also examines the inclusion and exclusion of language communities in the public space. People project their beliefs, attitudes, and identities through material objects, artifacts, and proxemics in their surroundings. The present study examines these two symbolic functions of self-presentation and collective identities in the linguistic landscape of Peshawar in relation to written signs on public transport.

### 3. Data Analysis

The analysis showed that monolingual, bilingual, and biscriptal signs were present in the data. Out of 300 signs, Pashto had 133 monolingual signs, followed by 81 signs in Urdu, and 48 in English, respectively. Hindko, the language spoken by people in and around the city had only four monolingual signs (See Table 1).

Table 1: A summary of monolingual signs in the data

S. No	Language	Occurrence
1.	Pashto	133
2.	Urdu	81
3.	English	48
4.	Arabic	6
5.	Hindko	4
6.	Persian	3
7.	Turkish	1

All 300 signs were thematically categorized into the following categories: Adoration, Religious Tendencies, Dejection, Familial Bonds, Nationalism, Terms of Address, Fatalism, Directives, Animosity, Greetings, and expletives (See Table 2). The present study, however, examines only the top three dominant themes, i.e. Adoration, Religious Tendencies, and Dejection.

Table 2: Themes on public vehicles in the linguistic landscape of Peshawar

S. No	Themes	Common Pattern	Occurrence
1.	Adoration	Romantic love and amorous content	63
2.	Religious Tendencies	Religious affinity and dedication	51
3.	Dejection	Heartbroken and melancholic feelings	45
4.	Familial bonds	Attitudes toward family, especially parents	22
5.	Nationalism	Affinity towards one's country, caste, and other state institutions	20
6.	Terms of Addresses	Names, nicknames, and titles	20
7.	Fatalism	Inevitability of fate and death	15
8.	Directives	Informational and instructional purpose	10
9.	Animosity	Hatred and hostility towards someone	09
10.	Explicit	Swear-words or obscene content	04
11.	Greetings	Greeting etiquettes	04

#### 4. Adoration

In the context of the present study, the term *Adoration* refers to the state of being in a romantic relationship, realized through the absence of the beloved, admiring their beauty, describing oneself in love, or complaining against the cruelty of the beloved against the lover etc. *Adoration* was as the most dominant theme with a total of 63 signs. Pashto had the highest number of adoration signs on display (43 signs). Majority of the *Adoration* signs took poetic forms, such as *tappa* and couplets. Signs such as *Zama da ishq daftar ta rasha/ che be-taleema de afsar olagoma* (Pay a visit to my love office/ I will hire you without any prerequisites) and *Ka jungarha me tabah shi parwah nishta/ Ghat ghat kali wranawi da janan stargy* (I don't care if my home is shattered/ my beloved's eyes can destroy towns) are two representative examples of poetic inscriptions on public vehicles in Peshawar. These signs emphasize the overpowering nature of love and romance portrayed through exaggeration and hyperbole to show the effect of the intensity of the beloved's eyes which are capable of spreading destruction all around. The portrayal of the beloved's eyes, whether mentioned in popular literature or painted on public transport, is a popular tool in expressing romantic feelings in Pakistani culture (Rahman, 2009). In the backdrop of this is the tradition of veil (Pardah) which adds an element of mystery to the charm of feminine beauty in Pashtun folk art. The glorification of the big eyes of the beloved forms a good part of the language display on public transport.

Within adoration comes the notion of *forbidden love* which refers to the cultural and religious taboos on romantic love. Romantic relations between people out of wedlock are treated as forbidden in Pakistani society in general, and among Pashtuns in particular. Involvement in a *forbidden* relationship is, therefore risky as displayed in the following representative sign, *Pa ghalat crass me khapa na shy/ Nawakhta kegee da janan didan la zama* (Don't be offended by my reckless driving/ I am running late for my beloved's meeting). The word *janan* is a term of endearment used for a beloved or a partner in Pashtun culture; secret meetings between such lovers is an anxiety-inducing task in Pashtun society and the lovers have little or no chances of seeing each other again if they miss the chance. Therefore, the haste is indicative of that anxiety caused by romantic love.

Urdu has a share of 12 signs in depicting love and romance. Signs such as *muj ko fursat hi kahan musam suhana dekhun/ Main teri zaat se niklun to zamana dekhun* (Your beauty has captivated me in a way that I prefer to enjoy your splendor more than the wonders of nature) and *Fasla rakhain wrna pyar ho jayega* (Keep distance, else you will fall for me) are two representative signs in this category. The serious tone of the first couplet treats the subject matter with reverence and grace. Similarly, the formal tone of the second sign as shown in the selection of the lexical choice of *rakhain*, which is more formal as compared to *rakho* (on another sign) *Pasla rakho wrna pyar ho jayega*. It is interesting to note that falling in love is presented as something to be avoided. This creates and represents the social identity of the people as someone who would avoid romantic intimacy.

A total of eight signs in English portray love and romantic relationship. The signs in this category include expressions such as *friend my love*, *love is life*, *love to all*, and *I love you*, etc.

#### 4.1. Religious Affiliations

The second dominant theme is that of *Religious Affiliations* displayed on a total of 51 signs. Signs with the name of Allah/God, declaration of the belief in the finality of the Prophet or *khatm-e-nabuwat*, dua (prayers), moral teachings, sins and virtues, and the Day of Judgment were displayed in all three languages (Pashto, Urdu, and Arabic).

The word Allah and his various attributes were the most dominant of all the religious signs. *Allah hi waris* (Only Allah is the Lord), *Ya Allah tera lakh lakh shukar* (O Allah I am grateful for everything), *Ya Allah madad* (O Allah! Help me), *Mola karam kar* (God have mercy), etc. Signs related to the preaching of Islam were another manifestation of the *religious tendency* of the people. These signs emphasized the importance of Islamic teachings and practices, such as prayers (*Namaz*), the Day of Judgment (*Qayamat*), refraining from bad deeds (*bad'i*), and promoting good deeds (*naiki*) etc. The signs can be seen as portraying the collective identity of the people as these religious practices are considered essential to a Muslim's life. Since Peshawar is a Muslim majority city, the visibility of these signs strengthens, reinforces and projects the 'Islamic' image of the city. Arabic texts, such as *Astaghfirullah* (May Allah forgive us), *MashaAllah* (Allah has willed it), and *La Ilaha Illallahu Muhammad ur Rasool Allah* (There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah), etc. are religious expressions that reinforce the Muslim identity in the sociolinguistic makeup of the city and reiterate people's affinity with the religious discourse of the city. A collective identity of an ardent Muslim is constructed through these signs that also resonate with popular Pakistani culture.

The Finality of the Prophet (*khatm-e-nabuwat*), a popular slogan in this part of the world, was clearly visible in these signs. The slogan of *Khatm-e-Nabuwat Zindabad* (Long live the finality of Prophethood) is a powerful tool used by religious and political parties to show solidarity with Muslim majority and to subdue minority communities—those deemed to not align with it. The presence of these signs shows how religion is used as an identity marker of Muslimness in the LL of Peshawar. Religio-political parties get popular votes by displaying their party catchphrases and religious slogans in an attempt to get sympathies and support of the masses. These moves by political parties can be interpreted as identity projection through which they identifying themselves with the faith of the majority. Similarly, *Dawat-e-tableegh zindabad* (Long live the preaching of Islam) is another projection of Deobandi Islamic identity. Rahman (2013) also points to this assertion of Deobandi community profusely displayed on public transport in Pakistan. These signs

are a reminder of how some Muslims are constantly engaged in public preaching of the religion in a bid to convert 'others' to Islam.

Greetings, mostly expressed in form of prayers and good wishes, make another dominant type of religious signs. One of the signs signifying a prayer is *Za Allah de mal sha* (May God be with you; it wishes people safe travels) displayed on eight vehicles. The sign displays a cultural way of bidding someone farewell or wishing good luck and are a representation of a collective identity of Pashtuns.

The sign '7 Sharif' also written as *Sehwan Sharif* is displayed on vehicles. Sehwan is a city in Sindh province, where there are shrines of many celebrated saints, including that of Laal Shahbaz Qalandar. And the city is called 'Sehwan Sharif' in the honour of the holy saints buried there. The sign, *Bari Sarkar* refers to another holy saint hailing from Punjab province, Bari Imam. The word *Bari* refers to the shrine of a holy saint, Syed Abdul Latif Kazmi that has thousands of devotees across the country. The identity of Muslims, particularly the devotees of the saints, is asserted in the LL of Peshawar through the display of these sign.

The artists/painters often mould and amend poetic inscriptions according to their liking (Rahman, 2013). These modified verses were observed in our data too. A widely quoted couplet in Pashto language: *Har sa rata waya khu Islam ta me sa ma waya/ da me da aghyaro na pa sru weenu gataly dy* (Do and say what you may, but do not utter a word against 'my' Islam/ I fought with my blood for it). The original couplet has the word *watan* (homeland) instead of *Islam*. Replacing *watan* with *Islam* changes the nationalistic theme into a religious one. The original couplet alludes to the invaders and colonizers against whom Pashtuns had to fight for the freedom of their homeland. However, assigning the couplet an Islamic meaning as opposed to the original nationalistic one changes the identity assertion. The sign can be seen as an argument in the identity construction of Pashtuns who, as portrayed in this sign, would prefer Islamic sentiments over nationalistic sentiments.

These signs portray the identity of the city populated by people with strong religious affinity with religion. Displaying the name of God/Allah, on vehicles not only serve as the reminder of His existence, but is also used as a symbol of protection from unforeseeable troubles. This implies that the mere display of language has powerful consequences in the lives of these people.

#### 4.2. Dejection

*Dejection* was another dominant theme in the data and appeared in a total of 45 signs. In the context of the present study, dejection refers to the feeling of broken-heartedness and unrequited love and the associated feelings of gloominess and misery. Dejection caused by rejection in love or as a consequence of rejection by people in general. The first category of signs expresses bitter experiences in romantic relationships through the use of poetic verses, proverbial statements, and cryptic words, lamenting the treachery of a beloved. For example, *der bewafa wukhati* (you turned out to be extremely disloyal), *akhir waly bewafa shwy* (why did you become unfaithful?), and *zama arman ba drshi* (you will realize my worth some day). These signs portray the image of a miserable lover deceived by a ruthless beloved. A monolexemic sign *Girls* asserts its meaning through its graphic presentation i.e. a line crossing out the word negating the existence of girls especially in a romantic relationship. A similar sign (*No girl no tension*) conveys the same notion of women being the cause of misery. Both of these signs reflect a dejected male lover whose beloved seems to have caused him pain and suffering in love and therefore he feels like warning other people to stay away from the fair sex. It is little wonder that the voice of women on the same

subject remains absent from the linguistic landscape since there is hardly any women driver in the public transportation system of the city.

The sign *Mung da ashna pa farmaish bandi riksha wakhista/ Hagha zalim us da raqeeb sara tractor ki garzi* (I bought a rickshaw on the request of my beloved/ But she went off with my rival in his tractor) portrays this materialistic identity is one example of the multitudes of satirical and amusing statements found on public transport in Peshawar. It is a biscriptal sign mixing Urdu and Pashto. This sign portrays the dejected lover as someone who suffers as a result of the lack of capitalistic lifestyle i.e. they ultimately face the consequences when all of their relations leave them one by one. Similarly, *Matlab hatam, rabta hatam* (a relationship is based on interests), that also portray someone who experiences dejection due to their inability to be of any interest to people.

The signs in this category illustrate the overall bitter experience of crestfallen lovers and other persons. These vehicle inscriptions attempt to warn other people about the horrors of love or other investments of affections. Their display on the vehicles indicate that the speakers of these signs refuse to go ahead with the relationship due to the unfortunate experience of the past. It was observed that materialistic attitudes and the resultant opportunism was the major reason of misery depicted in these signs. Collectively, these signs construct and construe ethnic and regional attitudes, as outlined by Shohamy (2010), through cultural expression of dejection in the LL of Peshawar.

Other signs displayed in Pashto language also express culture-specific attitudes of the people. These signs provide insight into Pashtuns and their distinct outlook on life. These signs are: *kabarjan lalay* (vain beloved), *baaghi* (rebel), and *Za Rahman da baighairato pa khilaf yam/ Ghairati ko me dushman wi zindabad* (I, Rahman, am against the dishonorable ones/ Long live the honorable, even if he is the enemy) etc. *Ghairat* is one of the main features of Pashtunwali, which is associated with manliness, courageousness, nobility, and ethics, making it one of the dominant identity markers of Pashtuns. The sign claims that even an enemy with *ghairat* is better than those without it. The idea of honour, alongwith rebellion and pride, are portrayed and reinforced in the LL of Peshawar as one of the revered qualities of Pashtuns.

The notion of intoxication finds abundant display in the LL of Peshawar through signs such as *khyr dy yaar nasha ke dy* (My lover/friend is high on something), *Cherha me ma, naswar nishta* (Stop annoying me me, I have not been on naswar lately), and *Speed zama nasha da, overtake zama nakhra da/ Brake um bewafa de, pa Allah me barosa da* (I am high on speed/overtake is my attitude/ the brakes are unreliable, but I have faith in Allah), etc. The image created through these signs is of someone who is a roguish and carefree individual. The sign, *Cherha me ma, naswar nishta* refers to the actual intoxication of naswar – widely associated with Pashtuns – and its side effects. Naswar is a kind of tobacco that is highly addictive and that users usually keep in their mouth for hours. Just like any other drug, naswar also has its effects on its user when it is unavailable causing mood swings and extreme anger.

## 5. Conclusion

The results revealed that three themes had a predominant presence in text displayed on public transport of Peshawar city; they were: *adoration*, *religious Tendencies*, and *dejection*. *Adoration* included romantic love such as the beauty of beloved, longing for the beloved, or complaint against the cruelty of the lover. These signs were primarily written in three different languages: Pashto, Urdu, and English. *Religious tendencies* was the second dominant theme and included signs showing religious affinity towards Islam and the associated religious, cultural and

moral values. The third dominant theme *dejection* expressed melancholic and gloomy attitudes either towards romantic experiences or life in general. The overwhelming presence of romantic love on the mobile signs counters the stereotypical jingoistic or war-loving/mongering mischievous image of the Pashtuns – archotypically presented in the colonial discourse on Pashtuns, and is rather evidential of nonviolent and peace-loving behavior of Pashtuns. This self-representation of Pashtuns through mounting a parallel discourse negates the violent representation in the national and international media. The existence of romantic and religious signs side by side on the public transport is also indicative of the locals' show the locals' putting things in balance.

While the dominant presence of religious signs may be indicative of the majority population creating and constructing their Muslimness, minority religions remain absent from the scene by having no representation in the LL of the city. This underrepresentation of minority in the LL of Peshawar indicates that the society has yet to embrace the religious minorities to the extent to enable them to be visible in the LL of the city. Political and religious parties' overwhelming use of religious slogans to appeal to the popular public sentiments was another manifestation of this issue.

While this study highlights the sociolinguistic make-up of a multilingual city of Peshawar vis-à-vis the visibility of LL of the city, it also bring to the surface the language policy of the state and how it constitutes, determines and reflects the linguistic prospects of different languages used in the city. For example, Pashto is the dominant language of the city, but its written script is facing exclusion from the public signs and the language is not formally taught around the city: in its written form the language is faced with marginalization. Urdu, in comparison, has dominant presentation in written form with signs transliterated from Pashto and English. The occasional presence or near-absence of Hindko on mobile signs is indicative of the 'less privileged' status of language as opposed to Pashto, Urdu, and English.

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