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***Blended Scripts, Blended Voices: A Qualitative Analysis of Urdu–English  
Code-Mixing in Pakistani Billboards***



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**Abstract**

The present research explores the code-mixing of Urdu and English in Pakistani billboard advertisements, and how bilingual linguistic choices construct meaning, identity and persuasive power within public advertising discourse. The study is inspired by the fact that very little qualitative research has been devoted to exploring billboard-specific code-mixing strategies, although much descriptive research on print, broadcast and digital media has been carried out. The study sought to understand the structural forms, communicative roles and ideological significance as they are captured in code mixing on billboards. Twenty-five bilingual billboard advertisements were sampled from Google Images and used as the data. The study used qualitative discourse analysis to investigate the process of inserting English words into Urdu structures. Myers-Scotton (1993) Markedness Model and Matrix Language Frame (MLF) Model were used to analyze the data to interpret linguistic patterns and sociolinguistic motivations. Findings reveal that the most common type of mixing is lexical insertion where English nouns, adjectives and short phrases are inserted into Urdu grammatical structures. Lexical elements of English that are associated with technology, beauty, lifestyle, and digital culture are always indicative of modernity, prestige, youth orientation, and technical power. The results show that the use of code-mixing on billboards is systematic and ideological rather than merely stylistic. The study concludes that bilingual billboard discourse creates hybrid consumer identity and strengthens English as a symbol of aspiration and social capital within the advertisement industry in Pakistan.

**Keywords:** Code-Mixing, Advertising, Billboard Discourse, Markedness Model

**INTRODUCTION**

Language is one of the most effective means through which human beings communicate and define themselves. In multilingual societies such as Pakistan, language not only makes it possible to communicate and share ideas, but it also demonstrates social class, cultural values, and power dynamics. Pakistan language has been influenced by the two most popular languages in the country, Urdu, which is the national language and English, the language of prestige in education and status and global interrelation. The combination of the two languages has produced various language patterns especially code-switching and code-mixing, which have become the order of the day in normal communication.

In sociolinguistics, code-mixing is the mixture of words or phrases of two or more languages in one utterance. Skiba (1997) defines code-mixing as a process of switching between languages in the course of communication. Mixing means the transfer of the units of code A into code B at intersentential and intrasentential levels (Kachru, 1986). Mushtaq (2012) also differentiate between code-switching and code-mixing by clarifying that a code-switching is the switching or changing at higher syntactic levels, and code-mixing is usually performed at lower level with specific words or short phrases.

Advertising can be considered as one of the most effective methods to influence the opinion of the population, to promote products and to direct the choice of a consumer

(Habib et al., 2025). Advertisements play a significant role in educating the population on a product- its existence, its type, and the place of purchase (Olateju, 2007). They are mainly aimed at conveying a message to the largest possible audience. The billboards language is usually short, straight to the point and simple to comprehend since their purpose is to reach a large number of people in a short period; hence, few words are employed. Billboards are widely utilized to advertise various types of products and, in some cases, create awareness to the general population on social issues. The words and pictures on billboards are clearly appealing and eye-catching. The content of billboard advertisements is normally designed with a lot of caution, but there are cases when the message fails to match the nature of the advert. One of the most common tricks used in advertising is the ability to condense a lot of information to a very limited number of words that will create a broad set of reactions (Osundare, 1996). Particularly billboard advertisements target a great number of people and a wide range of people through the use of brief, convincing, and compelling words. The mixing of Urdu and English in billboards has become more common in the recent past and this indicates the way in which language is not only being used as a means of communication but also as a status symbol and as a marker of culture (Tariq et al., 2013; Asghar et al., 2021).

Urdu-English bilingualism is an important aspect of advertising in Pakistan and has taken the centre-stage over the last twenty years. Urdu adds emotional appeal and cultural familiarity to advertisement whereas English relates itself with status, sophistication and better socioeconomic status. This combination enables advertisers to attract consumers that are sensitive to both global and local cultural identity. English as a global lingua franca widens the vocabulary of various spoken languages all over the world (Shooshtari & Allahbaksh, 2013). As a donor language, the language of science, technology, and an important component of the contemporary advertising speech, English has a significant impact on the formation of lexical systems in other languages (Zhiganova, 2016). Pakistani billboards in advertising are the lexical elements of sale, style, offer, brand, and discount that are regularly inserted in Urdu slogans to give them a modern and attractive sound (Ehsan & Aziz, 2014). Although the prevalence of bilingual features in advertisements is widely observed, Urdu-English code-mixing in billboards has been a little explored field of the Pakistani sociolinguistic research. This paper seeks to analyze the use of bilingual mixing in billboard advertisements and the communicative functions and social meanings that it expresses. The data of the study is comprised of billboard pictures collected online such as publicly available Google image search, which are advertisements posted in large cities in Pakistan.

This subject has been chosen due to a number of reasons. To start with, very few studies on billboard advertising in Pakistan have been done. Although much research has been conducted on code-mixing in television commercials, talk shows, classrooms, as well as print advertisements, very limited studies have been conducted concerning billboard texts. Second, previous studies of code-mixed advertisements have primarily investigated the social implication or effect on the audience, primarily in television and print. Nevertheless, the degree of the English usage, the communicative functions it fulfils, and the linguistic categories that are used in billboard advertisements have not been thoroughly studied yet. Billboards are a strong, but much underestimated element of the linguistic environment of Pakistan.

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## **Research Objectives**

The following are the objectives of this study:

to identify the forms and linguistic patterns through which Urdu and English are blended in Pakistani billboard advertisements

to analyze the communicative purposes behind advertisers' use of mixed language in billboard messages

to explore how this bilingual fusion reflects and affects social stratum, cultural standards and new modern tendencies in Pakistan

## **Research Questions**

The research aims at addressing the following questions:

To what extent are Urdu and English combined linguistically in billboard advertising?

What communicative, sociolinguistic purposes does code-mixing in Pakistani billboard discourse have, e.g. to attract the attention of specific audiences, to indicate modernity or prestige, and to produce a certain tone?

How and to what extent do bilingual advertisements reflect cultural and social meanings?

The methodology of the research is a qualitative discourse analysis. The data set consists of twenty-five billboards found on the Internet, mostly in Google image searches that were publicly accessible. The frequency, types, and communicative purposes of English insertions in Urdu text are analyzed in each advertisement. The analysis is based on the Markedness Model (Myers-Scotton, 1993), who takes the language choice as a socially significant act signalling identity, social relations, and intent on the part of the speaker, and the Matrix Language Frame (MLF) Model (Myers-Scotton, 1993) that defines the dominant language of structure and the language that is inserted in the bilingual texts. With such a framework of analysis, it is possible to understand the ways advertisers use code-mixing to create meaning. The research adds to the overall information regarding bilingual language use in the Pakistani linguistic environment. Practically, the results can provide a useful input to marketers, advertisers, and educators who study the issue of language as a symbolic and persuasive instrument. This study contributes to the language and media studies in Pakistan by giving special attention to billboard advertising as a medium that has not received much scholarly attention. Lastly, it preconditions the further study of code-mixing in other areas, media types, and multilingual societies.

## **Literature Review**

Code-mixing between Urdu and English in Pakistani advertising has become a popular issue in sociolinguistics and media discourse research. Billboards which are a major feature of the national linguistic environment are more and more characterized by hybrid language practices, in which Urdu frameworks are mixed with English lexical units. This literature review is a summary of the current studies on Urdu-English code-mixing in billboard and advertising discourse in Pakistan using sociolinguistic, semiotic, and linguistic analyses. It is a critical evaluation of the methodology, a summary of the empirical evidence and an analysis of the theoretical frameworks applied by researchers. Through the patterns, interpretations and gaps in the literature review, this review places the current study in the larger scholarly discourse and identifies the necessity of further qualitative research on the communicative and ideological intent behind the design of bilingual billboards

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(Javaid, 2021).

The interaction of languages in multilingual societies is a dynamic and complex sociolinguistic process since that is usually in the form of either code-mixing or code-switching (Ojiakor-Umenze et al. 2019). This is why it is highly important to distinguish between these two concepts as they are different linguistic processes. Code-mixing, which is generally intra-sentential, is defined by Myers-Scotton (1993) as "the selection by bilinguals or multilinguals of forms from an embedded variety (or varieties) in utterances ... during the same conversation". Code-switching, on the contrary, is an inter-sentential alternation. Bokamba (1989) distinguishes code-switching and code-mixing: "Code-switching is the mixing of words, phrases and sentences from two distinct grammatical (sub) systems across sentence boundaries within the same speech event ... [while] code-mixing is the embedding of various linguistic units such as affixes (bound morphemes), words (free morphemes), phrases and clauses from a co-operative activity where the participants, in order to infer what is intended, must reconcile what they hear with what they understand". Thus, code-switching and code-mixing are two terms that are similar in that they both involve using multiple languages, however, code-mixing can be described as internal, intra-sentential and it is also a dominant characteristic of dialogue between the bilingual populations in Pakistan. The significance of these differences lies in the fact that research on Pakistani billboards shows unanimously that the majority of code-mixing is done at the level of insertional, and not sentence switching, meaning that advertisers focus more on English lexical items placed within Urdu grammatical frames.

The sociolinguistic situation in Pakistan is characterized by diglossic situation, whereby the national and official languages, Urdu and English, respectively, have varying and overlapping roles. The English language continues to possess prestige and symbolic authority that is derived out of the colonial history and is commonly linked to modernity, sophistication, and social mobility. The lingua franca and cultural identity language, Urdu, is constantly in contact with English in numerous situations. The use of the two languages is made by the fact that the meanings and associations of the two languages are different and therefore allow advertisers to make more convincing advertisements. This mixing is evident in billboards since they are one of the most noticeable types of public communication and the decision to mix languages or the language used is related to social meaning.

Also, research done in other countries demonstrates that code-mixing is a communicative strategy and not a coincidental linguistic phenomenon. Bhatia and Ritchie (2004) in a study that was conducted in India reveal that blending English with local languages assists the advertisers in developing contemporary and luxurious identities. It has also been demonstrated by Martin (2002) in a study conducted in Malaysia that English boosts brand image and the local language assures the connection to the culture. The publication of Al-Heeti and Al-Haq, (2009) in Arab countries also reveals that the use of English in advertisements is associated with modernity, credibility, and sophistication. These results combined confirm that code-mixing is an international practice of associating products with specific ideological identities or lifestyles.

There is a lot of theoretical and empirical literature that is carried out in Pakistan that sheds more light on the functions of the Urdu-English mixing in billboard advertisements. The semiotic and sociolinguistic interpretations have plenty amount

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of literature that is based upon them. In a Barthesian semiotic examination, Ghulam and Nusrat (2023) discovered that the advertisements in bilingualism create stratified meanings where English can be understood as a sign of cosmopolitanism and modernity, and Urdu can be understood as a sign of cultures. Nousheen et al. (2024) claims that in hybrid advertisement language in Pakistan English is an ideological resource that is linked to prestige and that it assists in the formation of modern identities.

What these semiotic interpretations demonstrate is further supported by linguistic and structural studies. In order to determine which language gives the major framework and which one is inserted in the text in billboards, researchers tend to rely on Matrix Language Frame (MLF) Model (Myers-Scotton, 1993). Research always finds that Urdu is the matrix language and English is the embedded one, which is consistent with the structural patterns that are observed in international bilingual advertising studies. Morphosyntactic studies by Nousheen et al. (2024) also reveal that the lexical units of English, i.e., nouns, adjectives, and hybrid compounds, are structurally fitted in the Urdu grammatical frames.

According to Pakistani studies, there are generally common trends in billboards in terms of linguistic pattern: insertion of lexical text, mixed taglines with both Urdu and English, emphasis based on English and semiotic overlay (interaction of bilingual text and visual imagery). Insertional code-mixing is better than complete bilingual alternation in billboard taglines due to the prevalence of brevity, legibility, and speed of message delivery in billboards. Another common finding by many researchers is that the English text is more frequently accompanied by visual accentuation by the means of typography, colour, or larger or bolder text as an element of prestige signalling.

These language selections have wider and narrower purposes and convey more social connotations. Academics have accepted that code-mixing builds hybrid identities, demonstrates prestige, increases memorability, and appeals to aspirational consumers. The English language is described as the indicator of modernity and social economic mobility that corresponds to the symbolic hierarchies inherent in the linguistic landscape of Pakistan. These patterns indicate that English is associated with power, progress and elite identity as described by Ghulam and Nusrat (2023). Still, these interpretations are accompanied by a lack of empirical data on the perception of the audience. The attitude of the audience to bilingual taglines is only studied in one study by Munir and Anwar (2025), which, however, does not have controlled experimental designs, which complicates the process of making global statements about the persuasive effect.

The strategic application of code-mixing in Pakistani advertisement has been further discussed in a number of media. Riaz (2019) have found that the combination of Urdu and English in advertisements in magazines has promotional and relationship roles. Nadeem et al., (2024) in *Al-Mahdi Research Journal* demonstrated the extent to which taglines in the English language made commercials of the Shan Masala more attractive. In spite of the fact that Habib et al. (2025) have explored billboard advertisements, they did not carry out a critical qualitative explanation of the socio-semiotic reasons of mixing, but instead, they were only descriptive, identifying linguistic categories and prevalence (Bilal et al., 2021). This highlights an existing gap in the literature: linguistic and semiotic analysis of billboards has not been studied in-depth as other advertising media.

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Altogether, the literature reviewed demonstrates that Urdu-English code-mixing is one of the main strategies in Pakistani advertising in the formation of modern, hybrid identities and the increase of persuasive power of advertisement in Pakistan. Nevertheless, the literature is highly descriptive in nature and merely outlines tendencies and seldom examines how the limitations of billboards, i.e. brevity, spatial layout or speed of exposure to the audience, influence mixing strategies. The emphasis is less on the perception of viewers, multimodality, and regional diversity, and more sophisticated studies are required. To address these gaps, the present paper will discuss Urdu-English code-mixing in the online available photographs of billboard ads in Pakistan based on the qualitative discourse analysis in terms of the Markedness Model and Matrix Language Frame (MLF) Model (Myers-Scotton, 1993).

## **Methodology**

This paper has utilized a qualitative research design to learn about Urdu-English code-mixing in Pakistani billboard advertisement. As the research is aimed at explaining linguistic forms, social meanings and communicative functions, but not counting numerical frequencies, the qualitative method is suitable. Twenty five billboard advertising materials have been gathered online and this includes publicly available searches in the Google images. Such pictures are reflective of the billboard advertisements that are placed in different urban centres in Pakistan. The internet sources enabled the access of a wider geographical scope that enabled the information to be more representative of the advertising trends of the mainstream instead of limiting the research to one city. Only the advertisements that had both Urdu and English components in them were chosen to analyze them.

Purposeful sampling was applied because it enables inclusion of billboards that obviously include bilingual or mixed-language messages. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method, which is often applied in qualitative studies when one wants to obtain cases of information richness that directly represent the phenomenon he is investigating. The advertisements were analyzed in terms of the presence of English lexical, brand name, slogans, or phrases that were used in the mainly Urdu text (and the same). Ads that were not bilingual were eliminated.

In the research, the qualitative discourse analysis approach is applied to explore the ways in which English is entrenched in Urdu and how these language options generate social meanings. The discussion has centred on the code-mixing linguistic forms which are insertion, alternation and hybrid constructions and explaining the sociolinguist motives that drive these decisions. The importance of English words in terms of meaning, tone, prestige, modernity or brand identity and the way Urdu retains cultural resonance and emotional appeal were addressed.

## **Analytical Framework**

Two sociolinguistic approaches were used in the analysis:

Myers-Scotton Markedness Model (1993): This is a model that describes that language choice is a social act that has a meaning. It assists in decoding the presence of English additions to billboards that carry either marked (prestige, modernity, authority) or unmarked (expected, normative) communicative work. The model informs the understanding of sociolinguistic motivations of mixing.

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Matrix Language Frame (MLF) Model (Myers-Scotton, 1993): MLF determines which language forms the grammatical structure (matrix language) and which the language forms embedded elements. The given framework is especially applicable as past studies of advertising have found the consistent use of Urdu as a matrix language in Pakistan with English elements being introduced to the language only to gain a symbolic meaning.

These structures combined help in structural as well as sociolinguistic understanding of code-mixing.

Primary data will be recorded in the form of photographs of billboards on the Internet, and subsequently every of the advertisement will be coded in terms of linguistic characteristics, placement of English components, and communicative functions. The advantage of this methodology approach is highly promising to the aim of the study of exploring the identity and modernity and persuasive strategies in a multilingual environment in Pakistan.

### Collected Data of 25 Pakistani Advertising Billboards



Figure 01: Shan \_ 'Daygi haleem jaisa Perfect maza'.



Figure 02: Nestle Everyday\_ 'Original khaas taste, tum hi mera pyar everyday'.



Figure 03: LU Candi\_ 'Woh khaas mithas, jo kisi aur mai kahan-share your #khaas dost selfie'.



**Figure 04: Shangrila\_ 'Chatpatta saucy Ramazan'.**



**Figure 05: Djuice Telenor**

**'If you keep problems inside, you'll start looking like one!-khamoshi ka boycott'.**



**Figure 06: Fair & Lovely**

**'Is eid ko roshan karain, humaray best ever nikhar sy'**



**Figure 07: Nestle Cerelac**

‘Nannhay pait ki bari ghiza, sachet mei bhi dastiyaab hai’.



Figure 08: Nido

‘Star tou laina hi hai! Mukammal nushonuma jo nazar aye.’



Figure 09: Nestle Everyday

‘Mix chai nay world record bana dala’.



Figure 10: Fair & Lovely BB Cream

‘Ab make up walay look kay liye no make up’.



**Figure 11: KIPS \_ ‘jeet hai pehchaan-A true winner is always consistent!’**



**Figure 12: Jeeto Pakistan ‘Jitni zyada shopping, utnay zyada jeetnay kay moowaaqay’.**



**Figure 13: HEART BITES\_ “Bite lo Light lo”**



**Figure 14: ZONG 4G\_ “Bharpoor Signal Behtreen Coverage”**



**Figure 15: Revive\_ “PYAAS BUJHAANE KI SUPERPOWER”**



**Figure 16: YANGO\_ “AFFORDABLE RIDES ROZANA”**



Figure 17: SOOPER\_ “Sooper hai ye dharti sooper hai har jawaan sooper hai Pakistan”



Figure 18: Nestle Pure Life\_ ‘Zinc barhayee meri family ki quwat-e-mudafay’at’.



Figure 19: Telenor 4G\_ “Speed par ao”.



Figure 20: UBL Omni\_ “Train kay ticket ki khareedari aur addaigi nahayat asaan”



Figure 21: pepsi\_ “LIVE IT ABHI”



Figure 22: McDonalds\_ ‘Yehi sach hai-win big with Zalmi meal’.



Figure 23: Servis\_ “UTAARNAY KA SCENE HEE NAHI”.



FIGURE 24: OLPERS\_ “Apnay liye intekhaab kijiye kuch naya, naya Olpers, full cream ki khoobiyou kay sath’



Figure 25: Jazz\_ ‘Pakistan ka no. 1 network’.

#### Data Analysis

The information on this research comprised of twenty five Urdu-English bilingual

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billboards advertisement found on publicly accessible google images. The billboard advertisement taglines were analyzed as a unit of analysis and analyzed qualitatively through the content analysis method with the aid of a sociolinguistic and structural linguistic model, especially the Markedness Model by Myers-Scotton, and the Matrix Language Frame (MLF) model. It was analyzed in terms of four dimensions, which are (1) the structural pattern of Urdu English mixing, (2) frequency and distribution of English lexical items, (3) communicative and persuasive functions of such mixed components and (4) ideological meanings indexed by bilingual options.

## **Structural Patterns of Code-Mixing**

The most prevailing format of structure in the collection was the lexical insertion, in which English nouns, adjectives, or short phrases were inserted into an Urdu grammatical frame. Such as “humaray best ever nikhar sy” (Fair & Lovely), “speed par ao” (Telenor), “full cream ki khoobiyou kay sath” (Olpers) and “behtreen coverage” (Zong 4G). In every example mentioned above Urdu acts as the matrix language and English as the lexical contributor of ideologically significant words. This validates the propensity observed in earlier literature that billboard advertising is biased towards compact, insertional mixing with regards to spatial, visual and attention-related factors. Of the taglines there are fewer that had intersentential switching, and there is a sentence or phrase that is written in English in its entirety, followed by an Urdu phrase. One can notice it in the tagline of the billboard advertisement, "If you keep problems inside, you'll start looking like one! - khamoshi ka boycott" (Djuice Telenor). The purpose of using a full English sentence to create attention tactic after which a Urdu slogan follows to create local anchoring is an intentional change of style. Likewise, McDonalds advertising of win big with Zalmi meal is in Urdu with an opener “Yehi sach hai”, resulting in a hybrid marketing tagline in which English is being deployed to accomplish the promotional task, and Urdu is used to establish authenticity. In some instances, social-media English words (share your #khas dost selfie, LU Candi) can serve as a multimodal discourse layer, and thus the billboard discourse can be combined with digital communication modes. These objects serve as the tokens of code-mixing as well as intertextual indicators between the offline advertisements and online involvement. Such structural patterns are in line with Matrix Language Frame (MLF) Model which suggests that a language (the Matrix Language) offers grammatical frame, and another language (the Embedded Language) offers elements that are inserted into it (Myers-Scotton, 1993).

## **Frequency and Distribution of English Lexical Items**

Even in the 25 taglines of billboard advertisements they contain at least some 1 English lexical item which underscores the mixing rate that accentuates English dominance in modern Pakistani advertisement. It has a number of English tokens and they are clustered on certain semantic areas. As an illustration, the tokens of ‘speed’, ‘signal’, ‘network’, ‘coverage’, ‘4G’ have been applied in case of the semantic domain technology and telecom. In the case of the semantic domain of beauty and lifestyle, tokens, ‘best ever’, ‘make up’, ‘no make up’, ‘original’ have been utilized. The tokens ‘perfect’, ‘everyday’, ‘light’, ‘bites’ have been utilized in the case of food and consumer goods and the tokens, ‘win big’, ‘share’, ‘selfie’ and ‘sachet’, ‘zinc’ in the case of the semantic domains of engagement/contest/social media and technical/functional details respectively. The English lexis is a symbolic and

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functional value of billboard communication. To accentuate the service quality (“Speed par ao”, “Bharpoor signal - Behtreens coverage”) telecom operators always use English technical language, and beauty and lifestyle products use English adjectives to create high-premium global image (“best ever nikhar”, “no makeup look”). The terms of the social-media (selfie, share) are mostly used in advertisements targeted at young people in order to demonstrate the use of digital and modern lifestyles.

## **Communicative Functions of English Insertions**

As it has been demonstrated through the analysis, in Urdu structures, a number of overlapping communicative functions are undertaken by English. The initial purpose of the English inserts in the Urdu structures is prestige and modernity that has been demonstrated through English things like best ever, original to enhance the quality of the product. These items are in line with the symbolic capital of the English language in advertising in South Asian as described by the scholars. Technological authority is another communicative role. Half of the telecom adverts are in English technical language (speed, signal, coverage), which has no equivalent in commercial language at all in Urdu. The terms are used due to the fact that it indexes efficiency, reliability, and modern infrastructure. Another role that English plays in Urdu structures and the products that are most utilized in this role are ‘selfie’, ‘share’, ‘win big’, ‘style’. These products are serving as symbols of youth and tuning brands to a globalized popular culture. Another role is persuasion and recall, however to create short, punchy and memorable slogans as the one seen with win ‘big’, ‘light lo’, ‘or perfect maza’, English verbs and adjectives are most effective. The final communicative role is construction of identity. The billboard advertisements have numerous taglines that form localized hybrid consumer identities that are contemporary and modern.

## **Application of the Markedness Model**

Through Myers-Scotton Markedness Model (1993), it has been established that English additions in the billboard adverts are mostly marked options, which are meant to convey modernity, aspiration, innovation and the upward mobility. It is now evident with the following illustrations that in one way or another such as, “Speed par ao”, “best ever nikhar”, “no makeup look”, “win big”, place the consumer in a global promotional culture, and “selfie”, respectively, place the consumer in a digital youth identity. It has been examined further that when English would seem as a functional technical nomenclature (signal, network, and coverage) it is also a socially charged decision in support of English as a language tool which implies power and expertise. Cases that tend towards unmarked status such as commonly borrowed objects (original, perfect) are few, but they have positive connotations based on the global branding culture.

In general, the billboard advertisement tags on the Pakistani billboards represent systematic and patterned English application in the Urdu-based advertising discourse. English is not just a medium of communication but an ideological symbol in Pakistani billboard advertisements related to modernity, young people, prestige, technological progress, and desirable consumerist identities. The prevalence and regularity with which code-mixing is used in various sectors like beauty, food, telecom, transport, indicates that bilingual advertisement is a well-established marketing concept in Pakistan. The results confirm the previous findings within the literature but also point

out the micro-level linguistic decision-making processes used by advertisers to create persuasive and socially significant identities within very visible social places.

### **Findings and Discussion**

By examining twenty-five Urdu-English billboard advertisements, it was found that there were regular patterns of insertional code-mixing that were in line with the literature of Nousheen et al (2024) and Habib et al. (2025), respectively. English words were often incorporated in Urdu constructions, with slogans and taglines of billboard advertisements like "Jitni zyada shopping, utnay zyada jeetnay kay moowaaqy" and "Utarnay ka scene he nahi". Such slogans also show that English words such as shopping and scene perfectly fit in the Urdu frames of grammar as advertisers intentionally use English as an instrument of attentionality and modernity. Thus, insertional code-mixing has been proven to be the desirable form of inter-sentential code-mixing over the complete switch as proposed by Myers-Scotton (1993) and in line with the Pakistani advertising traditions (Munir & Anwar, 2025). Also, the idea of hybrid construction and mixed taglines was also witnessed, whereby Urdu and English words are used to create brief, catchy slogans. Some examples of these concepts include: "Original khaas taste", "Bite lo light lo" and "Sooper hai Pakistan". Not only is legibility and brevity guaranteed by such constructions, but their multifaceted meaning is also achieved, with English speaking of prestige or novelty and Urdu continuing to be culturally rooted (Habib et al., 2025). English use in brand names and other product descriptors are common further underlining the symbolic capital of English as an index of modernity and sophistication of urban Pakistani society.

The findings also suggest that Urdu-English code-mixed has a number of sociolinguistic and communicative functions. Original lexical selection are prestige and aspirational and are in line with the findings of the earlier studies conducted by Habib et al. (2025). By way of illustration, the adverts like "Best ever nikhar" (Fair & Lovely) and "Perfect maza" (Shan) identify the advertised products with the high quality, innovation, and social ascendancy. With such slogans, it has been revealed that bilingual advertising functions as a social index indicating modernity as well as middle-class desires. Secondly, English can be viewed as the indicator of fashionability and youth culture, in the case of "Share your #khaas dost selfie" (LU Candy) and "Speed par ao" (Telenor 4G). This kind of usage is not without reason since Moon, et al. (2025) conclude that the application of English in the advertisement is strategic in reaching young people in urban areas and promoting the image of global connectivity and modern lifestyle through digitally literate people. Thirdly, and finally, Urdu-English code-mixing in Pakistani advertising billboards also serves functional communication roles, making short billboards more memorable and understandable. The short and high-impact bilingual messages are favored by advertisers because of the limited space of billboards, which are usually focused on English keywords visually in terms of fonts and color (Nousheen et al., 2024). The finding is supported by similar findings by Osundare (1996), who maintain that the linguistic economy and persuasion efficiency play a crucial role in advertising to the general population.

Through the analysis, it has also been established that the incorporation of English in Urdu Advertising is an expression of more dominant forces in society and ideologies. It has also been revealed that English is always related to modernity, sophistication,

and connectivity to the world, whereas Urdu is culturally relevant and emotional (Ghulam & Nusrat, 2023). As can be seen, the national pride in a modern idiom is presented as the slogan *Sooper hai Pakistan* is spelled in English and syntactically in Urdu, evidencing the symbolic bargaining of identity in bilingual advertising. On the same note, English insertions in slogans such as *a true winner is always consistent!* (Kips) or *"Revive piyas bujhany ki superpower"* (Revive) feature inspirational globally-focused lifestyles that appeal to urban audiences. These results have underscored the fact that billboard advertisements are not simply the transmission of information about the product. They generate hybrid social identities that strike a balance between the local cultures and the globalized aspirations. This corresponds with Barthesian semiotic interpretations by Ghulam and Nusrat (2023) who observe that the bilingual adverts create stratified meanings in that English is used to convey cosmopolitanism and prestige whereas Urdu is used in order to make the postings accessible and emotional. This twin role of languages, Urdu and English in commercials favours earlier findings that indicate that code-mixing in Pakistan is not accidental but an ideologically inclined process (Bhatia and Ritchie, 2004; Habib et al., 2025).

Comparing advertising billboards to other mediums, one might see that the former has a higher dependence on insertional code-mixing as opposed to inter-sentential code-switching, which is expected to be the case based on the brevity and immediacy of the medium (Munir & Anwar, 2025; Riaz, 2019). The thing is that in contrast with other advertising devices as TV commercials or print media where the dialogue or the story can be longer and the switches can be complicated, the billboard adverts have a mission of communicating and being memorable and the English words or phrases additions to the advertisement should be at the level of single words or phrases. Thus, this channel-specific effect supports the arguments of Nousheen et al. (2024) that language choice is determined by structural constraints. Moreover, the study supports the idea that the language of advertisement is one of the arenas of ideological negotiation has been confirmed by the study, in which social class, modernity, and prestige are manifested in the choice of language (Habib et al., 2025). Although the past research investigations have been directed towards semiotic or morpho-syntactic features, audience-oriented strategies, including the use of hashtags, English lexical focus, among others, which target to optimize engagement and memorability in urban billboard spaces are also emphasized in this research.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

This paper has analyzed the Urdu-English code-mixing in Pakistani billboard advertisements in a socio linguistic qualitative perspective. As the results indicate, the most common linguistic strategy is the insertional code-mixing of which Urdu is the matrix language and English is the embedded one. English words are tactfully employed to deliver modernity, prestige, trendiness and aspirational identity and Urdu retains cultural resonance and emotional attachment. Hybridized slogans and bilingual forms can enable advertisers to create more layered messages that can attract both the local and the globalized sensibilities on a larger social and ideological motivation in urban Pakistan. The research shows how the characteristics of billboards as a high-visibility mode of advertising are particularly limited because they are forced to be short and demand immediate effectiveness, which defines the peculiarities of bilingual language application. The English insertions are also identified as

memorability boosters, as well as a sign of social mobility and cosmopolitan identity, which is consistent with the case of Pakistani advertising research (Habib et al., 2025). These trends support the idea that bilingual advertising is a communicative approach as well as a social positioning instrument, a symbol of modernity and prestige to the urban residents.

To begin with, the researchers are advised that future research may consider the perception toward code-mixed billboard adverts applied by surveys or experimental design to cover the gap in reception research nowadays (Munir & Anwar, 2025). Besides that, it is also possible to monitor changing trends in bilingual advertising by regions and forms of media through longitudinal research. Secondly, it is suggested to the advertisers that billboards can also use bilingual text to make maximum appeal, though much care must be taken concerning the suitable use of cultural appropriateness and legibility, so that the English text should not overpower the Urdu message. And finally with the significance of learning more about bilingual language practices as a component of urban sociolinguistic landscapes brought to the fore by the study as the concern of teachers and experts in the field, it is suggested that as an approach to exploring how students can learn to read critically the way language is used in the media and in marketing products, it is advisable to incorporate such research into the curriculum.

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