

LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE OF DHAKA CITY: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that-

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing my degree at BRAC University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate reference.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Abstract

The study showcases the present condition of Dhaka city's Linguistic Landscape. It is the written language in textual format on the visible signboards, billboards, nameplates even on the shop windows which are meant for the public. This study intends to unveil the languages used on the capital of Bangladesh, Dhaka city's linguistic landscape and why is English language receiving priority over the national language, Bangla by analyzing 513 signboards and interviewing 30 shop owners/keepers.

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Linguistic Landscape of Dhaka city: An Exploratory Study

Chapter- 01

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Linguistic Landscape includes all the language elements that are displayed in public (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008). Since Landry and Bourhis coined this term, ‘Linguistic Landscape’ in 1997, it has started receiving attention in the research field of sociolinguistics. Language in textual forms on shop windows, billboards, advertisements, and commercial name placards, building names (both government and non-government), street names, shop names, graffiti, traffic signs, posters- all of them which are seen through naked eyes represent the linguistic landscape of a geographical territory (Gorter, 2006). It is a newfound arena of research in linguistics and sociolinguistics, somewhere in between [...] “sociology” and “social psychology” (Landry & Bourhis 1997:23). Linguistic Landscape (LL) of a place represents the generic symbolic signage of a community in public. It investigates the language written or displayed in public (Alomoush, 2015).

In Bangladesh, 98% people speak Bangla and this national language is foundational to them (Imam, 2005). Language has played a significant role here in securing independence from Pakistan in 1971. Therefore, to Bangladeshis, language is a romantic ideological construction (Imam, 2005). Additionally, by linguistic landscaping, Itagi and Singh (2002) referred to the language decisions by the higher authorities (e.g., state, municipal authority, public institutions and so on) imposed on signs. In 2014, Bangladesh Supreme Court issued a rule demanding the use of Bangla everywhere in line with the 1987 language act where it is stated both the state language and official language of Bangladesh are only Bangla (Islam, 2019). The rule was also against the usage of English in banners, posters, signboards, electronic media advertisements, vehicle number plates, etc. (Islam, 2019). However, this research will reveal the contradiction between local language practices and the stated language act of Bangladesh in the linguistic landscape of its capital, Dhaka city.

The subject matter for this study is built upon mostly the billboards, signboards of stores, shopping malls, small/medium enterprises of Dhaka city and analyzing the language usage on them. As shop names are fixed or relatively stable signs (Alomoush, 2021), the present study will look into the imbalance between the Bangla language and English language usage.

1.2 Problem Statement

Dhaka city’s LL shows a significant presence of the English language over Bangla. As linguistic signs are meant for the consumers (Suleiman, 2017), these signs should serve the communicative purpose to the general people/consumers of Bangladesh. However, the general adult literacy rate here is 74.9% (as data collected by UNICEF in 2020) which means approximately 25.1% of the common people here will not be able to read the languages on the billboards/signboards. Additionally, the mountainous usage of English on Dhaka city’s LL may lead the national language, Bangla, to go through language hybridization as any language’s strong, prominent position over others present in the context, gives it a survival advantage (Gorter et al., 2012, p.

227). By analyzing the LL of a given community, it provides insights into the status quo/ power relations between/among the languages present in that society (Ben Rafael, 2008).

This research will show how English is enjoying a prestigious status on Dhaka city's Linguistic Landscape. If the advertisers are using English on their billboards to identify with the global world, it could be that they are intentionally excluding Bangla language and the minority group of illiterate people, as English is the marker of modernity, advancement and internationalism across the world (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008). The findings and data analysis section of this research will explore what is affecting this mindset with the help of Edward Said's theory of Orientalism in detail.

1.3 Aim of the Study

This research aims at unfolding the local language practices and the reasons of English language being prioritized over Bangla.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The following are the objectives undertaken to conduct the research-

- To explore the language use of different billboards and signboards of Dhaka city
- To explore the reasons of prioritizing English language on Dhaka city's LL

1.5 Research Questions

Below are the research questions concentrated to conduct the study-

- What is the language used on Signboards and billboards of Dhaka city?
- Why is English language receiving priority over the national language, Bangla on the LL of Dhaka city?

1.6 Rationale of the Study

By investigating LL of a place, it points out the "ongoing changes" of language/s used in a community (Backhaus, 2005). Thus, this present study in Dhaka is important to know if the national language, Bangla, is heading towards any language hybridization in Bangladesh. Dhaka is an emerging urban city across the world and in Bangladesh, the most important one. Every urban city offers innumerable written messages on their public display [...] (Backhaus, 2007). The LL studies have mostly been conducted in urban cities so far and it is often about a specific city (Botterman, 2011). Being a recently emerging field of research, LL studies has been receiving much attention from many important urban cities across the world but, in Bangladesh this research is not much explored yet except for one study conducted in Pabna (Chanda, 2018). The present research on Dhaka city is of crucial socio-symbolic importance as it attempts to introduce this society and community people with the rest of the world. It reveals the grassroot of a community's cultural identity and the yearnings of its people (Huebner, 2006). Linguistic Landscape also referred to as a 'public life' of a community by Ben Rafael (2006). Thus, through this study the 'public life' of Dhaka city dwellers will also be explored. Additionally, the LL of Dhaka city will reflect the greater influence of globalization through the usage of English language and its commercial value in a third-world country like Bangladesh. Public places of Dhaka are given the utmost priority in conducting this study as it offers a "fertile ground" full of infinite written texts to study LL of the city (Shohamy & Waksman, 2009).

1.7 Significance of the Study

As English language has visibly received momentum in day-to-day communication and is much loved by the young generation of Bangladesh especially in social media and computer mediated communication (CMC), this study will shed light on whether the usage is the standard form of English, whether they align with the prescriptive ‘correctness’ in language usage or the LL of Dhaka city represents language mixing as per their local need. This study will also include the local people’s attitude and feelings towards the languages used in their public display which will add qualitative value to this study. Often researchers do not address the issue of who made the signs and why (Finzel, 2013). This study will attempt to answer this question by involving real people’s verification regarding this issue. As much as LL of a particular setting represents its local language practices, the peoples’ thoughts and attitudes regarding their language usage, people rely upon it for messages, knowing places and going in the right directions. Billah, 2022). This is why knowing about their feelings is helpful in knowing the importance of LL as they are the targeted customers of it. Based on this data and the clicked photographs of signboards, the study will identify some of the factors which make English language appear more prominently than Bangla on the city’s LL.

The state language policy makers could be benefitted from this study as they will get to know the contradictions between their issued language rules and the actual language practice in public. They will learn if there is any need for them to imply new language interventions to support the minor illiterate group of Bangladeshis or to safeguard their national language, Bangla from language hybridization. Besides, anybody interested in the present language situation in Bangladesh may receive new knowledge from the study.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

LL is not only limited to static placements, or imprints which are immovable. The vehicles which are always on the move carry languages too. LL on transport conveys information and messages. Interestingly, they are not the cultural bearers of only one geographical region as they move from city to city, place to place. This research paper does not concern this concept of ‘Linguistic Landscape on Move’ (Almouh, 2021). Also, this research does not distinguish between ‘top-down’ (official) and ‘bottom-up’ (non-official) signs (Ben Rafael, 2008). Besides, interviews taken to conduct this research were not more than 30 due to the time constraints and thus, it falls under one of the limitations of this research. The larger the sample size (N), the greater empirical support researcher attains to establish a given hypothesis in qualitative research, however, larger sample size doesn’t always ensure quality research (Gerring, 2011).

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

Linguistic Landscape: It refers to the visible linguistic items and noticeable factors of languages on the commercial signboards which are exposed to public (Landry & Bourhis 1997: 23).

Landscape: This word has its origin in Dutch. Its literal meaning is ‘tract of land’. In English, it is a painting of a scenery in land. In LL studies, it is referred to as a place and a way of seeing simultaneously (Leeman & Modan, 2009).

Signage: It is a form of communicative language especially in urban cities which falls under the umbrella study of Linguistic Landscape (Diko, n.d). It is a planning tool of an urban environment

just like the city's architecture, its view or its growing business among others (Backhaus, 2005; Gorter, 2006).

Chapter- 02

Literature Review

2.1 Linguistic Landscape

The widely accepted and all-inclusive definition of LL comes from Landry and Bourhis (1997: 25). The explanation goes-

The language on the communal signs, place names, publicizing billboards, street names, shop signs, and commercial signs on both government and non-government buildings are the representatives of linguistic landscape of a geographical region. Their seminal work in 1997 named, *Linguistic Landscape and Ethnolinguistic Vitality: An Empirical Study*, first introduced us with the term, 'Linguistic Landscape'.

According to Blommaert (2013:6), LL studies have both descriptive and analytical potential that can lead into "profound investigations" of sociolinguistics research. Durk Gorter (2006) has stated, Linguistic Landscape is not merely the literal study of languages but the signs and its underlying meanings, also, it studies the growing usage of English. The study of 'Linguistic Landscape' first came to light in 1970 with the advent of language policy and planning especially in the places where linguistic conflict started rising (e.g., in Belgium, Quebec regarding Flemish-French and English French situation). At the end of 1990s, Linguistic Landscaping received acknowledgement as a sole area of research under the umbrella study of Sociolinguistics (Backhaus,2005). Although, Ben-Rafael (2006) has come up with two distinctions in studying signs, one 'Bottom-up', one 'Top-down' which Backhaus (2007) later has chronologically termed them- 'in Vitro'(official signs') and 'in Vivo' (unofficial signs), I am not going to differentiate between the signs I have collected to conduct this research. However, my motif is to reveal what Dhaka city's linguistic landscape has to say to the world.

Before getting straight into Dhaka city's LL study, other LL research in different urban cities across the world need to be acknowledged. So, the following is a summary of other LL studies conducted in world-famous urban cities.

2.2 Linguistic Landscape in other contexts

The study in Tokyo had explored the visible multilingual signs including both official and nonofficial. The signs are analyzed based on the notions of solidarity and status quo/ power relations (Backhaus, 2006). Result shows, one-third of Tokyo's foreign linguistic minority population comes from Chinese and Korean speaking countries. Cenoz & Gorter (2008) has worked on the connection between LL studies and Second Language Acquisition (SLA), basically the impact of LL on SLA. A study in Oman, based on over 1600 photographs of signs containing written languages where the community is of ethnolinguistic diversity shows lexical innovation, borrowing, cultural referents, attributes, generalization, and some specific strategies of using the global language, English. This study also has shown the diversified adaptations of English language based on the local needs. The durability of these commercial sign boards may lead the

path of longevity, acceptance, and sustainability of glocalized English usage in this Omani society (Buckinham, 2015).

English, despite being the foreign language of Pakistan, is seen to be overtly used in Quetta's Linguistic Landscape. In fact, written Urduized English or Englishized Urdu are commonly seen overpowering the other indigenous languages of the country (Manan et al., 2017). Linguistic Landscape has been investigated in a Nigerian city, *Ibadan*, from the perspective of 'layering' (the coexistence of two signs or older and newer versions of the same sign) and to reveal the socio-linguistic meanings intended by the sign-producers. 332 signs were collected from 11 local government areas of *Ibadan* metropolis to document the study. Usually, the newer versions were seen to contain more information and be more improved (economically, socially, and semiotically) than the older one. Three broad types of layering (Newness, Discursive symbiosis, Chaotic symbiosis) are discussed with proper photo'd sign boards as examples in this paper (Adetunji, 2015). Another study investigates the commonly used languages in the street signs of Brunei Darussalam. These languages are- Malay, English and Chinese. Despite Malay being the only official language here, English in many aspects is seen to be overused on the city's public sphere (Coluzzi, 2016). 104 photographed signs are investigated to study the Linguistic Landscape of Post-Soviet Bishkek. The author has studied the relation among Kyrgyza, Russian English and the society in which these languages prevail (McDerMott, 2019). The study on the Linguistic Landscape of Saint Petersburg, Russia focuses on the language of migrants' present in the community. It has tried to reveal the mismatch between the real linguistic diversity and its official presentation on the LL of the city (Baranova & Fedorova, 2018). The study in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, examines the language of the international brand names on its Linguistic Landscape (Lanza & Woldemariam, 2013).

2.3 English Language in Dhaka, Bangladesh

Among all the subjects, English language is the most popular and compulsory subject which is tutored even beyond the school curriculum especially to the students of secondary school (grade VI-X) in Bangladesh (Mahmud, 2017). English has significantly influenced the medium of education in Bangladesh during the period of British colonial rule (1757-1947 AD) (Faquire, 2010). Since then, the job sectors in Bangladesh tend to hire employees who have a good grasp over the English language (Mahmud, 2017). Dhaka is the metropolitan city, and it is the center of all developments in the country. Being the eleventh most crowded city across the world (Mahmud, 2017) it delivers the urgency to look into its language situation as it has the potential to add knowledge to the study of World English. Language situations beyond monolingualism prevails in Bangladesh (Faquire, 2010) even though both the official and national language should be Bangla everywhere as instructed by the state. However, not everyone has the source of income to provide education in English to their offspring and the illiteracy rate is also high in Bangladesh. It means, English is enjoying a high prestige value and it is not equally accessible to everyone in Bangladesh.

2.4 The Glocalization of English

Research on Linguistic Landscape may help us understand the fast-forward global world in which we live (Bolton, 2012). The penetration of English into every nook and cranny of the world has become almost inevitable and undeniable nowadays. English no longer belongs to the West only but it has become globalized and glocalized. The English language is heavily influenced by local

languages and their needs. The increasing demand of English language and its usage in the public spaces of this multilingual world turns global English into glocal English. As stated by Robertson (1995), glocalization is the inclusion of global components to adjust with the local needs. Oanh (2012) also defined 'Glocalized English' as the communication between English language and local languages referring to 'language hybridization' to fulfill local conversational needs especially in non-English speaking countries. Linguistic landscape study both influences and is influenced by cultural associations (Ben Rafael, 2009). Asia has the populous "English-learning" and "English-knowing" nations across the world (Bolton, 2008). Thus, Asian culture is rapidly changed and influenced by the English language and in many cases, they have made this language their 'own'. The public rationalization and awareness of using English language only on the nameplates, signboards is proof of 'glocalization of English'.

2.5 Indexicality

Commercial signs/symbols are a rich source of "linguistic diversity" and "language contact" (Piller, 2003). Using English on the city's linguistic landscape has almost become a trend in recent years especially in multilingual communities (Buckingham, 2015). The presence or absence of languages on a city's linguistic landscape refers to the high or low status functions of the languages frequently used in that society (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). In linguistics, the references and referents depend on situational contexts which means the audience is targeted and there is a shared knowledge of how the audience would interpret the message (Fromkin et al., 2003). This is known as indexicality and in pragmatic linguistics, it is called deictic expressions.

2.6 Language Hybridization and Language Flexibility

English in the linguistic landscape of less status societies used to best suit the local communicative purposes. English as Lingua Franca (ELF) there is not "systematized" rather constantly adapting as per the dynamics of different socio-cultural needs (Buckingham, 2015). Certain lexicogrammatical features and portmanteaus might occur in those contexts which might have no semantic relationship between the words but are successfully transmitting messages to the viewers/audiences (Bolton, 2015). Portmanteaus is an example of language mixing or language hybridization. Language hybridization or mixing on signboards are used to promote the products advertisers are selling by seeking readers' attention. In Dhaka city, by 'language mixing' it is merely referring to the mixing of Bangla language and English language. English language is a flexible communicative resource (Manan et al., 2017). Many item names or product names are so easily uttered and pronounced in English that no other language seems to fit in the same place to convey the same message. In short, it provides terminological flexibility (Manan et al., 2017) and thus, people across the world use it frequently.

2.7 Conceptual Framework of LL study in Dhaka city

The significance of LL studies has been escalating ever since the term got introduced and at present it is at its peak. Gorter and Cenoz (2008): 343 stated-

Linguistic Landscape is floating around us, it is everywhere. It is on the streets, shops that we regularly visit, schools we study in, hospitals we go to receive medical treatment and where not!

Therefore, there was no special sampling method followed while clicking still images of LL of Dhaka city, rather it was randomly selected in the hope of giving a realistic verification to this study. The visual presentation of the language in its written form is concrete data to explore the situation of language use in public places and Dhaka city is no different to it. This research will measure the extent of comfort with which people of Dhaka city are using English language in meaning making communicative context. For a newly emerging developing country like Bangladesh and language being their national sentiment, are the advertisers following the national language policy or they are keener towards using English over Bangla trying to cope with the modern industrialized world where English receives the utmost priority, will be the main focus of this study. The main components of LL studies are - “sign”, “sign producers” and “sign consumers” (Adetunji, 2015). “Sign producers” (writer/authors) expect the “sign consumers” to make meanings of the signs based on their prior knowledge or real-world knowledge that they themselves share (Kallen, 2009). This is why this research aims at unfolding the intentions of the sign-producers to prioritize English over Bangla by interviewing them in one-on-one meetings. As Landry and Bourhis (1997) identified two major functions of LL studies- informational and symbolic; informational function gives us an idea of the linguistic situation in a “given territory”. Symbolic function serves the purpose of revealing power relations/ status quo among the languages present in that territory. Therefore, the first research question of this study is what languages are used on the LL of Dhaka city to understand the linguistic situation of Dhaka.

2.8 Theoretical Framework of LL study in Dhaka city

To analyze the data of this study, some theories and models established by pioneering figures will be considered. They are-

- a. Edward Said’s theory of Orientalism (Said, 1977)
- b. Peirce’s Theory of Signs (Zeeman, 1977), (Culler, 1977)
- c. “The: Life of Signs within society” by Ferdinand de Saussure (Berger, 2011)
- d. Hyme’s concept of “Ethnography of Communication” (Hymes, 1964)
- e. Grice’s Conversational Maxim (Spolsky, 2009)

Orientalism leads the idea to think the West is “powerful” and “articulate” over the East which is less significant. Therefore, people are sometimes swept away with their own feelings of insecurities thinking they are not enough or at least not better than the “Other” (Said, 1977). In Bangladesh, many tend to consider English to be the language of ‘posh’ society and their own language, Bangla, to bear less significance than English language. According to the theory of signs established by Pierce all sorts of thinking depend on the usage of signs, and it is the medium of thinking (Atkin, 2010). The signs reflect these thoughts no matter how different interpretations readers may come up with. Again, Ferdinand de Saussure emphasizes the relationship between a concept and its interpretation of a Linguistic sign. To him, symbols/signs are not empty configurations, but they carry meanings (Haldane, 1994). It is not only language but communication and therefore, it is connected to cultural values, beliefs and “social institutions” (Hymes, 1964). In short, this research can represent the social, cultural values, norms and beliefs of Dhaka city residents specifically in terms of communicative language usage in their daily lives.

Chapter- 03

Methodology

This chapter includes the context of the study, research design, methods applied, data collection procedure and tools, sampling and population, trustworthiness, and ethical consideration.

3.1 Context of the Study

The study is conducted in Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh. Dhaka is one of the fastest growing megacities across the world despite being a low-income city with a dense population (Sharmin, 2014). It is located on the deltaic land amid the three major rivers of Bangladesh- Padma, Meghna and Brahmaputra. The other rivers- Buriganga, Turag and Balu surround the city from south to east (Sharmin, 2014). Bangladesh is a highly monolingual country, Bangla being its both official and only national language. (As per the language act of 1987 in the constitution of People's Republic of Bangladesh). However, English language received inclusion in the education system of the country since the British colonization period mostly through the establishment of English medium schools and colleges to create a subordinate elite class of people who can communicate in English (Imam, 2005).

3.2 Research Design

To begin with, for conducting the study on the LL of Dhaka city, primary data which were photos of signboards/ billboards, posters, nameplates were clicked with the help of a digital cell phone within a time span of (2020-2023). These photos were stored both in the phone's gallery and uploaded in google drive to ensure their safety to eliminate unauthorized access or any sort of corruption with the data. Sites were randomly chosen to click these pictures but mostly they are crowded public places across Dhaka city, therefore, very exposed, and visible from the roadsides. As already mentioned, no explicit distinction between government or non-government signs was made throughout the study, so, eventually, no specific rule applies to the site selection to study the signs although to some extent it aligns with the framework of Cenoz & Gorter (2008) mentioned later in the sub-section of this chapter, 'methods followed'. Then, the photos were analyzed and counted manually to identify the major features of these signboards. After carefully exploring the data, major trends followed in the LL of Dhaka city along with their percentage have chronologically been mentioned in the chapter, 'findings'. Later, in the section, 'discussion' the findings have been analyzed against few established socio-linguistic theories with references to the thirty (30) shop owners/keepers' responses to the questions related to their shop's signboards/name placards. The questions were mostly asked to elicit the reasons behind prioritizing English language over the national language to find out the answer to the second research question of the study. Interviews were originally conducted in Bangla language and direct quotations have been translated in English language and kept in a 'word-docs' file in the form of a written data. Additionally, the questions asked were mostly subjective and open-ended. After the discussion, some valuable insights have been offered to ponder upon the language situation at present in Bangladesh especially for the state language policy makers and academicians at the concluding part of the study.

3.3 Methods Followed

This is an exploratory case study which has used photographs and interviews as its primary data. It is a strategy of inquiry where the researcher explores an event, activity or one or more individuals in detail by following a variety of data collection procedures (Creswell, 2012). Linguistic Landscape can be an extraordinary idea for an exploratory study and would surely contribute to the research works in real world (Blommaert & Maly, 2014, p-1). A random sampling procedure was adopted to collect the data for this study. This study follows the social constructivist worldview where individuals are heard and given utmost priority as they make thoughtful subjective meanings from their experiences. From this, the researcher receives views of complexity which cannot be narrowed down; rather one can dive into another ocean to gather new knowledge (Creswell, 2012).

3.4 Data Collection Procedure and Tools

A total of 513 photographs were collected from different areas (mostly from Farmgate, Dhanmondi, Mohammadpur, Banani, Mohakhali and Gulsan) of the city. The photographs were captured, and interviews recorded with the Samsung A 32 android cellphone. Only prominent and visible public signboards (e.g., shop names, restaurant names, public catering place names, posters, commercial billboards etc.) were selected to analyze the data. Later, the findings have been shown in a simple pie-chart along with the percentage of the major trends found in the LL of Dhaka.

Data collection procedure was followed as how the pioneers of Linguistic Landscape studies, Landry & Bourhis (1997:205) had suggested-

Linguistic Landscape concerns the language in its written form, and it should be in public. It is the public road signs, commercial advertisements, billboards, shop names, street names, public signs on both government and non-government buildings.

Moreover, 30 shop owners'/keepers' interviews have been taken to understand their priority of languages between Bangla and English to be displayed on their shop's signboards. The questions were semi-structured since qualitative researchers keep their questions open-ended to let the participants share their ideas and views (Creswell, 2012).

3.5 Data Sampling and Population

The selection of data collection sites has partially followed the proposed framework of Cenoz & Gorter (2008: 343) "to choose city areas with similar characteristics to analyze the differences in signs". Additionally, interviews were taken of 30 shopkeepers/owners, the presumed advertisers of the LL of Dhaka city to investigate their viewpoints regarding the LL. Again, the sampling was random here, but the designing of the interview questions as already mentioned were semi-structured and open-ended to fulfill the requirements of qualitative research (Creswell, 2012).

3.6 Data Analysis

The collected photographs of the signboards were thoroughly analyzed to identify the frequency in which both English language and Bangla language appear on them. It was to check whether both English and Bangla language are given equal space in the signboards or if it is only English or transliterated English displayed. Then, the findings have been attempted to discuss based on some basic arguments of five established socio-linguistic theories- Edward Said's theory of Orientalism (Said, 1977), Peirce's Theory of Signs (Zeeman, 1977), (Culler, 1977), Saussure's

“The: Life of Signs within society” (Berger, 2011), “Ethnography of Communication” by Hymes (Hymes, 1964) and Grice’s Conversational Maxim (Spolsky, 2009). These theories have helped better understand the major trends found in the LL of Dhaka city. Additionally, many responses received from the interviewees could be connected to these which strengthened the discussion points. To sum up, both visual (images of signboards) and audio data (interviews) have been collected and analyzed to conduct the study. Interviewees were given the opportunity to talk “openly” and “largely” by not asking them any rigidly specific question on their preference of languages between Bangla and English on their shop’s name placards which make this qualitative research (Creswell, 2012).

3.7 Ethical Consideration

Research code of ethics and protocols were well taken care of while taking the interviews. Such as- taking the interviewees’ permission before audio-taping their statements and ensuring their consent to be interviewed, also the discretion of their personal information including their identity. Later, the audio record was transcribed and translated in English to analyze them. Numerical units have been used from (1-30) to denote individual interviews and their statements to maintain the research code throughout while keeping a written record. What is more, not a single personal question was asked even including the establishments of their shops unless they wanted to share the information on their own at first. Table-1 below shows the research instruments used and their numeric-

Table-1: Interviewees and Research instruments

Research instruments used	The numerical number
Photographs	513
Interviews of Shopkeepers/owners	30

Chapter 4

Findings

4.1 Major Trends in designing the LL of Dhaka City

This chapter will discuss the major trends and patterns found in the linguistic landscape of Dhaka city. According to LL studies landscapes contain illustrated texts which can be photographed, read, interpreted, linguistically and culturally scrutinized (Nash, 2016). Nash (2016) has stated both language and landscape are so internally connected to each other that they are obliged by and dependent on each other. Cities exhibit visual imprinted symbols and images. It has an added value because it has a special impact on the readers, the people who see these signs (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008). Figure-1 illustrates the major patterns and trends on these signboards of Dhaka city.

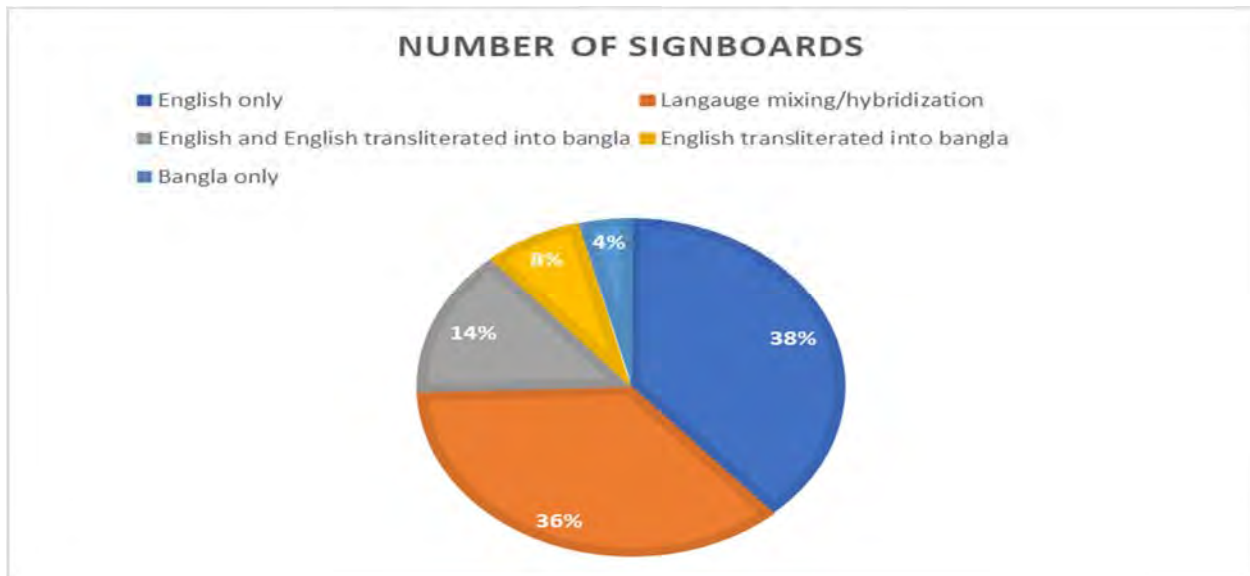


Figure 1- Major Trends in the Linguistic Landscape of Dhaka city

As Figure 1 shows the percentage of the major patterns that Dhaka city’s Linguistic Landscape follows, surprisingly 197 signboards among 513 contain only English (38%) which tops every other trend followed by the advertisers. Next is, 36% which is pretty close to the ‘English only’ trend. 185 sign boards have been found containing both Bengali and English letters alongside each other, therefore categorized under the name of ‘Language mixing/ language hybridization’ trend. 73 signboards out of 513, 14% have English language and English transliterated into Bangla letters alongside whereas 38 (8%) signboards contain originally English language transliterated into Bangla. Finally, only 20 signboards of Dhaka city, 4% have only Bangla language.

4.2 English only

Amid the whole corpus of data, signboards containing English language only score the highest which is 38%. The sign boards are of educational institutions, fashion industry, restaurants, shops selling bakery/ice-cream/biscuits, tailors and so on. Even many medical agencies, pharmacies, mobile agencies have their signboards written in English only. Figure (2-5) illustrates the monolingual only English policy prevailing in Dhaka city.



Figure 2- English only



Figure 3- English only



Figure 4- English only

Figure 4 is a 3D alphabetical advertisement of a university which is also electrically lit with golden lights. A signboard of an educational institution completely in English also shows a subtle economic investment in making it. Education in English is no longer limited to a few “English manor born”, rather it has become a profitable global business where wealthy elite society is paying a handsome amount for their children’s education, especially for them to receive literacy in English (Preece, 2009). English is associated with modernity, advancement, internationalism and perhaps, this could be a potential factor behind the mountainous usage of this language on the Linguistic Landscape of non-native countries (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008). Signboards of figure (2-4) serve mostly symbolic functions of a language.

4.3 Language Hybridization

A significant number of signboards (36%) contain mix codes, both English and Bengali languages. In these signboards, advertisers have used mixed languages to publicize their products/services. Code-mixing can be an effective way of communication in bilingual communities but in Bangladesh, it is a monolingual one and thus, the percentage of language mixing in Dhaka city’s linguistic landscape is extra-ordinary. According to Bhatia and Ritchie (2004), code-mixing is the mixing of various linguistic units from different languages (e.g., lexical items, morphemes, words, phrases, modifiers and sentences). Moreover, if one uses two or more languages in the same speech event, then it is known as code-switching (Woolard, 2004). Figure (5-7) showcases both the usage of Bangla and English language within one signboard. These photos are representative of language mixing/code-mixing/language hybridization. In Figure 5, the names of the shops are both written in Bangla and English (e.g., Biba. Anjan’s, Margin). The noteworthy aspect here is that ‘Biba’, the Bangla writing, is significantly shorter than the English one. Again, ‘Anjan’s’, the English one, is in 3D alphabetical order whereas its Bangla name is in plain 2D format.



Figure 5 - Language Mixing and Language Hybridization



Figure 6- Language Mixing and Language Hybridization



Figure 7- Language Mixing and Language Hybridization

In Figure 6, ‘Hotel *Indropuri*’, both the Bangla and English names are in 3D format and in electrically lit letters. Additionally, the signboard on its right, the price tag and type of the lunch they offer are all in English, but the shop name, ‘Sajna’ is at first written in Bangla on the left

corner of the signboard and then in English on the right corner of the signboard. In figure 7, the Bangla names in Bangla letters, 'Noni' and 'Shinepukur' are written in the left corners of the signboards and their names in English letters are written alongside and underneath it. 'Shine' is clearly an English word, but 'Pukur' is a Bangla word (meaning 'pond' in English) and is attached with 'shine' in such a manner as if it is a single word. This is a clear indication of code-mixing and language hybridization. Hybridization is a process by which words can be created from scratch, new words can be formed taken from previously existing elements or by borrowing from other languages (Stockhammer, 2012). 'Shinepukur' is an unpredictable word formation which neither represents a 'pond' ('pukur' in Bangla) nor the shop or its nameplate 'shines' as in its literal meaning. As clearly visible, this shop sells ceramic utensils, thus, there is also no relationship between the shop's name and their selling products. Here, the foreign word, 'shine' is added to an already existing native word, 'pukur' which plays a symbolic value of language rather informationally as the name, 'Shinepukur' might have been used stylistically to display "linguistic skills" or "play with languages" (Stockhammer, 2012).

4.4 English and English transliterated into Bangla

14% of the collected samples show the presence of English language and English transliterated into Bangla. Transliteration is the process of writing words using letters/alphabets of a different language. It is the process of replacing words/meanings with words/meanings of another language as sometimes there might be a shortage of exact equivalent in the language resource to convey the same meaning (Regmi et al., 2010). Figure (8-10) are some examples of English and English transliterated into Bangla on Dhaka city's linguistic landscape.



Figure 8 - English and English transliterated into Bangla



Figure 9- English and English transliterated into Bangla



Figure 10- English and English transliterated into Bangla

In figure 8, on the left-side signboard, 'Prime sweets and bakery LTD' is a complete English name, on the signboard at its right side, 'Food Art' is also completely an English name. Bangla word resource do have equivalent words for 'food', 'art', 'sweet', 'shop', 'cake' which are chronologically, 'khabar/khaddo', 'shilpo', 'mishti', 'dokan', 'pitha', yet the advertisers chose to transliterate the English words using Bangla letters. 'KFC' (figure 9) is a widely known brand in the world which sells fried chicken and is apparently seen in Dhaka, Bangladesh now. However, they are not a franchise of it. It is understandable that, there is no equivalent meaning or word in Bangla word resource which could replace 'KFC' other than transliterating it but in figure-10, 'Tasty Treat' could be replaced by equivalent Bangla word or meanings, yet its Bangla name is transliterated and written in a lot shorter size than the English one in 3D English letters. There is also a message written in 'English', "food you will love to share".

4.5 English transliterated into Bangla

8% of the collected samples have been found to contain English language to be transliterated into Bangla and no presence of English letters or words themselves. In Figure 11, although the name of the shop is written in Bangla letters, the name, 'Home Decor' is originally an English one.



Figure 11- English transliterated into Bangla

4.6 Bangla only

Only 4% of the still images contain only Bangla and absolutely no presence of English is seen, not even in a transliterated form. However, comparing the other categories found in the linguistic landscape of Dhaka city, it is the lowest.



Figure 12- Bangla only

Chapter-05

Discussion

This chapter will discuss the major trends found in the LL of Dhaka city along with the 30 interviewees' commentary on their choice of language on the signboards. The discussion is highly influenced by some established linguistic/sociolinguistic theories and models as stated earlier in both the theoretical and conceptual framework of the chapter named literature review. The discussion is elaborated against the theoretical framework first.

Based on the findings of this research, the language used on the LL of Dhaka city are mostly English language in English letters, then, both Bangla and English, English and English transliterated into Bangla, no presence of English letters but they are being transliterated into Bangla (written in Bangla letters) and the least number of signboards contain Bangla language in Bangla letters without any trace of English language. The findings have shown how English language is enjoying higher prestige value than the national language, Bangla in the capital of Bangladesh, Dhaka. This question has been attempted in the following paragraphs backed by a few popular theories.

5.1 Ferdinand De Saussure and the LL of Dhaka City

To begin with, pondering upon Levi Strauss's paradoxical question, "what exactly makes a man think that language speaks?" If we only have considered signs to be mere objects then, how are they able to convey meanings and sometimes show directions of the passerby's destinations? Surely, they are meaning making objects but within a culture and the rules and conventions of these meaning making are either consciously or subconsciously set by the members of that very culture what semiotics tries to find out (Saussure, 1974). Again, Strauss has stressed the matter of how humans are "conscious thinking beings" to perceive objects with meanings. Additionally, we cannot impose meanings unless they are understood given that conventions which help making understanding are in place. A sign consists of two things- a signifier and signified. Both signifiers and signified are relational entities (Culler, 1977). From a semiotic point of view, brands are known as 'signifiers' and we use it to establish a public identity (Saussure, 1966). It might have been one of the reasons for the climbing usage of English on the LL of Dhaka city as stated by one of the shop owners, "*If we don't use English these days, how is the world going to recognize us?*". In this way, the language, English has become a signifier and the signboards containing this language have become signified according to the theory given by Ferdinand De Saussure. "Language is a system which expresses ideas and therefore can be compared to a system of writing [...], science that studies life of signs [...], I would call it semiology (from Greek *sēmeîon* "sign")" (Saussure, 1966:16). It is the study of what laws govern the signs and what constitutes them. There are three components to this study, the sign itself, what do it refers to and who interprets it. As found in the chapter of findings, 38% signboards from the collected data showcase only the English language. Most of them are the signboards of educational institutions, pastry shops and restaurants which means the audience of these signboards must know English and those who do not, will not be considered as eligible to access their services. Such a subtle exclusion creates the image of 'self' as opposed to a group of people in a society who do not have the access to English language due to many circumstantial socio-economic reasons. According to Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, their observation says, if women suffer the avoidance, then they were never included into the "social fabric" of men as they think they (women) are of "low esteem" and this is same in case of

“functions of language” (Hymes, 1964). This matter is also most likely influenced by the British colonists who tried to impose the importance of English in the south Asian region, and some has been contributed by the “elite/pseudo elite” residents of Bangladesh propagating the importance of English language (Zaman, 2023). To understand the meaning of ‘self’ and ‘other’ we need to investigate the theory of ‘Orientalism’.

5.2 LL of Dhaka against the backdrop of Orientalism

From the introduction of ‘orientalism’ till Edward Said’s death, he has argued how the “west” has visioned and enveloped themselves with the idea of “orient”. He has stressed the west’s long-standing desire to engulf ‘east’ and establish power over them as a notion of their cultural superiority. Said called it a “human production”. He also stated Europe defines itself as having the most “superior civilization” and therefore, they tend to look down upon others especially on “occident” (the ‘east’). Said exclaimed “Orientalism is the elaboration of two unequal halves-Orient and Occident [...] and in some cases to manipulate, to control [...]” (Said, 1994; p-12). When the ‘only English’ category wins over the other major trends in the LL of Dhaka city, they naturally create an imagery of ‘self’ where English language holds a prestigious value excruciating the importance of the mother language, Bangla. As stated by one of the interviewees, “*This is Bangladesh, we should use Bangla on the signboards.*” However, ironically his own shop’s sign board contained English too. Our colonial mindset has contributed to the urge to identify ourselves to the superior world of ‘self-identification’ out there (Zaman, 2023). In this way, it contributes to our consciousness.

5.3 Theory of Signs; has the LL of Dhaka City followed it?

Peirce’s theory is a theory of “signs”, theory of “experience” or rather of “consciousness” (Zeman, 1977). It is not a detached, independent element but influenced by thoughts. To examine Peirce’s theory, one must develop a “preliminary view” of “Trichotomy”. These are – “Firstness”, a feeling or a happening without reflecting much on thoughts. When asked about the signboard named “Medical Hall”, the owner replied, “*Well, honestly, I did not think much about it*”. Another shopkeeper responded to the question of using English on the sign board instead of the national language, Bangla, he said “*You see, everyone uses English these days, including the renowned national/multinational companies and so did we*”. As clearly understood from their responses, they align with Peirce’s idea of ‘firstness’. “Secondness”, is the sudden “confrontation” or realization of the actual existence (Zeman, 1977). One of the shops named ‘*Mishtimela*’ (meaning, sweets fair in English) which is originally a Bangla name but written in English letters, when asked about this matter, the shop owner replied, “*English letters have been used to beautify the design*” and again when he was asked if Bangla letters instead would have done the justice to the design as he wished for, he said, “*The man who worked on the nameplate suggested English and we listened to him*”. The way he confronted the truth very much goes with Peirce’s “secondness”. “Thirdness” is the continuation of a “habit” (Zeman, 1977). One of the respondent’s replies to the question of using English on their shop’s sign board directly connects to the Peircean “thirdness” as he said, “*Using English has become a culture, look around!!*” Among these three categories, ‘secondness’ is what is perceived/ interpreted by others and therefore the easiest among Peircean categories to understand (Zeman, 1977).

As Pierce states a ‘sign’ is of some value to whom it stands and therefore, it creates an equivalent imagery of sign in the mind, or it can be more developed. In many cases, it may refer to an idea/set of ideas which Peirce has named ‘the ground of the sign’. It is associated with grammar, the

interconnectedness between the signs and thus it is clear that ‘ground’ has a close connection with the sign itself. The consequence of every sign is related to three things, the ground, the object, and the interpreter (Culler, 1977). Peirce stated a sign is closely connected to the ‘thing’ denoted and mind. He again stated, a word has meaning if we can use it to communicate our knowledge to others and receive the knowledge as others seek to communicate to us and it is nevertheless the lowest grade of meaning making. Peirce and William James, the founders of American Pragmatism said, the meaning of a conception lies within its implication or real-life consequences (Culler, 1977). He also said, a sign in front of a shop is closely connected to the shop. To support this argument, one shop owner’s statement can be referred to, *“I sell food in my shop which is both hot and cool. People can come here, sit, and relax. This could have given me a reason for naming my shop ‘cooling corner’.”*

5.4 “The: Life of Signs within society”

Saussure, Freud, and Durkheim (1986:86) addressed society as a “primary reality” to human beings, it is not simply the accumulation of “individual experiences” or the “manifestation of minds”, if one wants to study “human behavior”, he must acknowledge that there is always a “social reality”. To sum up, linguistics, psychoanalytic psychology, and sociology according to them are only possible when “one takes the meanings which are attached to and differentiate objects and actions as primary reality in a society” (Berger, 2011; p-234). Additionally, Berger concluded, meanings are “social products” and so explanations must take the “social terms” into consideration. To support his statement, one fast-food shop owner said in defense of using English on his signboard, *“The younger generation is attracted to spicy food, fast food, they also love such phrases. I do observe them, and I know they love the English language as they use it in their conversations frequently”*.

As already mentioned, according to Saussure, there are three parts of ‘signs’ to consider, first, the sign itself, second, what it means and thirdly, the one who interprets it. If we take his argument into account, then we must think of the concept of ‘self’ as opposed to a group of people or “society” or some kind of similar entity (Berger, 2011). Saussure raised a question whether there would be ‘self’ if there was no “society”. In response to the question why English has been used on the nameplate of a shop named ‘Chengi Electronics’, its owner replied, *“It has become a culture now. Everyone does so!”*. This shop owner here wanted his shop to get identified with the other ones in society and thus, he mentioned how it has become a culture these days. As Berger (2011) argued there can be three levels of ‘self’ and the “public self” is the “branded self” that humans display to others. The other two are- chronologically ‘privata’ and ‘privatissima’. ‘Privata’ is the self that we do not display and ‘Privatissima’ is the self that humans cannot fully fathom but it plays a pivotal role in shaping other selves. For example, it instigates a person to purchase brands to create the ‘public self’ (Berger, 2011). Among thirty interviewees, three to four shop owners/keepers have given similar responses *“Everyone is using English on their signboards and so did we!”* It shows the urge to create a public identity, getting identified with the rest of society by the means of establishing “public branded self”.

“Every sign by itself seems dead. What gives it life? In use it is alive.” (Haldane, 1994, pg- 451)

-Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, Part 1

5.5 Hyme's concept, Grice's Conversational Maxim and LL of Dhaka City

The view on creating meanings involves the speaker's psychological attitudes with an affirmation of the established patterns of language use in society (Haldane, 1994). An individual cannot just use terms as he pleases and expect society to understand it even if the sense of language is independent and true that language exists because individuals want to express themselves (Haldane, 1994). It must be taken into account that meanings are created within a community and its “communicative habits” upon which the members of that community rely (Hymes, 1964). In reference to this, one of the respondents said, *“In place of the term, Engineer's, if we had used Bangla, ‘Kolakoushol Bidya’, ‘Prokousholi’ on our nameplate, nobody would have understood it. We wanted an easier name for our shop”*. As clearly understood from his response what he meant- signboards should be written in such a language that everyone is familiar with. This is exactly what Grice has mentioned in his three principal Conversational Maxim. This is the second condition which asks to write a sign in a language that the advertisers would expect his customers to read and understand. The third one is the “symbolic value condition” and it says to write a language in the advertiser's own language or in a language with which he wishes to be identified with (Spolsky, 2009:34). Some of the interviewees have answered the question of why they chose English to name their shops, they said *“We/I did not think much about it”*. Such a statement reveals their preference of English language over Bangla. Thoughts are “intrinsically significant” as Brentanist theory claims that they are always about something or other (Haldane, 1994). This could also be their love for the English language as Aristotle said, “spoken words are signs of passion in the soul”. Linguistic meaning making depends upon “public use” (Haldane, 1994). Their statement also explains how even in their subconscious mind, the English language carries significance that they did not think twice before choosing their shop's names in English. This refers to the inclusion of global English into the Bangladeshi local community in such a manner that brings the discussion of glocalization of English.

5.6 Glocalized English in Dhaka City

Cities exhibit visual imprinted symbols and images (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008). It has an added value because it has a special impact on the readers, the people who see these signs. [...] Comparatively, the wealthier regions of a city in Asia have showcased a “massive change” in terms of using English language publicly due to the growing number of middle-class people across many Asian countries (Bolton, 2012). English has been consistently popular even among the illiterate people (Hsu, 2016). In the chapter, ‘Findings’, under the categories of ‘Language Hybridization’ and ‘English and English transliterated into Bangla’, in total (36%+14%=50%) of the signboards contain both Bangla and English language. This reflects the prominence of ‘code-mixing’ in Dhaka city. [...] The practices of code-mixing develop a mixture of “local and global” identities [...] (Almouh, 2021). Usually, in code-mixed imprints, easier usage of English vocabularies is seen which is much appreciated and liked by the younger generation as they think it to be cute (Hsu, 2016). The popularity of the English language is so publicly evident now that it has become an “emblem” of “cosmopolitanism”, fashion and “commercial success” which plays a vital role in the “construction of glocal identities” (Almouh, 2021, p- 56). To quote one of the shop owners in this regard, he said, *“Bangla should be given priority. This is our mother language, but we cannot ignore the importance of the English language. In fact, I think people should use English on their sign boards along with Bangla. In this way people will know us better and it has professional benefits too”*. When I asked another bakery shop owner why he didn't write ‘sweets’, ‘welcome’ in Bangla instead of English, he answered, *“We have got used to such words and these are very*

common words". He also added, "*young generation love the English language*". If "intra-sentential" English vocabulary is used in the "advertisements", then it creates a sense of trendiness and "fun" to respond to young people's style of 'mix and match' (Hsu, 2016, p- 160). As it is said, "First, you have to get your audience's attention" (Underhill, 2009, p- 64). In reference, the shop owner of the 'Delower Art' where they do the 3D word artwork when asked why no sample work has been done in Bangla letters, but every work displayed was in English letters, he said, "*We do both, but our customers seem to demand the English one more*".

"Mixture of English language with the other ones has "socio-psychological" effects about the advertised products on the audience which are- global identity, topnotch quality, originality, cosmopolitan/modern inclination, city experience, middle-class status, and the contemporary taste of the younger generation. Such effects are observed globally (Hsu, 2016, p- 159)". However, readers mostly do not accept the difficult English vocabularies or the overt usage of this language if they are not natives (Hsu, 2016). A smart sign design would be to break the message into small parts and deliver it little by little. It should be delivered the way people can consume it, a bit at a time, in a proper sequence as a sign does not necessarily have to correspond to the "cutting-edge" technology to "leave an impression" (Underhill, 2009, p- 64 & 76). The durability of these code-mixed commercial sign boards may lead the path of longevity, acceptance, and sustainability of glocalized English usage (Buckingham, 2015).

5.7 Indexicality in the LL of Dhaka City

English is a prestigious language affiliated with "luxury" and "global values" (Almouh, 2021, p- 56). In the framework of Spolsky and Cooper (1991: 74-94), they suggested using 'the language readers know' or 'to use the language readers are assumed to read' on the signboards (Backhaus, 2006, p.62). There is another category established by them to analyze power relations among the multilingual signs- people write signs in languages they wish/prefer to be identified with. Similarity has been found among a few interviewees' replies on the question why their sign boards contain English is that either they chose English without putting much thought on it or they simply imitated others. One LL study conducted in Quetta, Pakistan has revealed among the 30 interviewees in total, they have significantly mentioned about 'imitation of others' for using English on their signboards (Manan et al., 2017). Besides, [...] English is mostly used as a name of an established organization or as a name of a brand (McDerMott, 2019). For example, one of the interviewees on the question of why he has written his shop name completely in English letters, he said, "It's a brand [...]". Even in the fastest economically growing country, China, local brands such as "Acer", "Travel Fox" were first introduced in the local market in English language and later in Chinese to make customers think these are international brands (Hsu, 2016). Mitchell (2000:100) asserts, "Landscape being a place also is a way of seeing it. The places are carefully chosen and represented to the world to convey a meaning or a message. In this way, it creates an identity, a consent, or a wish to acculturate with an audience of comparatively powerful social interest. (As stated in Leeman & Modan, 2009, p. 6)".

Linguistic Landscape studies can identify social change on any scale level from the frequently changed ones to the most recent and from the very slow to the fastest including gradual ones. The study can also interpret them and help them store in synchronic order (Blommaert & Maly, 2014, p. 02). English on the advertising sign boards is not merely used for informational purposes, rather promotional purposes which in turn serve the symbolic function of the language. It is also used for ornamental purposes or as a cosmetic vehicle (Manan et al., 2017). In support of the statement, the

shop owner of *'Mishtimela'*, on the question of why despite giving the shop a Bengali name, English letters have been used on the signboard, answered- *"it has been done that way to give it a stylistic effect"*.

Additionally, the positions of signs or the place allocated to a certain language on signboards, the font sizes which are comparatively larger and seemingly in the center to meet the eye-level of passersby suggest high prestige value among the languages present in the signboard (McDerMott, 2019). Despite Bangladesh being a monolingual country and without clarifying the status of English language in the national language policy yet, this study has revealed among the collected data, the highest number of sign boards contain only English language whereas only 4% contain the mother language, 'only Bangla'. This data clearly shows that the English language is overpowering the national language of the country, Bangla. Bangla is understood by all the citizens of Bangladesh and therefore, if the government wants to ensure a hundred percent literacy rate, Bangla language should be made the only medium of communication in administration, business, education sector, courts and so forth (Bhattacharja, 2023). However, the findings of the LL of its capital city, Dhaka, is a complete opposite to it. The national elite class of the country "continue to invest in English" language privately (Imam, 2005, p- 474). There may be a connection between the widespread usage of English language and economic prosperity, growth, modernization and increasing number of middle classes, but it remains unclear whether the poor and disadvantaged from Asia will receive access to this language let alone benefitting from it (Bolton, 2012). These days, Bangla is "outrun" by English language everywhere even including the regional cricket team names inside the country (Bhattacharja, 2023). The emphasis of the English language on the Asian education system may be backed by several factors but both educationally and linguistically they will have to pay a price (Bolton, 2012). To refer to the statement by the shop owner of 'Dhakaiya Juice Bar and Fast Food' about his shop name, he said- *"I have stayed abroad for many years, there I have seen such shop names. Besides, I have a master's degree and so does my wife!"* He has clearly tied the educational values/degrees with the usage of English language and therefore, his targeted audience must also know English to read his shop's name to the least. This is almost like what has been found in the LL study in Quetta, Pakistan, one bakery owner explained the reason behind using English which was, his customers are mostly from upper-class, educated, elite society. So, they are more inclined towards the English language (Manan et al., 2017).

5.8 Hybridization and Flexibility observed in the LL of Dhaka City

Rhetoric and linguistic flexibility have become new norms as we consciously have grown into a global world which is unavoidable now. The meaning-making works are no longer mono-lingual or transparent rather trans-lingual and trans-national (Donahue, 2017). For example, when asked about the hybridized name of the shop, *'Choshma House'* (*Choshma= spectacles in English*), the shop owner replied, *"'bari', 'ghor'(the Bangla for the English, 'House') wouldn't have appeared a catchier name"*. Thus, the ethnographic data of Linguistic Landscape not only allows us to see the language used on it but also how they are perceived by the end-users (Moriarty, 2014). This also shows the adaptation of language as per the local needs (Buckingham, 2015). From the findings of the study, the second highest major trend is the 'Language Hybridization' (36%) found in the LL of Dhaka city. Again, 14% of the signboards from the collected data contain 'English' and 'English transliterated into Bangla' which shows, English language is present in approximately 50% of the signboards of Dhaka even if the signboards contain Bangla. The climbing usage of English on these signs expresses a symbolic assertion of the people to get acculturated with the English language community (Backhaus, 2006). To quote one of the shop owners, he said about

writing his shop's name both in English (English has the bigger font size compared to Bangla one) and Bangla- "*Only Bangla could have been enough if we didn't have any foreign visitors*".

Signs indicate past, present, and future at the same time. 'Past' because it helps us understand the origin of its modes of production (e.g., who made it, what resources were used, under which circumstances these signs were deployed etc.), 'future' because signs convey the messages to an intended audience and their "preferred uptake". Finally, 'present' because the 'emplacements' are chosen carefully, not randomly. Thus, the linguistic landscape has been turned into a social landscape, features of which can now be read through analysis of the public signs" (Blommaert & Maly, 2014, p. 05). This refers to how borrowed words from another language and their entry into the other one is never "mysterious" (Fromkin, 2003). Using more than the native language on the linguistic landscape shows a commercial aspiration to identify oneself with the global (posh) market (Blommaert & Maly, 2014). To refer to one of the shop keeper's responses- "*See, it's Gulsan and we have foreign customers here who won't understand Bangla*" indicates that they are trying to keep pace with the modern world and [...] 'modernity' explicitly refers to economic flourishing (Lanza & Woldemariam, 2013). [...] There are "socio-symbolic" meanings related to the usage of English which attracts customers (Almouh, 2021). Because, this language represents "internationalism", "premium quality" and "exquisite taste" (Hsu, 2016, p-158).

From the discussion above, now, it can be answered why is English language receiving priority over the Bangla language in the linguistic landscape of Dhaka city. Major reasons found from the study are stated below-

- a. English language is the 'signifier' of 'public identity.'
- b. This language is thought to have a cultural superiority to any other language.
- c. English is a 'trendy' language. It offers commercial success, a sense of fashion and therefore, can be used to add ornamental value to the signboards.
- d. By using English, one can easily identify with the global/international market.
- e. Young generation appreciates English language and the idea of 'language hybridization'.

Chapter- 06

Conclusion

Billboards are advertisements for what YouTube is to the internet where new ideas are invented for communication (Underhill, 2009). Linguistic Landscape cannot be divorced from its environments for signs do not convey meaning without a place. Placement of the signs also involves the prestige of the people connected to them. The visual information on the signboards can influence the perceptions on the status of languages of local people and their linguistic behavior (McDerMott, 2019). "[...] All retailing depends on the written word now more than ever before" (Underhill, 2009, p-141).

The linguistic landscape of Dhaka city displays an over emphasis and passion for English language which is visibly not shown to the mother language of Bangladesh. Bangla, the national language of this country, has a long burning history which bears the agony of innumerable known sacrifices and many unknown! In fact, International Mother Language Day across the world has been recognized and celebrated by UNICEF to honor the Bangladeshi language martyrs who had laid their lives unabashedly for the sake of language. In such a country, the absence of her own language on the billboards and signboards of her capital, Dhaka city reveals the "English craze" what China

and South Korea had long been experiencing (Bolton, 2012) due to which, Bangla language might face occlusion in near future. Therefore, this should work as an awareness raising research to the state language policy makers to safeguard the honor of Bangla language and call for a revival of it, if needed.

Historically, all outer circle Asian countries which includes Bangladesh was under the pawn of Anglophone colonial authority (Bolton, 2012). Therefore, English language had always been influential on the native languages of these countries, however, a concern should be raised so that, English language does not take the place of the mother languages by overshadowing/overpowering them. Shockingly, this research has revealed an excessive usage of English language on the LL of Dhaka city, Bangladesh undermining Bangla language. Even though English language is a must these days to ensure the global growth of a country as Darwin's theory is much aligned with the common sense too that the only organisms that best adapt to the environment are the successful ones (As stated in Underhill, 2009, p- 288), the question is whether the linguistic landscape of Dhaka city is doing the justice to the national language, Bangla by showcasing 4% signboards written in Bangla language only whereas 'only English' category owns 38% of them. As it is said, English language is important but can be dangerous too (Imam, 2005). It also has the potential of "Killer language" (Bolton, 2012, p-17), therefore, it is high time we should pay close attention to the linguistic texts of the signboards/billboards of Dhaka city.

Crotty (1988) assumed, the basic meanings are generated and understood out of an interaction with a human community as it is always social, meanwhile the researcher can interpret it based on his/her own experience, knowledge, and background (As stated in Creswell, 2012). From the interviews with the potential sign authors (shop owners/keepers) behind such a prominent presence of English in the LL of Dhaka city, three reasons can be shortlisted-

- a. To symbolize 'modernity', 'internationalism'
- b. To achieve social prestige and commercial success by imitating other renowned multinational company signboards
- c. To attract foreigners

Now, the question to ponder upon is whether the intentions stated above could be achieved by allowing equal space to Bangla language on the signboard along with English. When a shop owner reasons his signboard for writing totally in English letters by saying, 'it's a brand', then, being a Bangladeshi, we should ask ourselves, can we not promote a brand in Bangla language? The attitudinal assessment of this research reveals a lot about our 'imposter syndrome' thinking our own language is lower in status than in English even within our geographical order. However, it is also argued, [...] people who understand English even at a medium level of competence tend to have higher acceptance rate of the localized patterns of English usage and illiterate readers show a sign of antagonism towards it (Hsu, 2016). Even so, we cannot possibly erase our history and shamelessly abandon the sacrifices of our ancestors or even defy it by only shedding "crocodile tears" in the month of February (the month of International Mother Language Day) and doing absolutely nothing about it (Bhattacharjee, 2023).

In conclusion, it can be said that language and landscape are dependent upon each other (Nash, 2016). Geographical space becomes a place, place being named and named through language,

language written on the Linguistic Landscape is yet young in the research field and needs much more attention by the sociolinguistic practitioners (Nash, 2016). This research has only focused on the static signs but the language that transports and even shopping bags contain can be explored to investigate the linguistic practices on the mobile LL (Almouh, 2021) in future.

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