

THE ROLE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES IN SHAPING THE LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE OF SCHOOLS IN KARACHI

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Abstract

This research focused on how schools in Karachi use digital platforms and forums to communicate with stake holders, which in turn shapes their educational identity and linguistic practices. Educational institutions rely heavily on digital platforms such as websites, social media and other communication forums to project their achievements. They also portray the different activities that take place within the campus and their institutional ethos. This study aimed to explore the linguistic strategies used by schools and how it impacts the perceptions and experience of the audience. A qualitative approach was adopted and data was gathered through a detailed content analysis of the digital spaces, to understand the language and the strategies used for their projection and communication with parents and students. Special attention was paid to audience engagement. The findings aimed to offer insights into how these digital practices impact the linguistic landscape of schools in Pakistan. It also aimed to contribute to a broader understanding of the evolving landscape in private institutions in Karachi.

Introduction

The digital age has impacted various domains, with schools being no exception. The educational sector has intelligently leveraged digital technologies to enhance their businesses, their visibility, and engagement with their audience. It is the reform of the traditional information types (texts, sounds, visuals, videos, and other data from various sources) into the digital language (Wang & Guo, 2017), that enhances the linguistic landscape. Formerly the linguistic landscape was expressed by physical signs like noticeboards, bulletin boards, charts and other static media, which has now evolved into further advanced digital spaces such as websites, social media and online communication portals (Grzech and Dohle, 2018).

This study reflects on the role of digital technologies in shaping the linguistic landscape of schools in Karachi, specifically examining schools who leverage these digital platforms for both their projection and

reflection of linguistic practices.

In earlier times, individuals had to physically visit institutions to know about their infrastructure, their system and education plans. In other ways, a school would gain popularity as a result of its achievements (a high achiever, or distinction) or by word of mouth. However, in today's times the digital media offers a plethora of ways to interact with diverse audiences such as parents, students, alumni and the broader community. It has also become easier for them to put their school landscape in front of the masses. This research aimed to examine both the linguistic choices and nuanced strategies these institutions employ to engage with their stakeholders.

Five schools were selected for the content analysis of their digital spaces (Original names have been retained for discrepancy)

1. School A (Elite- tier)
2. School B (High-tier)
3. School C (Mid-tier)

4. School D (Mid- tier)
5. School E (Elite- tier)

Research Objectives

This research aimed to examine the role of digital technologies in shaping the linguistic landscape and influencing language practices in private schools in Karachi.

Research Question

How do digital technologies shape the linguistic landscape and influence language practices in private schools of Karachi?

Research Variable and Conceptual framework

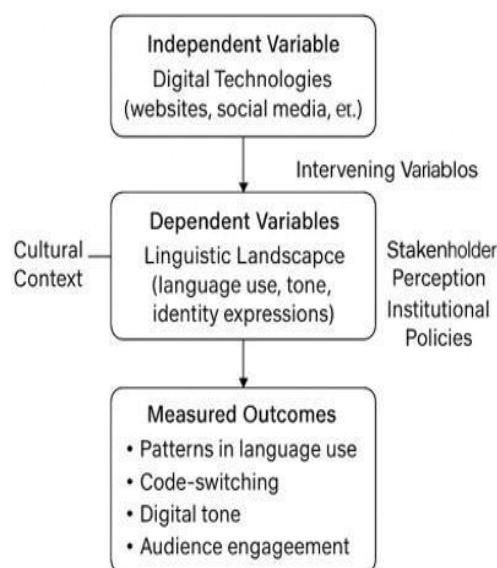


Figure 1: Flowchart showing independent and dependent variables

Figure 1 refers to how digital technologies such as websites, social media platforms and other messaging applications serve as the independent variable whereas the linguistic landscape that includes language choices, identity expression and use of tone and register function as the dependent variable. The intervening factors observed are stakeholder perceptions, social and cultural aspects and institutional policies. These factors influence how these digital tools shape linguistic practices.

Figure 1 presents the variables such as patterns in language use, code-switching, digital tone, and audience engagement in relation to one another, while Figure 2 further elaborates this view by showing how digital technologies and stakeholder perspectives interact through digital content to shape the linguistic landscape of private schools in Karachi.

Significance

This research was significant as it examined how digital technology impacts the linguistic landscapes of schools. It highlighted how these digital tools could influence language use and enhance language competence and adaptability. Additionally, for future reference, it can help leadership, policymakers, educationists, and digital marketers create a more inclusive educational environment and achieve better engagement with their audiences. It will also serve as a foundation for exploring in future the impacts of digital technologies in multilingual contexts.

Literature Review

The active integration of digital technologies in urban educational settings in recent years has reshaped how language is used and perceived within schools, particularly in metropolitan cities like Karachi. With the rapid emergence of

websites, social media platforms, and internal communication platforms, the linguistic landscape of schools has undergone a significant transformation. This literature review explores how digital platforms influence communication, language behavior, tone, register, and identity formation in educational institutions. It dives into how these digital spaces influence communication, mannerisms, behaviors and language adaptations. It also explores how linguistic landscapes are gradually expanding from physical spaces into digital realms.

Digital Technologies and the Linguistic Landscape of Schools

Incorporating digital technologies in educational settings and institutions in urban cities have significantly altered the linguistic landscape of schools. The usage of digital spaces such as websites, social media pages and communication tools has dynamically changed the way students, teachers, management and the administration engage with these platforms using their everyday language skills and interactions. Schools rely heavily on these platforms to engage with stakeholders, and facilitate communication. These platforms are no longer mere channels for information but also serve as interactive spaces where tone, register and linguistic choices are shaped dynamically.

Extension of Linguistic Landscapes into Digital Spaces

The study of linguistic landscape focuses on public signage and schools to analyze how language is used in educational environments. With the increasing influence of digital communication, researchers have viewed linguistic landscapes as an extension of physical landscapes. In-depth research on these linguistic landscapes suggest that English is often hybridized with Urdu on social media and websites to create a modern and prestigious image of the institution (Manan, 2017). Shohamy and Gorter (2009) highlight how digital platforms reflect linguistic practices and how institutions make use of language strategically to engage with their audience. In many educational setups in Karachi, these digital technologies add on to the learning experiences and facilitate language learning by providing students an exposure to both formal and informal language

and registers. This influences their linguistic competency and potential.

Language Choices and Institutional Identity

The use of these digital technologies has made mandatory the shift in language, tone and register among students, teachers and administrations alike. Digital spaces such as websites, adhere to a formal pattern of conversation to maintain professionalism. On the contrary, interactions on social media and internal communication platforms exhibit a more informal tone by incorporating code mixing and colloquial expressions for added relatability and engagement. Studies on various schools emphasize how language choices can reflect institutional ideologies by influencing the perceived credibility and inclusivity of educational institutions (Bernardo-Hinesley, 2020). Well-known research on the linguistic hybridity in Pakistan (e.g., Lahore signage studies) suggest that similar blending occurs in digital schools, eventually reflecting cultural and linguistic identities accommodating diverse stakeholders (Manan, 2017).

Linguistic Skill Development Through Digital Engagement

Digital technology has not only influenced communication but has also played a major role in shaping student's linguistic skills. Various studies reveal that exposure to bilingual and multilingual contexts can facilitate pragmatic competence and language awareness (Riadi & Wartti, 2021). Interaction through these digital spaces like school websites and social media pages enables students to engage in language learning beyond the boundaries of the traditional classroom. Research on social media's role in linguistic development (Aladjem & Jou, 2020), reveal students who engage with online linguistic content showed signs of a more developed vocabulary, improved contextual usage and digital literacy. Social media engagement also shapes students' writing styles as it develops in them the impression and target to meet audience's expectations.

Multilingualism and Sociolinguistic Trends in Pakistan

The presence and usage of multiple languages (alternating between English and Urdu) reflects

broader sociolinguistic trends. An examination of Pakistan's linguistic landscapes reveals that English dominates not only urban signage but also institutional discourse, where it symbolizes status, economic mobility, and modernity (Atta, 2021). Additionally, these digital platforms provide adequate space to local languages too; hence they can maintain their cultural integrity along with promoting bilingualism. Private schools in Karachi amplify how digital technology influences and affects the behaviors and linguistic choices. Both the administrators and educators adjust their languages best suited to different platforms, incorporating a mix of formal and informal language and varying communication styles to interact with students and parents. Where websites cater to a more formal dialect, messaging applications and social media platforms reveal an exchange of direct and informal languages.

Communication, Trust, and Authority Building

Chen, P. H. & R. (2023) suggests that a mindful usage of these platforms helps strengthen parent-teacher relationships too, which is an integral part of trust building and authority. Two-way communication between institutions and parents not only ensures the exchange of important messages but also keeps them updated about the

academics and the activities within the school landscape. Blommaert's (2010) theory of "sociolinguistics of globalization" presents a deep insight into how digital platforms play an important role in shaping linguistic landscapes. Blommaert speaks of polycentricity, a concept that highlights how multiple centers of authority can exist within a linguistic landscape pointing out to its visible relevance to schools using digital platforms. This also points out to the notion that digital platforms are dynamic, not static.

The role of digital technology in shaping the linguistic landscape in Karachi's schools is multifaceted. It encompasses institutional communication, identity formation and linguistic skill development. Existing literature highlights the blending of both Urdu and English on digital platforms, the appropriate use of formal and informal tone and register and their impact on the audience and on language acquisition. However, further research is required to explore the evolving dynamics of linguistics in digital landscapes and their implications on both language acquisition and institutional discourse. By leveraging these digital platforms effectively, the private schools in Karachi can create a linguistically rich environment and develop multilingual competency among the students.

Method

This section outlines the step-by-step systematic approach adopted in this study to explore how digital technologies influence and shape the linguistic landscape of schools in Karachi. A qualitative exploratory design was chosen to collect data to capture language choices and communication strategies. Data was collected through content analysis and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders to allow triangulation of perspectives.

The data was collected, coded manually and thematically analyzed to identify patterns and key themes related to language usage.

Research Design

A qualitative exploratory research design was adopted to gain in-depth insights into how private schools use language on digital platforms such as websites and social media pages, which in turn shapes the linguistic landscape of private schools in Karachi. The rationale for choosing a qualitative approach was because it allows a deeper understanding of the linguistic choices and communication strategies displayed on these platforms. The research was guided by a content analysis of publicly available material, supplemented by brief interviews with key stakeholders.

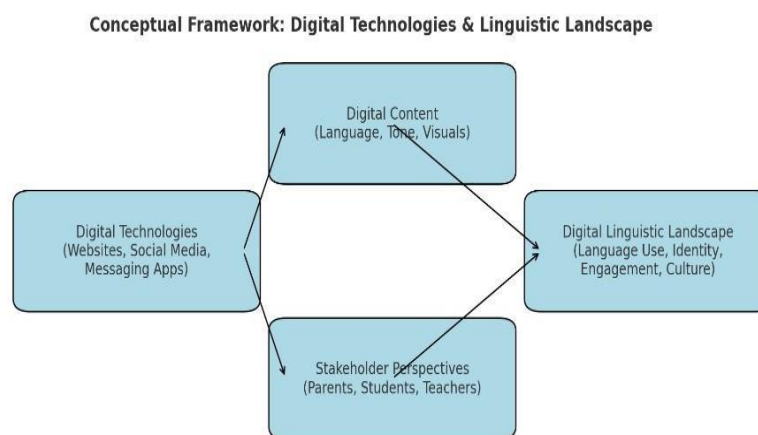


Figure 2 Illustrates the conceptual framework of this study, showing how digital technologies and stakeholder perspectives interact through digital content to shape the linguistic landscape of private schools in Karachi.

This framework shows digital technologies such as websites, social media platforms, and messaging applications as the primary drivers influencing the linguistic landscape of private schools. The interaction of these digital spaces with their stakeholders magnifies their perspectives (i.e. perspective of parents, students, teachers, and administrators) and in turn shapes how language choices, tone, and identity are expressed. The arrows in the framework indicate that this process is mediated by contextual factors such as institutional policies and cultural norms, which in turn reflects tangible outcomes like patterns of language use, code-switching, digital tone, and audience engagement. Through its visualization the figure highlights the interconnection and direct link in technological tools, human perceptions, and linguistic practices in the educational context.

Data collection methods

1. Digital Content Analysis (Primary Method):

An analysis of digital platforms of private educational institutions of Karachi was conducted. Websites and social media pages were studied, to identify patterns in language use, tone, register, and communication strategies.

2. Interviews: Short interviews with both the audience (parents and students) and school management (teachers and administrators) were conducted to explore their perspectives and

complement the content analysis. Data collected from the interview questionnaire was collated manually categorizing responses into key themes to gather perspectives and opinions of different audiences.

Ethical considerations were considered, ensuring that only publicly available information was used, and no confidential or private data was accessed without permission.

Nature of the Study

The research was exploratory in nature and aimed to analyze and understand the linguistic dimensions of schools' online presence, focusing on tone, register, audience engagement, and bilingual practices.

Population and Sampling

The population for this study included private schools in Karachi that actively maintained a digital presence for communication and engagement. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select five schools based on their active digital presence and prominence in the education sector. The selection of the institutions was done on the following criteria:

1. Schools that efficiently use social media and websites for communication and engagement with the audience
2. Diversity in curriculum (local/international), school type (elite/mid-tier, high) and geographical location
3. Accessibility of digital content for observation.

Research Tools and Instruments

To collect data, the study utilized content analysis as the primary research instrument.

The digital spaces of the selected schools, including websites and social media spaces (Facebook and Instagram), were examined for:

- Language choice (English, Urdu, or both)
- Code-switching, tone (formal/informal), and use of idioms
- Visual-linguistic elements (text on banners/images/videos)
- Engagement metrics (comments, shares, language used in replies)
- Cultural and linguistic positioning of the school

A brief semi-structured questionnaire was used to explore the perceptions of digital language use. The questions selected were both open- and closed-ended, focusing on user experience, preferences, and perceptions of institutional communication.

Research Variables and Framework

Table 1 outlines the independent and intervening variables of this study along with their measured outcomes and descriptions. These variables form the basis of the conceptual relationships shown in Figure 1

Table 1

Research Variables and Framework outlining different variables of the study

Variable Type	Description
Independent Variable	Digital Technologies (websites, social media, messaging apps used by schools)
Dependent Variable	Linguistic Landscape (language choices, tone, register, identity expressions)
Intervening	Stakeholder perception, cultural context, institutional policies
Variables	Patterns in language use, digital tone, code-switching, audience
Measured Outcomes	Engagement

As shown in Table 1, the independent variable for this study was digital technologies, which included the use of websites, social media platforms, and messaging applications. The dependent variable was the linguistic landscape, defined by language choices, tone, and identity expressions across these platforms.

Intervening variables included stakeholder perceptions, institutional policies, and the cultural context, which could mediate or moderate the relationship between digital tools and linguistic practices.

The measured outcomes were patterns in language use, code-switching, digital tone, and audience engagement.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure the reliability and validity of this research, the researchers got their resources reviewed and critically assessed by their supervisor to confirm their relevance to the research and alignment with the intended objectives. Feedback was incorporated where amendments were suggested. Pilot testing of the checklist was conducted on one school's digital content before full-scale application. Adding on to this, the triangulation of data from both the content analysis and interviews further solidified the validity of findings by cross-verifying insights through multiple sources.

Results and Discussion

Results of the Content Analysis of Digital Spaces

This result section presents a comprehensive thematic analysis of the digital presence of five prominent private schools in Karachi namely,

1. School A
2. School B
3. School C
4. School D

5. School E

Despite institutional variations in branding and content, differences in socio economic structure, location and infrastructure, recurring patterns were evident across all schools. This reflects shared strategies in digital communication and identity management.

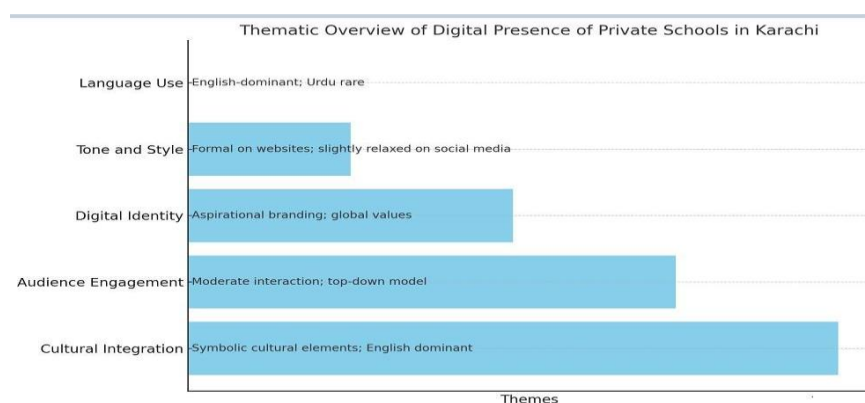


Figure 3 A thematic overview of the digital presence of private schools in Karachi

Figure 3 presents a thematic overview of the digital presence of private schools in Karachi. The analysis reveals that language adopted by the majority of schools is heavily English-dominant, with minimal presence of Urdu. Tone and style appear formal on school websites but slightly more relaxed on social media platforms. In relation to digital identity, schools were more inclined to project aspirational content aligned with global values. The audience engagement remains moderate and follows a top-down communication model where messages are conveyed from the higher authority only and the receiver only interacts. Cultural integration is largely symbolic, with a strong dominance of English usage and limited local cultural representation.

A detailed analysis of their websites and social media platforms, showed the emergence of the following key themes:

English as a linguistic choice reflects an emphasis on modernism, prestige and class, and also aligns with international educational standards. It shows a pressing effort adopted by these institutions to position themselves within a global educational framework, and also to project themselves as an English-speaking

Language Use Patterns

All five schools that were scrutinized predominantly used English as the main medium of communication across both their websites and social media platforms. Rare instances of Urdu posts were observed in Instagram posts of School B and School E, that showcased an Urdu project video and an announcement of the Urdu Elocution contest respectively. Audience interaction and comments on the posts however remained in English pre-dominantly. For example, School B's Instagram post similarly presented an Urdu activity using Urdu script in the visual, while retaining English in broader communication and digital branding. On the other hand, School C shared a post on Instagram that employed refined English in describing their Urdu Elocution contest, using phrases like "graceful hosting," "elegance and expression," and "depth and style", even though the event was centered around Urdu poetry.

identity both globally and nationally.

- The presence of formal communication including mission statements (on websites), academic announcements, and event banners (on social media), used standard, polished English.
- The concept of code-switching (mixing of

English-Urdu within conversations) appeared minimally. The only place they were somehow found were in user-generated comments, rather than institutional content.

- Urdu was generally reserved as symbolism, such as during patriotic posts or Urdu events, sometimes in the form of captions or slogans.
- None of the schools featured bilingual taglines or slogans in official posts or visuals. Rare instances were noticed in patriotic content and that too by School B and School C in particular.

Tone and Style

A relatively similar pattern of tone and style dominated through the 5 mentioned schools. A noticeable distinction existed between the formal tone of websites and a slightly relaxed yet polished tone of social media platforms. All schools maintained a professional digital persona across social media platforms, even though they are perceived to be rather informal spaces among the masses.

- The websites upheld a formal tone that reflects their academic connection and affiliation, with the use of a standard language and structured content.
- The social media pages (Instagram and Facebook), featured more

vibrant and colorful visuals, with motivational language to encourage their students. School A employed one such strategy in their social media post to motivate their students for a rowing competition by showing a short video clip message by Spanish coach Javier Garcia and another post that motivates students by saying “Strength in silence, power in every stroke”

- Emojis and hashtags were used modestly, appearing in approximately 30-40% of the content is more frequently by schools like School C and School D particularly on Instagram. The intent here was to soften the tone and connect with younger audiences. This was again found to be a rare instance in only these two schools, whereas the other three refrained from excess use of emojis in their posts and notifications, maintaining a consistently formal style across all platforms with minimal use of informal cues. Conclusively no school was seen to adopt a completely informal or casual voice. However, schools like School B and School D chose to incorporate relatively relaxed elements to increase relatability and connection specially in hosting events or when celebrating student’s achievements (results in particular).

Digital Identity Expression

All schools employed the use of digital platforms to cultivate a strong, cohesive institutional identity. School environment, and the different activities that take place within a school environment were effectively showcased. The posts communicated their vision and mission, reflected their values, and academic ethos through both language and visuals (snippets and video clippings). The intent was also to communicate with their parents and stakeholders on a deeper level and keep them informed about the school environment and their bond with the students. It also reflected how schools build a conducive learning environment and how they play their role in shaping the future professionals of the society.

All five schools in question here expressed their institutional identities and values in varied but

formal ways.

- Mission statements and school values were presented on mostly all websites except School D formally. The motive perceived was emphasizing excellence, global citizenship, and leadership. Inspirational taglines on official websites, presented a clear picture of the schools’ leadership and strong role in the quality academic journey of the students. Examples such as, “A community of lifelong learners” – School A; “Inspiring minds, shaping futures” – School E, are a clear message to the parents or stakeholders visiting the websites that these schools nurture an active, conducive and engaging environment that works towards the betterment of the students.
- Slogans and taglines, such as School E “Inspiring minds, shaping futures” and School B “When ambition meets opportunity...”, reinforced aspirational branding. The missions

reflected clearly on the home pages establishes them as an authority and clearly delivers their mission to their present and future prospects. It also emphasizes excellence, global recognition and academic success.

- Digital identity was further enhanced through visual-linguistic elements, and professional designs, maintaining a polished interface and outlook.

- The monolingual use of language adopted by the school revealed a strategic distancing from local linguistic diversity in the institutional branding. Despite the fact that the audience were a large number of non-English speakers too, the schools decided to maintain

Audience Engagement Strategies

Audience interaction across the schools' platforms was consistent but moderate, with a focus on broadcasting achievements rather than encouraging dialogue or initiating communication.

- Almost all the schools were active in posting content, typically 2–5 times per week, the majority of the posts covered academic results, student highlights, cultural celebrations, and some official updates and notices.

- Audience responses in the form of likes vastly outnumbered comments, indicating a top-down, one-way communication model (where information only flows from the top authority to the bottom sub-ordinates, with little or sometimes no feedbacks from the receiver)

- Audience comments were mostly in English specifically from the elite class infrastructure. However, some Urdu informal expressions (e.g., “mashallah,” “bohota acha”) were noted for being used by parents and students. Surprisingly emojis were used more by the audience in abundance reflecting comfort with bilingual, casual discourse.

The responses and the conversational

Cultural and Visual Integration

The digital assets did show some level of cultural representation but it was largely symbolic and event-specific, rather than structurally integrated into the schools' digital identity.

- Most visual content showed a preference

their monolingual tone for maintaining their standards both locally and internationally.

- Linguistic use of language was seen on the websites of School B and School E respectively, e.g. language, such as “We believe in you” or “When ambition meets opportunity”. It clearly showcases the school's ethos and motives to instill focus-driven aspirations in their students.

Even schools that did not have the mottos or slogans written on their websites (e.g. School C) adopted a communication tone that was aspirational and vision driven. establishing a strong digital identity aligned with high standards and modern education.

engagement from the institutional ends were minimal suggesting limited responsiveness. The overall strategy suggests maintaining a controlled and refined digital presence with limited interactive elements. The message seems to be effectively communicated, however there does not seem to be a viable space for two-way communication to take place.

- Comments from users were more casual, often blending Urdu and English with emojis. This element was reflected from audiences of almost all the five schools, which shows inclination towards building a more informal relation and discourse. One post by School A reflects a conversational and relaxed tone, diverging from traditional institutional formality. Code-mixing is evident, as English is interspersed with words or phrases in Urdu. This linguistic strategy not only adds cultural flavor but also indicates an inclusive communication style that resonates with bilingual stakeholders.

In their post shared by School B the informal language is complemented by the strategic use of emojis, which add emotional warmth and visual appeal. The tone is friendly and accessible, making the message feel more personal and engaging.

for English text in the form of banners and event highlights.

- Cultural elements, such as Urdu language or national symbols, were featured during events like Independence Day, Kashmir Day etc., often through themed visuals or captions.

- The visual tone remained formal on websites but was more colorful and vibrant on social media specifically during celebrations and events.
- There was little to no use of Urdu calligraphy or local fonts/styles in regular branding. Cultural integration was more symbolic, reflecting a tendency and inclination to prioritize international repute. Only School B and School C managed to

incorporate stylistic variation to enhance the content appeal, but even that was controlled and occasional.

Table 2 summarizes the recurring patterns across the five schools analyzed in the research. It presents cross-school themes, common patterns, and the linguistic and cultural elements observed.

Table 2

Summary table of Cross School Patterns

Theme	Common Pattern Observed
Language Use	English-dominant; Urdu appears rarely, mostly in user comments or patriotic posts
Tone and Style	Formal on websites; slightly relaxed on social media, especially Instagram
Digital Identity	Aspirational branding emphasizing excellence, leadership, and global values
Audience Engagement	Moderate interaction; likes > comments; casual code-mixing by audience, not institutions
Cultural Integration	Urdu and cultural symbols used symbolically during national events; English remains dominant

Note: Themes were developed based on content patterns from digital platforms.

Results of Interview data collection

This section presents the findings derived from interviews collected from a variety of audience namely:

- Digital communication managers
- Teachers
- Students and
- Parents.

The schools whose audience was questioned were:

1. School A
2. School B
3. School C
4. School D
5. School E

This interview aimed to understand their different perspective on how digital platforms in today's times contribute in shaping the linguistic landscape and practices of private schools in Karachi.

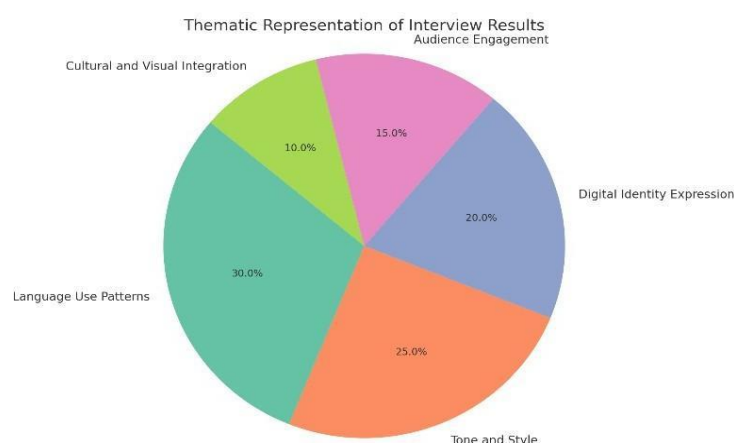


Figure 4: Pie chart showing a weighted visual representation of the key themes from the interview data:

Figure 4, is a pie chart that shows the thematic distribution identified through the qualitative coding of semi-structured interviews with teachers, parents, administration and students. The most dominant theme was Language Use Patterns (30%), indicating a strong focus on how educators adapted to communication styles for diverse digital audiences. This was followed by Tone and Style (25%), and Digital Identity Expression (20%), highlighting intentional and deliberate choices in crafting institutional identity. Lesser emphasis was placed on Audience Engagement (15%) and Cultural and Visual Integration (10%), though these still contributed to the overall digital presence of the institutions. The results were categorized into five different themes.

Language Use Patterns

English emerged as the dominant language across all stake holders. Almost all the institutions surveyed showed English being maintained as the primary medium of instruction and information on both the websites and social media pages. Code-switching (mixing of Urdu and English) was limited and informal, adopted mostly by students and occasionally by parents. The faculty members and management however preferred a mono-lingual communication to maintain professionalism. All digital managers reported institutional policies favoring English.

"I'm part of a branded school hence we use English only... we have to use [it] despite the fact that we do have [a] border line audience." – School B (Digital Manager)

This shows that despite the fact that all audiences interacting with the content do not have a perfect know how of English, institutions still prefer the monolingual use of language as part of their policies and reputation in the market.

"We communicate in one language. Monolingual." – Teacher, School C

This reflects policies enjoined by the institutions that encourage English as a medium of instruction and communication, in order to maintain their ethos and standards.

Some students and parents mix Urdu and English naturally for ease and familiarity

"Yes, I do sometimes [mix languages]. That depends on the context I am writing."- Student, School D

This shows a more comfortable approach to communication, which was observed on both the responses of parents and students alike.

Tone and Style

A variety of tone was observed across different platforms. A formal tone was used on official platforms such as websites while a semi-formal colloquial tone appeared on social media pages such as Facebook and Instagram. Students' responses were more relaxed whereas the administration and teachers emphasized on clarity and a more professional means of communication.

When asked about their preferred tone of conversation and communication there were mixed views. Teachers and managers tailored their tone based on platform and audience.

"The tone is based on the platform's audience...

formal for emails and official posts, semi-formal for WhatsApp and Facebook.” – School A (Digital Manager)

Parents also preferred clear, respectful, and professional communication.

“A formal tone makes it enjoyable for me... I like seeing the school have more of a professional reputation.” – Parent, School E

Students however favored a more informal casual style both in receiving information and responding to it.

Digital Identity Expression

Digital platforms aren't only intended for communication but are also used to project the identity of educational institutions. They highlight students' achievements, different activities within the school premises and showcase academic excellence. While the mission statements and vision are not always explicitly written at all times the language and the content used reflect institutional excellence, leadership and social responsibility. An analysis of the different responses showed that language plays an important role in showcasing the ethos of school to their audience.

All digital managers emphasized structured representation of school achievements.

They consider it as a way to project the school's image as being focused and innovative to the modern educational world.

“Facebook highlights student successes. This digital presence reinforces the school's image as innovative.” – School A (Digital Manager)

Both parents and students associate professional tone and content with a school's credibility. They recognize the school's value through content, not just slogans

“Yes, the language reflects how professional the school is.” – Parent, School B

“Yes [online language] ... reflects its values or personality.” – Student, School D

These examples clearly show that despite the comfort of using a casual informal tone, the audience associates formal language to a high level of professionalism and authority.

These examples from interview excerpts show that English is preferred over cultural

Audience engagement strategies

Digital platforms have been known to facilitate real time and interactive engagement with the audience and stakeholders. Where WhatsApp has been a popular medium for direct internal communication between school and parental body, Facebook was a more preferred platform for community building and event updates. Posts that are celebratory, motivational, or highlight events were the ones receiving more interaction, specially from the student body.

A student from School E recalled a motivational post: “Your participation matters, make your voice be heard.” Showing that appreciation and motivational posts were areas students not only remember, but are more interested in interacting with rather than a notification post. This shows that students demonstrate a higher tendency to engage with emotionally resonant or community-focused posts.

Teachers from various institutions believed that interaction through these digital platforms has increased outreach to a large extent. A digital head at School D noted: “Digital platforms have made stakeholder engagement more immediate and interactive.” There's an overall increase of engagement seen in the past few years, since the world has digitized and has resorted to a frequent use of these digital platforms. Teachers and managers use engagement metrics in the form of Comments and Likes to assess effectiveness of the post.

Cultural and Visual Integration

Urdu expressions, cultural symbols or imagery and Urdu based visuals were seen minimally. The only instances they were tied to were to celebrate National days, National celebrations or some Urdu debates or elocutions. Otherwise, schools adhered to standard professional styles with minimal to no local aesthetic elements. Both teachers and administration prioritized clarity and consistency over cultural elements

“We only communicate in English unless required.” – Teacher, School E

“School uses formal tone online... it's just not attractive, more like a necessity.” – Digital manager, School C

representation, and is used only when required to depict any national agenda or event.

Table 3 shows a consolidated finding from the stakeholder interviews. It presents key patterns for each theme expressed individually by teachers, administrators or digital managers, students and parents. This summary distills the exploratory qualitative responses into concise pointers to show how language use, tone, digital identity expression, audience engagement, and cultural integration were perceived across all groups.

Table 3:

Summary Table of Interview Results

Theme	Key Findings from Interview Data
Language Use Patterns	English dominant; code-switching limited to informal interactions by students or parents.
Tone and Style	Formal tone on websites/emails; friendly/semi-formal tone on WhatsApp and social media.
Digital Identity Expression	Identity projected through achievements and events; explicit values are less frequently stated.
Audience Engagement	WhatsApp/Facebook used for fast communication; emotional, community-based posts see higher engagement.
Cultural Integration	Local language and visuals limited to special events; otherwise, a neutral/professional digital style.

This study was based on how digital technologies shape the linguistic landscape and influence language practices in the private schools of Karachi. The findings of the interviews indicate that English is the dominant language in almost all digital platforms used by the schools mentioned, and the language, tone, register and style are carefully used keeping the audience and platform in mind. While these digital platforms have improved stakeholder engagement and built institutional identities, the integration of local languages and cultural references however remain

minimal.

Triangulation of the Findings

The aim of this triangulation was to combine both the results of the digital content analysis and the semi-structured interview to provide a holistic understanding and discussion on how digital technologies are impacting and shaping the linguistic landscapes of private schools in Karachi. Comparing these two data sets, reflected better how schools do not only present themselves online but also how their stakeholders perceive and interact with their digital presence.

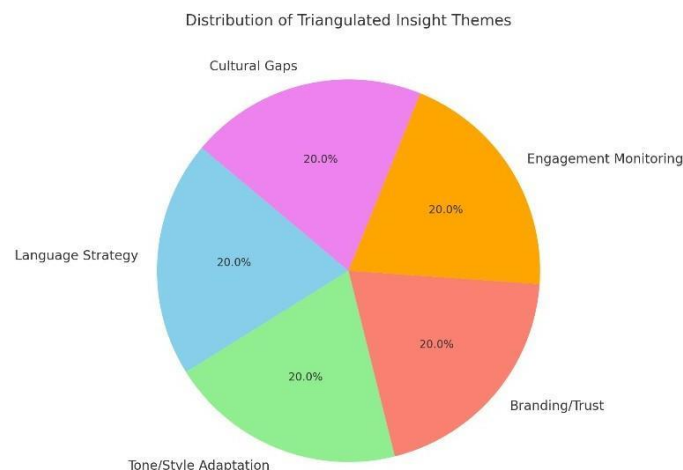


Figure 5 Pie chart showing the distribution of themes in the triangulated insights

Figure 5 illustrates the distribution of these triangulated insight themes, highlighting an equal representation (20% each) across Engagement Monitoring, Branding/Trust, Tone/Style Adaptation, Language Strategy, and Cultural Gaps. The balance in the diagram shows that each of these themes was equally important in bringing together and shaping the overall conclusion. This suggests a well-rounded and comprehensive analysis across different dimensions of the data.

Language Use Patterns- Convergence on English Dominance and Strategic Urdu Use Convergence

Both the content analysis and interviews showed a clear selected use of English across websites, social media platforms and other messaging platforms. This aligns with the broader sociolinguistic trend in Pakistan where English is associated with modernity, professionalism, and prestige (Atta, 2021; Manan, 2017). Digital managers and teachers specifically said that English was mandated institutionally and hence it is used as a prime medium of communication. Selective code-mixing was also observed in both data sets with an abundant use coming from the responsive side. Occasional Urdu posts were seen on social media during special events e.g National Day celebrations. Some parents and students acknowledged the use of Urdu in informal messages for comfort and ease.

Implications

This parallel study across data suggests that English was deliberately positioned as the dominant language for interaction and global branding while Urdu was used for emotional and cultural resonance confirming Shohamy and Gorter's (2009) view on strategic multilingualism.

Tone and Style: Consistent Platform-Specific Shifts Convergence

The analysis on both types of data affirmed that style and tone vary on each platform. Where websites adopted a more formal tone, social media platforms employed a colloquial and informal tone. Digital managers and teachers confirmed that the tone for audience interaction is adjusted according to audience type, i.e. formal for parents and more motivational or casual for students, since students enjoy a more relaxed tone while teachers emphasize decorum and clarity. The content analysis did show a limited usage of emojis on Facebook and Instagram, but the intent was to sound relatable without compromising on authority.

Implication

These findings support Blommaert's (2010) theory of polycentricity, where different centers of linguistic authority (e.g., websites, or social media apps) coexist and are managed intentionally and mindfully to meet the expectations of a variety of audiences.

Expression of Digital Identity: Agreement on Branding through Language Convergence
Schools constructed their digital identities through achievement-oriented language, positive framing, and formal language structure, even when their missions and visions were not always explicitly stated. This was evident from both content analysis and interviews.

Websites were more focused on projecting the ethos of the schools, and the social media platforms projected achievements, events, and student successes reinforcing values such as leadership, strength and community building. Teachers and social media managers cited these platforms as essential tools for projecting school values, achievements and professionalism.

Implication

This alignment reinforces the idea that language does not only function as a communication tool but also contributes to how the external audience perceives the internal state of the organization.

Stakeholder Engagement: Enhanced, But Managed Cautiously Convergence

Both data sources showed enhanced stakeholder engagement through digital platforms. Interviews revealed that students and parents found platforms like WhatsApp and Instagram easily accessible and engaging. Posts with emojis and hashtags received more engagement from the audience, owing to more visibility.

Divergence

Digital content analysis showed a fairly responsive approach from the institutions; however the interviews had a different picture to show. Almost all schools showed vigilance in monitoring content and engagement responses such as comments, but some schools preferred to limit direct interaction through these social media pages due to potential over-involvement by parents.

Implication

While digital platforms increase interaction and engagement with stakeholders, it also necessitates

the urge to redefine boundaries. This confirms the importance of clear language policies and communication strategies to ensure professionalism.

Cultural and Visual Integration: Confirmed Gap Across Both Sets Convergence

Urdu calligraphy or national symbols were minimal or mostly event based as deduced through both data collection methods. These were prioritized only to showcase either patriotism in posts, or highlight the importance of national events.

Implication

This highlights a potentially missed opportunity for cultural representation.

Institutions aim for a global modern image, however incorporating cultural elements could further enhance relatability with a niched audience without undermining professionalism.

Integrated Implications of Triangulation

Comparing the data of both the interviews and content analysis it was evident that linguistic practices across Karachi's schools are highly strategic and platform dependent. The interviews expressed the rationale behind language choices that were observed in the content analysis. Institutions focused on mono-lingual English usage for brand identity while tone and register were tailored for engagement, effectiveness and impact. In addition to this, both methods supported the idea that digital platforms are dynamic linguistic landscapes that contribute to the understanding of how schools use language not just to inform, not just to communicate but also to build identities, communication arenas, and influence behavior.

Table 4 shows a summary of the triangulated data which integrates findings from both the digital content analysis and stakeholder interviews and perceptions. The table highlights the points of convergence and divergence across the data collection sources. It shows how patterns were validated and refined

Table 4:

Triangulation Summary Table

Digital Identity	Implicit branding through achievements and content tone.	Stakeholders agree digital tools build school image.	Language supports institutional branding and trust-building.
Engagement Strategies	Use of hashtags/emojis observed on social media.	Students/parents engage more; mixed feedback on responses.	Engagement is high, but institutions monitor participation levels.
Cultural Integration	Local visuals appear during national events only.	Stakeholders see little cultural reflection in daily communication.	Missed opportunity for cultural connection and inclusivity.
Theme	Content Analysis	Interview Data	Triangulated Insight
Language Use	English dominates; minimal Urdu use.	English preferred; code-mixing by students/parents.	Strategic English use for image; selective Urdu for connection.
Tone and Style	Formal on websites, semi-formal/friendly on social media.	Same pattern; tone tailored by audience/platform.	Confirms theory of polycentricity.

Digital Identity	Implicit branding through achievements and content tone.	Stakeholders agree digital tools build school image.	Language supports institutional branding and trust-building.
Engagement Strategies	Use of hashtags/emojis observed on social media.	Students/parents engage more; mixed feedback on responses.	Engagement is high, but institutions monitor participation levels.
Cultural Integration	Local visuals appear during national events only.	Stakeholders see little cultural reflection in daily communication.	Missed opportunity for cultural connection and inclusivity.

The interviews revealed clear patterns in language usage reflecting institutional priorities, in our analysis, English was pre-dominantly used for official communication to display professionalism, class and status, prestige and clarity. This conjoined with previous findings (Manan, 2017; Atta, 2021) that associate English with status and modernity in Pakistani education. While both parents and students naturally code-switch or use Urdu informally, institutions consistently used English as a mono-lingual medium to maintain formality, showing a tension between linguistic inclusivity and institutional branding.

In line with the expectations set by Shohamy and Gorter (2009), the tone and style are adapted across platforms. With websites showing strictly formal tones, the digital spaces were comparatively relaxed with a more informal yet controlled conversational style. This supports the idea that digital platforms are polycentric linguistic spaces, where multiple norms co-exist (Blommaert, 2010). The study also supports the claim that digital communication is a tool for building identity. Even in the absence of explicitly stated missions and values, the institutions make a mindful approach of adopting language that reflects their

professionalism and carefully curated posts showcase their achievements, and aspirations. This aligns with Chen et al. (2023), who argue that digital engagement fosters trust and enhances school image.

Conversely, the limited use of local language and cultural elements beyond cultural and national celebrations shows a stark contrast with studies on linguistic hybridity in public signage (Manan, 2017). This might suggest a missed opportunity to reflect broader and socio-linguistic realities.

Stakeholder engagement has been noticeably changed with the use of language.

Students are highly influenced by the tone and the content of the social media posts and many have reported drastic changes in their own language, writing and speaking style as a result of regular interaction with quality content. Teachers also observed students switching to more formal tones of conversation and varieties of English through exposure to these digital contents echoing the findings of Riadi & Warti (2021) and Aladjem & Jou (2020) on the role of digital media in developing pragmatic language skills.

Implications of the Findings

These results contributed to a deeper understanding of the findings of how digital

spaces function as linguistic spaces that reflect both the individual linguistic behavior and the school culture. The findings also supported the existing theories related to the use of English language as a medium of institutional discourse but also added new insights on how this dominance is maintained and moderated across different platforms. For schools, especially in multilingual societies in Pakistan, the study emphasized the added need for adopting a strategic language planning in digital

Limitations

The methodology was designed to capture the breadth and depth in understanding the linguistic landscape of schools in Karachi. However, even the best researches have limitations, and certain constraints may have influenced the findings. While the study offered diverse and valuable insights, certain limitations have to be acknowledged:

1. The research was conducted with a fairly small group of schools (5 schools). The sample being smaller in size restricts the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts.
2. The study was limited to the data available on schools' digital assets and interviews were conducted with a small number of stakeholders. As a result of which some perspectives or communication channels may not have been fully represented or explored.
3. Content analysis can be somewhat subjective, especially when it comes to understanding language details. This might affect how reliable the data is, since different analysts may interpret things differently.

Delimitations

In designing the study, boundaries were set to maintain clarity and focus so that the study remained manageable within the given time frame and resources.

The following delimitations were established by the researchers to define the study's scope:

1. The research was intentionally limited to private schools with active digital platforms, excluding public and rural schools to maintain a focused analysis on digital engagement in more technologically advanced contexts.
2. The analysis was limited to content in two languages only namely English and Urdu.

communication. While professional language and tone do add credibility to the image, adding cultural elements can ensure a strengthened community, inclusivity and stakeholder communication.

On a practical level, digital managers could use these insights to further refine their strategies to improve their parent-facing content, by using localized expressions or offering multilingual content during culturally significant events.

No systematic analysis of any other language was performed.

The parameters were deliberately chosen to align the research design with the study's objectives.

Conclusion

The study examines how private schools utilize digital mediums such as websites and social media and other messaging platforms to not only shape their linguistic landscapes but also develop a communicative bond with their stakeholders. Through a triangulated approach of analysis, that included data collection through content analysis and semi-structured interviews with digital managers and administration, teachers, students and parents, the research revealed a consistent dominance of English across digital platforms, a strategic use of Urdu for cultural connectivity and resonance, and a platform tailored variation in tone and style. These digital practices serve as tools for institutional identity, audience engagement, and professional presentation.

One surprising finding of this study was the extent to which English was mindfully and strategically maintained across the platforms, despite the diverse backgrounds of audiences and stakeholders. Urdu was used minimally into everyday communication, which would have otherwise enhanced and improved visibility and engagement. This suggests that institutions prioritize global prestige over local resonance. The findings uphold the existing theories of multilingualism and polycentricity, sharing insights how institutions use multilingualism in a digitally developing society. They highlight the importance of adopting mindful language as a tool for shaping perceptions and building trust, and suggest that integrating bilingual content into routine communication can strengthen school-community relationships.

Recommendations

In terms of recommendations, future studies should consider a larger and more diverse sample of schools across different regions of Pakistan, including government, public, and low-cost private institutions. This would help in understanding how socioeconomic and infrastructural differences influence linguistic practices on digital platforms. Schools can integrate more Urdu or local language expressions, in parental outreach to enhance visibility and accessibility.

Further research is needed to examine how students and parents interpret the language and how they are influenced—particularly in terms of language learning, digital literacy, and institutional trust. Future research horizons could also include longitudinal studies that track changes in linguistic strategies over time. Comparative studies between schools in urban and rural settings could be conducted to explore regional variations in digital communication practices.

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