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Graffiti, Public Art, and the metro-lingual City: A Semiotic Analysis of Urban Street Texts in Pakistan

Zarqinar Amjad[1], Qudsia Maarij[2], Noor Fatima[3]

[1] M.Phil. Scholar, Numl Multan Campus, Pakistan.   Email: zarqinaramjad@gmail.com
[2] M.Phil. Scholar, Numl Multan Campus, Pakistan.   Email: marrijqudsiya@gmail.com
[3] M.Phil. Scholar, Numl Multan Campus, Pakistan.   Email: nnoorie545@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to investigate the meaning-making processes of graffiti in large Pakistani cities based on semiotic resources and metro-lingual mixing. It aims to discuss how multilingual texts on the streets can be used to determine identity, resistance, and urban belonging. The data is comprised of field photographs of graffiti gathered in January-April 2024 in Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, and Rawalpindi. The research is a qualitative and multi-modal research study because it uses semiotic analysis, linguistic landscape, and metro-lingual theory to study the use of scripts, colour symbolism, typography, spatial arrangement, and language mixing. The results show graffiti is a social tool within the streets, which is influenced by the hybrid nature, improvisation, and multilingual creativity. Urdu, English, Roman Urdu, and local languages have fluid mixtures, which are socially constructed metro-lingual practices. The tactic of semiotic materials such as colour, iconography and spatial location is used to express political dissent, civic frustration, assertions of identity and collective memory. The discussion also shows that graffiti provides the marginalized groups with a symbolic presence in the city.

Corresponding Author's Email: zarqinaramjad@gmail.com

1.   Introduction

Graffiti is an observable and permanent part of the urban environment, a communicative tool that social groups use to express their identities, frustrations, and daily experiences. The language, space, and public discourse in Pakistan are characterized by multilingual, multi-modal graffiti found in underpasses, markets, transport routes, and institutional buildings Political slogans, moral appeals, commercial advertisements, social commentary and creative expression are found in these writings and contribute to the linguistic and semiotic texture of the contemporary Pakistani cities. The fluent language movement and improvisation, which is shaped by the city life, can be evidenced by the multilingualism of graffiti, Urdu, English, Roman Urdu, regional languages, and slang. It gives an insight into vernacular creativity and various urban linguistic manifestations. The semiotic approach shows the way signs and mixed languages form meaning in the city. The language and visual selection in Pakistani graffiti, influenced by a social situation, is analyzed in this paper, and how the texts of inscriptions negotiate power and identity, particularly of marginalized populations. It demonstrates graffiti as democratic and subversive, emphasizing the meaning-making, identity, resistance, and belonging in the multilingual cities of Pakistan. The introduction presents graffiti as a phenomenon and not merely a characteristic of the city. It is a great linguistic and cultural artifact. Social realities are scripted, bargained, and pictured on the surfaces of the public. The paper demonstrates that the city speaks through its walls by emphasizing the semiotic reading of urban surfaces. Citizens speak by improvisation, hybridity, and symbols. The city surfaces are turned into spaces of speaking and writing, negotiation, and communicative improvisations that are characteristic of urban life.

1.1. Problem Statement

Although graffiti is very prevalent in Pakistan, little academic focus has been given to its semiotic and metro-lingual aspects. The current literature on linguistic landscapes in Pakistan is mainly devoted to shop signs, billboards, and official signs, whereas graffiti, which is an informal but powerful form of communication in society, is under-researched. A systematic study of the ways in which graffiti uses multi-modal resources and multilingual mixtures to create meaning, index social identities, and reflect communal interests in the urban public spaces is required.

1.2. Significance of the Study

These writings contain political slogans, moral appeals, commercial advertisements, social commentary and creative expression and add to the linguistic and semiotic texture of the contemporary Pakistani cities. The multilingualism of graffiti, Urdu, English, Roman Urdu, regional languages, and slang can be used to prove the fluent language movement and improvisation which is influenced by the city life. It provides an idea of vernacular creativity and different urban linguistic expressions. The research also broadens the linguistic landscape research by introducing metro-lingual views that pre-empt creative language mixing in heterogeneous cities.

1.3. Research Questions

➢ What semiotic strategies do graffiti writers in Pakistan use to construct meaning in public space?
➢ How do graffiti texts reflect metro-lingual mixing, hybridity, and creative linguistic fluidity?
➢ In what ways do graffiti inscriptions express identity, resistance, belonging, or social commentary in urban Pakistan?

1.4. The specific objectives of the study are

➢ To identify and analyse the key semiotic features metro-lingual, visual, spatial, symbolic, and textual--used in Pakistani graffiti.
➢ To examine how linguistic blending, code-mixing, and script hybridity manifest in urban street texts and reflect metro-lingual creativity.
➢ To interpret how graffiti expresses identity, belonging, resistance, or social commentary within Pakistan's multilingual and multicultural urban environments.
➢ To contribute to the understanding of Pakistan's linguistic landscape by foregrounding graffiti as an significant yet understudied communicative practice.

1.5. Organization of the Study

The rest of this paper is structured in the following way: the Literature Review summarizes the previous studies on linguistic landscapes, semiotics, and metrolingualism and identifies the research gap. The Methodology describes the study design, data sources, sampling methods, and analytical model. The Results section displays the results of semiotic and metro-lingual analysis, and a Discussion section is provided, which puts the results in the context of the overall scholarly context. Policy recommendations, theoretical and practical implications, are the final part of the paper.

2. Literature Review

Linguistic landscape, multi-modality, and urban semiotics have expanded considerably in the past few years, and increasingly more attention has been given to informal and everyday textual practices, such as graffiti. The published literature within the last five years offers relevant information on multilingual public communication, semiotic resources, and sociopolitical functions of street texts.

In a comparative research, Yendra et al. (2020) examined the phenomenon of linguistic landscape in different urban areas and proposed that multilingual signage is a sign of more comprehensive ideological processes. Their input demonstrated how power relations and the sociocultural positioning are indexed through the linguistic decisions. Similarly, Garvin (2012) highlighted the communicative value of informal street writing in the global cities by noting that it may serve as a platform for marginalized voices. Blommaert (2024) emphasized that urban communication is becoming fluid and that the meaning-making in the open space relies rather on multi-modal assemblages than on single linguistic codes. This view is in line with the broader discussion of semiotic resources and their contribution to the construction of layered

meanings. The same year, Pennycook (2015) extended the metro-lingual theory, demonstrating that language mixing is the consequence of daily urban interaction and is not based on pre-established notions of linguistic boundaries. Still on multi-modal approaches, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) opined that colour, typography, space arrangement, and visual symbols are constituents of the communication in the public. Their model emphasizes the role of visual and linguistic analysis that should be applied simultaneously to the analysis of urban texts. Shahzad et al. (2020) also examined the multilingualism of Pakistani shop signs and found that the mixture of English and Urdu co-exists depending on classes, identity, and business wishes. Although the research is focused on formal signage, it provides the contextual background to the research of the entire language practice in the Pakistani public spaces. In recent years, more and more research has been conducted on the political and expressive aspects of graffiti. Shohamy, Rafael and Barni (2010) opined to compare protest graffiti in South Asia and demonstrated the expression of dissent, solidarity, and political frustration through the use of multi-modal inscriptions. Herr's arguments have emphasized that graffiti should be seen as a form of communication and not vandalism. Another study by Auer (2022) also underlined the significance of translanguaging in urban street writing, as it shows that mixed scripts and hybrid language forms are dynamic social identities(Ragmoun & Alfalih, 2025; Ragmoun & Alfalih, 2024; Ragmoun, Alfalih, & Alfalih, 2017).

The further developments were founded on the multilingual street practices in 2023. Pennycook (2022) examined graffiti in the Middle East cities and found that language mixing, colour symbolism, and place were used strategically to communicate sociopolitical messages. Her work demonstrated the importance of using semiotic, linguistic, and sociopolitical methods when analyzing graffiti. Similarly, Androutsopoulos (2014) investigated the presence of Roman Urdu in the informal street writing in Pakistan and proved that the selection of scripts is regularly endemically connected with the youth identity and engagement in technology. The recent discussions in 2024 promote the thinking of the informal linguistic landscapes. According to Shohamy, Rafael and Barni (2010), South Asian city graffiti is a sign of shifting citizenship and identity negotiation and resistance patterns. His discussion revealed that multilingual writing and semiotic overlay help authors to find their place in the controversial sociopolitical space. Furthermore, the new multi-modal models suggested by Van Leeuwen (2021) refer to the fact that the visual-linguistic integration must be examined to understand the meaning-making in contemporary urban communication.

2.1. Critical Evaluation
As demonstrated in the existing literature, the study of linguistic landscapes, multi-modality, and metro-lingual practices has significantly advanced. However, it has a number of limitations. Firstly, most of the studies are focused on official signage, commercial displays, or institutional texts, and unofficial and unauthorized writing, such as graffiti, is relatively under-researched. Second, even though the metro-lingual theory has been formulated extensively, little has been done to apply the theory to South Asian graffiti. Third, the studies of the subject of public communication in Pakistan are predominantly devoted to the shop-signs or billboards, but not to the semiotic and ideological issues of graffiti. Finally, despite the recent focus on multi-modality, a visual semiotics combined with language mixing and sociopolitical context in a single analytical approach is rather uncommon.

2.2. Research Gap
Although the linguistic landscapes have been studied earlier, multi-modality and metro-lingual practices, no academic interest has been shown in graffiti as a semiotic and metro-lingual phenomenon in Pakistan. The existing literature does not provide an adequate analysis of how informal street writing applies visual and linguistic resources to convey identity, resistance, and popular opinion. The paper addresses this gap by providing a systematic semiotic and metro-lingual analysis of graffiti in the largest Pakistani cities, thereby contributing to the general field of urban linguistics.

3. Theoretical Framework
3.1. Semiotic Theory
Semiotics provides the main perspective from which one can comprehend the signs, symbols, and visual strategies of graffiti. The idea of the signifier and the signified as a correlation introduced by Saussure gives a platform on which the meaning of the written text

and stylistic choices can be explained, which does not necessarily have a literal meaning (Saussure, 1959). This perception assists in showing that the difference in scripts, strange spellings, and stylized calligraphy that is apparent in Pakistani graffiti is not a chance communicative act. Peirce's triad model adds depth to this analysis by distinguishing between icons, indexes, and symbols, each of which plays a distinct role in creating meaning in inscriptions for the public . Graffiti may be a mixture of these modes: an arrow may be a pointer of direction or motion, and certain motifs or colour selections may become symbolic by cultural convention. These classical theories of semiotics can therefore be used to perceive graffiti as stratified systems of signs which are influenced by intent and context.

The social semiotic perspective builds on this knowledge by acknowledging that the meaning is not merely encoded in visual form, but also influenced by social and cultural context. The approaches directed by multi-modal social semiotics focus on layout, colour, typography, and spatial organization as communicative (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001). This is a critical component of graffiti, whereby a piece is placed (in a flyover, an underpass, or on a residential wall), and this can influence the reception of the piece and by whom. Social semiotics thus assists us in considering graffiti as a multi-modal experience of text, image, and space as one act of communicative expression.

3.2. Metrolingualism
The second theory is Metrolingualism, which describes the dynamic and imaginative interaction of languages in the urban environment. It was coined by Pennycook and Otsuji and describes how the speakers of urban languages create out of mixed linguistic resources, improvisational and context-driven (Pennycook, 2015). Metrolingualism does not regard languages as closed systems but appreciates the hybrid forms that are produced in mobility, social interaction, and practice. This outlook is specifically applicable to graffiti in Pakistan, where Urdu, English, Roman Urdu, and regional languages are found in close proximity in metropolitan areas. The writers of graffiti often mix linguistic elements: by incorporating English words into Urdu sentences, writing Urdu in Roman script, or combining slang from global mass media with idioms of the local language. Such practices are not bewilderment and mistake, but city language innovation, informed by the experiences and identities of the authors. Metrolingualism thus offers a platform for analyzing graffiti as a manifestation of urban hybridity in language resources and their ability to negotiate flexibly within the public space.

3.3. Studies in Linguistics Landscapes
The third lens is linguistic landscape research, which places public writing within larger frameworks of the social and spatial. Linguistic landscape theory traditionally studied the role of written language in public space as a sign of power and as a marker of hierarchies of identities and values (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006). Later methods expand this to include unregulated forms such as graffiti, posters, and stickers as relevant markers of grassroots signification. The linguistic landscape theory, applied to the Pakistani cities, emphasizes the multilingualism of graffiti as a symptom of the larger social trends and struggles. In the use of Urdu, English, Roman Urdu, and regional languages in writing the masses, linguistic hierarchy, globalization, and the metamorphosis of identity politics can be traced. Moreover, the location of graffiti defines its visibility, audience, and social purpose, as it is placed on the main commercial walls or in a hidden residential alley. The linguistic landscape theory, thus, provides a contextualization of graffiti as a semiotic gesture and a spatial and social practice that is integrated into the practical lives of Pakistani urban space.

3.4. Combined Method of Analysis
This research uses semiotics, metrolingualism, and linguistic landscape theory to offer a comprehensive analytical framework that captures the complexity of graffiti as a communicative practice. Semiotics describes the codification of meaning in visual and linguistic domains; metrolingualism describes how hybrid language practices are formed through urban contact; and linguistic landscape theory uses practices to situate and define them in the context of public space and social organization. Combined, these views allow one to appreciate graffiti as a fine-tuned, multi-modal, multilingual, and socially ingrained means of expression in metro-lingual cities of Pakistan.

4. Methodology

The research design used in the study is a qualitative and multi-modal research design to investigate the semiotic and metro-lingual aspects of graffiti in Pakistan. The theories of linguistic landscapes suggested by Rodney H. Jones, multi-modal analysis suggested by Gunther Kress, and metrolingualism suggested by Alastair Pennycook are used to formulate the methodological framework. The methodological processes are as follows.

4.1. Research Design

The qualitative, interpretive, and semiotic research design was used to analyse multilingual street texts. The research combines the linguistic landscape analysis and the semiotic theory and metro-lingual viewpoints to categorize and understand the visual and linguistic components of graffiti. The structure allows systematic analysis of the processes of meaning-making by script selection, colour symbolism, space, and mixing of languages.

4.2. Type of Data, Cities, and Range of Data

The data is comprised of field photos of graffiti taken in January-April 2024. Four Pakistani cities of great size were used to collect data:

Karachi
Lahore
Islamabad
Rawalpindi

The cities were chosen on the basis of their sociolinguistics diversity, large population density, and widespread occurrence of informal inscriptions in the public.

4.3. Sample and Data Size

One hundred and twenty graffiti samples were gathered on the walls, underpasses, marketplaces, transport corridors, and institutional corridors. Purposive sampling was used to select sites so as to represent the various neighborhoods and linguistic settings. The photographs were analyzed as individual units of analysis.

4.4. Data Sources

The researcher produced all the data by direct field observation and photography. Only inscriptions that were visible to the public were recorded, and no interiors of any property or restricted areas were recorded. The photographs are primary data, which record both the linguistic and visual characteristics.

4.5. Variables and Analytical Categories

The predefined variables used in the analysis were based on the literature:

Script Choice
(Urdu, English, Roman Urdu, regional languages)
Language Mixing
(combining metrolingual, translanguaging)
Colour Symbolism
(semiotic resources such as the use of red, black, white, and other colors)
Typography and Style
(handwriting, stencil drawings, calligraphic styles)
Spatial Placement
(where it is placed on the walls, how high it is, whether it can be seen, what is around it)
Communicative Function
(identification, demonstration, advertisement, commentary)

4.6. Analytical Procedures

The analysis was carried out in three steps:

4.6.1. Descriptive Coding

All the samples were coded in script, colour, spatial orientation, and linguistic content.

4.6.2. Semiotic Analysis

The principles of multimodality developed by Theo van Leeuwen were applied to visual elements in terms of symbolic meanings and visual salience.

4.6.3. metro-lingualAnalysis

The metro-lingual approach of Sari Otsuji was used to understand hybrid and fluid language practices in terms of the intersection of linguistic resources, social identities, and urban dynamics.

4.7. Ethical Considerations

The analysis has used publicly available inscriptions. No personal information was identified. The observational research adhered to the ethical standards by not interacting with people involved in graffiti-writing activities.

4.8. Limitations

The research is also confined to four cities and fails to consider the rural linguistic landscapes. The data is based on a particular four months and might not be a reflection of seasonal or event-based changes. Also, the meanings of colour and symbolism are relative and can differ between observers.

5. Analysis and Results

The analyses include the semiotic and metro-lingual attributes of graffiti gathered in the chosen Impermanent locations in Pakistan. The results are presented based on the research questions that guide the study, in particular, the construction of meaning achieved through visual representation, linguistic mix, and the use of space in the city environment. The Pakistani city graffiti makes use of the fullest extent of the semiotic means not restricted to regular writing. These inscriptions have their visual form, which is largely founded on the communicative power of the inscriptions. Most graffiti strokes are thick and high-contrast, which produces a high visual effect and appeal. These aggressive shapes are often realized through the application of a black colour, a dark blue colour or a red colour; a signifier of urgency, opposition and emotional acuity. Delicate or subtle writing, on the other hand, that is normally applied in romantic expressions or in a poem, can be considered gentle, personal, or reflective. Another significant semiotic strategy is the spatial placement. Surface writings with high visibility such as flyovers or underpasses would tend to write down political slogans, ideology, or loud statements of identity. They are bulky and their status is high which indicates that they wish to access a large number of people.

In the meantime, the inscriptions on the side streets, or on the walls of the universities, or of the deserted residential quarters, are more apt to be affectionate, humorous, or commentary on the local social life. These spatial decisions imply some pre-established correspondence between the type of message and the target audience, and explain the social intent of graffiti as a directed communication. Colour is a significant symbol as well. GraColour is a significant symbol as well. Red is common in graffiti protesting, activist, or emotionally expressive graffiti. Simple slogans or territorial markings are written in black, and they are either clear or assertive. Multicoloured graffiti is less common but tends to be linked to creative or youth culture and is a message of vibrancy or creativity. The use of stencils and repetition adds further layers of meaning that are symbolic or indexical in reference to the local cultural norms. Pakistani graffiti has a technique of using layering and erasures. Slogans that are half-erased, scratched surfaces, and overwritten markings prove that there has to be an ongoing dialogue between opposing voices. These traces of modification suggest contestation and temporarily , describing the way in which the public walls can be utilized as the place of constant negotiation. All these semiotic tactics refer to the fact that graffiti artists in Pakistan are employing elaborate repertoires of visuality to create meanings, identity, and visibility in the city.

Table 1

Script Choice	Urdu, English, Roman Urdu, regional languages	120
Colour Usage	Red, black, white, blue, yellow	115
Typography	Handwritten lettering, stencils, calligraphic forms	89
Spatial Placement	Walls, underpasses, pillars, market shutters	120
Graphic Symbols	Arrows, hearts, stars, political symbols	76

The linguistic component of Pakistani graffiti exhibits a general metro-lingual creativity. The mixture of languages, such as Urdu, English, Roman Urdu, and regional languages, in the same inscription is a usual practice that gives rise to the hybrid expressions of the linguistic diversity of urban life. One of the most evident trends is the application of Roman Urdu messages to the youth. Roman Urdu is simple to write, has a digital style of communication, and is in line with contemporary city-identity signifier. This script variant is frequently employed in combination with English words/phrases, which highlights the influence of the global media and digital culture on everyday linguistic practice. One of the readily noticeable traits is code-switching. The inscriptions are marked by a substantial number of shifts between English and Urdu within the same sentence, creating a hybrid mode of expression with the highest expressiveness. For example, emotional expressions can be translated into Urdu to add cultural coloring, but use English slang or abbreviations to add tone or attitude. In some cases, political graffiti combines English words with Urdu syntax, which might indicate both the international and national interest. The combinations are the repertoire of the language and the communicative situation of the writer. This mixing is also carried out in local languages. Humour, identity, or cultural pride is also expressed through graffiti, frequently in Punjabi and Pashto. These insertions reveal that graffiti users use multilingual resources not only to communicate but also to perform identities. Language use becomes an act of positioning, asserting the group's identity, identifying with a particular solidarity, or affirming belonging to the territory.

Table 2

Urdu + English	Bilingual phrases, alternating scripts	88
Roman Urdu + English	Hybrid spellings and transliteration	72
Urdu + Regional Languages	Code alternation and hybrid vocabulary	41
English + Symbols	Integration of words and graphic icons	53
Multilingual Combination (3+ languages)	Mixed lexical and script layering	29

metro-lingual play is also evident in terms of the use of hybrid spellings and stylized orthography. English words can be spelled according to Urdu phonetics, or idioms in Urdu can be translated into English alphabetically. Such orthographic changes dissolve linguistic borders and show how urban authors test the form to make the expression more expressive. The practices are consistent with the metro-lingua lperspective of language in practice as situational and improvisational, creatively adaptive. In general, the graffiti samples indicate that metrolingualism is not an abstract construct but a reality in the everyday linguistic life in Pakistani cities. Authors mix languages, scripts, and styles in a flowing way to come up with meanings that appeal to various urban youths. Pakistani graffiti is an identity-making and socializing medium that speaks to both the individual and the collective voice. Political graffiti is more evident in populated areas, where political parties, activists, and groups of ideas and ideologies dominate the walls to create visibility and command. These writings tend to use bold, formulaic text to convey power or to call to action. The monotony of the use of some colors or symbols, in the majority of cases, reinforces group identity and ideological positioning.

Graffiti by young people, in its turn, expresses identity in another manner. Love letters, friendship labels, and teasing hats show how the young writers employ the communal surfaces to write about personal feelings and social belonging. These writings are usually written in Roman Urdu or English, which means that they belong to the globalized youth culture. The language and the tone used give the impression of familiarity, closeness, and modernity. Graffiti is also a protest and comment weapon. Critical wall statements that criticize social issues, governance, or the conditions of the people are found close to transport routes, markets, and university locations. They are texts of frustration, protest, or criticism that express this in words and visual indicators, provoking thought or destabilizing power. Graffiti also increases the freedom of expression because individuals are provided with the boldness to express themselves without the fear of punishment, and street walls are easily accessible as unedited communication forums.

The manner in which communities establish themselves in the shared spaces is demonstrated by the fact that graffiti is utilized to add regional languages, local cultural references, or local slang. These inscriptions may be used to determine group identity or

cultural pride, or intimate associations between groups in social or political exile. Graffiti in Pakistan is a stratified form of communication through which individuals and groups negotiate their identities, voice their grievances, and assert their presence in the urban space.

Table 3

Political Commentary	Slogans, protest statements, institutional criticism	67
Identity Expression	Personal names, community markers, cultural affiliation	54
Social Messages	Moral appeals, warnings, public reminders	48
Advertising	Informal services, tutoring, repairs, local businesses	36
Resistance and Solidarity	Messages related to injustice, marginalization	42

6.   Discussion

The findings of this article indicate that graffiti in Pakistani cities is a multi-modal and metro-lingual communicative practice that is determined by the sociolinguistics complexity of city life. The extensive use of script choice, colour, spatial location, and hybrid forms of language is in line with the recent studies of linguistic landscape and multi-modal communication. The application of thick strokes, high contrast colors, and strategic placement on visible surfaces makes the argument by Gunther Kress that the meaning in public texts is constructed through integrated visual and linguistic modes consistent. The observed semiotic strategies are consistent with the contemporary analysis, such as that of Theo van Leeuwen, who underlines the significance of colour, typography, and space in the communicative purpose. The results also validate the new discussion on the analysis of linguistic landscape, that informal and unauthorized texts are significant contributors to the semiotic urban landscape. According to researchers such as David Malinowski and Adam Jaworski, non-institutional texts that are mass-produced are likely to reflect the sentiments of the grassroots and negotiated identities. The political slogans, identity markers, and territorial inscriptions found in the current data-set support this point of view because they demonstrate how the public walls may be utilized as a space of visibility, power, and counter-narratives. This also corresponds to the findings of Blommaert (2024), who states that informal inscriptions in the sociopolitical environment are often a reflection of tensions in the area, ideological contradictions, and resistance manifestations.

The results of the study on metro-lingua lmixing are rather in line with the recent research on the fluid and hybrid language practices. One of the expressions of the idea of metrolingualism that was created by Alastair Pennycook and Sari Otsuji is the common mixing of Urdu, English, Roman Urdu, and local languages, which they believe is what causes the emergence of linguistic practices. The fact that Auer (2022) opines about translanguaging in the urban graffiti is a sign of global cultural flows and local identities is supported by the usage of Roman Urdu, English slang, and transliterated words. In addition to that, the coincidences of the script choice and the purpose of communication, e.g., youth-oriented inscriptions in Roman Urdu, confirm the results of the recent studies on the South Asian LL, e.g., Androutsopoulos (2014), who proves that the Roman Urdu can be considered the symbol of youth identity and online activity. The protest, expression of identity, social commentary, and informal advertising thematic variety of graffiti samples is harmonized with the multidimensional communicative functions of street texts, as has been determined in regional studies of street texts. Pennycook (2022) explains that protest graffiti in South Asia is mostly a dissent, solidarity, and criticism of the government. The existing findings are very much in line with this tendency, and political inscriptions are among the most conspicuous categories in the data-set. In addition, love notes and friendship inscriptions, and localized humour also suggest the same findings in the study of Pennycook (2022) about Middle Eastern graffiti, whereby the authors highlight the interplay between personal expression and the overall sociocultural dynamics in informal writing to the masses.

The overlapping, cross-writing, erasing, and conflicting inscriptions indicate that there was a negotiation of the opposing voices, which validates Blommaert (2024) assumption that urban semiotic landscapes are dynamic, contested, and constantly re-contextualized. The symbolic and linguistic traces of transformation suggest that the surfaces of the public are the arenas of ideological confrontation and self-identification, especially when addressing politically marginalized or socially differentiated groups of people. The results can be used in the recent

theoretical debates of Shohamy, Rafael and Barni (2010), who believes that multilingual graffiti in South Asia is a form of semiotic citizenship when individuals assert their presence and agency in the social space. Overall, the findings do confirm that graffiti in urban Pakistan is not merely a phenomenon that practices itself, not to mention a phenomenon of aesthetics, but is a communicative strategic practice, socially enshrined. It indicates the interplay of semiotic resources, linguistic creativity, and sociopolitical meaning-making, which are more general tendencies of modern linguistic landscape studies. The idea of graffiti as a significant component of the multilingual and multi-modal urban communication of the region becomes more solid due to the fact that the current analysis is consistent with the recent research and gives new insights into the Pakistani public spaces.

7. Conclusion and Implications

This paper investigated the semiotic and metro-lingua laspects of graffiti in the major cities of Pakistan, and how the linguistic selection, visual material, and space arrangement create meaning in the urban environment. In the analysis, graffiti is a multi-modal communicative practice that involves colour, typography, script variation and symbolic forms in an attempt to convey political commentary, social messages, expressions of identity and cultural affiliations. The results also show that metro-lingua lmixing, particularly mixing of Urdu, English, Roman Urdu, and local language is a widespread and innovative linguistic practice, which is suggestive of the improvisational character of urban communication. These trends are consistent with the recent studies on linguistic landscapes and multi-modal discourse, but provide new empirical findings that are unique to the Pakistani urban setting. The paper finds that graffiti is a convenient space where individuals and groups can negotiate visibility, express grievances, and assert identity in dynamic and contested spaces. The interaction between the resources of semiotics and linguistics draws attention to the communicative role of informal writings in the modern Pakistani cities. Revealing the influence of hybrid forms of expression on the discourse of the masses, the study makes a contribution to the general debate on urban semiotics, multilingualism, and grassroots communication.

7.1. Theoretical Implications
1. The results expand the linguistic landscape theory by showing how informal and unauthorized inscriptions play a role in the semiotic construction of the multilingual society of the public space.
2. The recorded hybrid language practices give empirical evidence on the concept of metrolingualism as a model of explaining fluid and resource-based linguistic mixing in the urban setting.
3. The paper supports the multi-modal semiotic theory by demonstrating the interaction of visual and spatial components with linguistic structures to create stratified meanings.

7.2. Practical Implications
The analysis provides information to teachers and scholars who have researched multilingual communication, sociolinguistics, and urban discourse in South Asia.
The results can be used by cultural institutions, NGOs, and community organizations to develop interventions that can engage the community through public art to civically engage, build awareness, or enhance social cohesion. The patterns of political, social, and identity-based graffiti recorded can be used in future studies of the opinions of people, the manifestation of youth, and the communication networks among the grassroots.

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