

Linguistic Landscape of ULAB in the time of Corona



Parisha Parvin

Student ID: 193055015

Department of English and Humanities

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Student Name: Parisha Parvin
Student ID: 193055015
Thesis Supervisor: Mahmud Hasan Khan, PhD
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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

I hereby declare that this thesis is the student's own work and effort. All sources of information incorporated here have been duly acknowledged. This thesis has been submitted with my approval.

(Mahmud Hasan Khan, PhD)

Associate Professor

Department of English and Humanities

DECLARATION

This thesis is a presentation of my original research work. Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to indicate this clearly, with due reference to the literature, and acknowledgement of collaborative research and discussions.

(Parisha Parvin)

193055015

Department of English and Humanities

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Table of Contents

Abstract

1. Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Background of the Research

1.3 Statement of the Problem

1.4 Research Questions

1.5 Conclusion

2. Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Linguistic Landscape

2.3 Virtual Linguistic Landscape

2.4 Geosemiotics

2.5 Multimodality and Indexicality

2.6 Harvey's Space

2.7 Conclusion

3. Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

3.1 Research Design

3.2 Procedure of Data Collection

3.2.1 Location

3.2.2 Nature of Data

3.3 Procedure of Data Analysis

3.3.1 Sampling

3.3.2 Data Analysis and Interpretation

3.4 Conclusion

Chapter 4: Analysis-----29

Chapter 5: Conclusion -----68

Works Cited -----70

Abstract

SARS-CoV-2 has spread to almost every part of the world by the first quarter of 2020. Besides the economy, one of the worst affected hits of Covid-19 is the education sector. Schools and universities across the world began to close gradually. Bangladesh government declared to close all educational institutions from March 17. Since then, many private universities started online classes from April including the one which has been used as the site of data collection in this study. First the authority started with the app Zoom, later they shifted to Google Classroom as it did not have any time limitations, besides the interaction with students got easier. The researcher has used the framework of Linguistic Landscape (LL) in this study to generate a description of urban multilingualism (i.e., the images--colors, signs, layout and written languages in public space). This paper shows how the look or landscaping of ULAB has changed due to the pandemic. It is shown how things were in physical space and how it is now in virtual space. The images collected by the researcher were from the University website, its official Facebook pages and different online discussion groups. The researcher has taken screen shots and downloaded the images to examine and explain them based on their purpose and placement. The research required to answer the question of how the linguistic diversity is experienced in the cyberspace of ULAB.

Key words: Linguistic landscape, multimodality, virtual linguistic landscape, geosemiotics, indexicality, identity construction.

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Linguistic Landscape is mainly concerned with the material position and meaning of signage in public space (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). Even though this definition cannot limit the field, its meaning in the online digital space. COVID-19 has not only affected the health sector but also education and economy sectors. Cases are increasing, and it is gradually changing the landscape of the whole world, especially the education system. With the purpose to reduce the impact and spreading of the pandemic on education, online teaching started to reinstate normal teaching. This Study investigates what forms the linguistic landscape in the cyberspace of the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB). ULAB is one of the distinguished private institutions in Bangladesh established in 2004. Its permanent campus is located in Mohammadpur. It can be anticipated that the linguistic landscape of a well known institution would carry on the distinctiveness that it aims to establish by displaying a variety of signs.

Social media sites are mostly spot as public space where users represent and interact with each other in their network (Blackwood, 2019; Han, 2020). ULAB has shifted its landscape from physical to virtual where the students can interact with the faculties and other course mates. Some platforms like Facebook assisted students to get proper updates of their institution and courses. Linguistic landscape studies visual literacy in an educational setting (Gorter, 2013). We know that Universities are established to produce, exchange and spread knowledge. This is a workplace where we get to see students and staff working. During corona universities were bound to change their physical platform and shift to the virtual stage. So, the present study

intends to make these stakeholders aware of the significance of signs displayed in assembling the identity of a university in an online platform.

This researcher has taken pictures of the ULAB website, banners and signage in Facebook pages, and screenshots from Google classroom. The pictures are then classified by their function and placement. Next, the forms and meanings are examined to facilitate and explain the identity that ULAB carries in online platforms.

The social meanings in the physical or material placement of signs are surveyed through the indexicality process (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). This informs us where the signs are located, and it identifies how or what signs index in the world and the symbolic meaning. The virtual linguistic landscape of ULAB indexes the institution's identity and the educational activities in course of language, images and signs. The researcher studies the presentation of institutional information in websites and ULAB's Facebook pages to get a close identity of ULAB. The researcher talks about the background in this chapter that includes a short description on linguistic landscape, virtual linguistic landscape, geosemiotics, multimodality, indexicality and Harvey's space. All these ideas are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

1.1 Background Information

By the help of "geosemiotics" we can explain the meaning of Linguistic landscape (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). Geosemiotics is an idea extended from Charles S. Peirce's theory of Semiotics (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). According to Scollon and Scollon (2003), geosemiotics can be explained as a study of public meaning examining the material emplacement of signs, discourses and people's actions in the practical world. As a result, we can say geosemiotics to be the study of the meanings of signs and space. Besides, it is also entitled as the meaning making system that

helps us to explain the linguistic landscape and also virtual linguistic landscape. As described by Scollon and Scollon (2003), we must look closely at the “social and physical world” where the public texts are placed and look for the meaning of the Linguistic Landscape since the meaning depends on where and how the sign is being placed. Geosemiotics has three important systems, which are interaction order, visual semiotics and place semiotics (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). In chapter two, these orders will be discussed in detail.

According to Gorter (2006) language is spoken, heard and used by people. It is used for representing and displaying for functional and symbolic purposes. Landry and Bourhis were the first ones to use the term “Linguistic Landscape” in their seminal work titled, “Linguistic landscape and ethnolinguistic vitality: An empirical study”. It was published in 1997. Since then researchers, scholars and mostly linguists started studying the language in the public spaces from a linguistic perspective. Shohamy and Gorter (2009, p.1) have said that Linguistic landscape is our awareness towards the language in the environment and also the words and images that are demonstrated in any public space. He also stated that LL that carries a language in the display in public places holds a meaning for a particular society where more than one language is used. Biró (2018) states that LL not only looks into demonstrations of visible written language, but also semiotic, multimodal, visual and oral elements that can show different viewpoints on language awareness and multilingualism. The elements of linguistic landscape are mostly displayed in advertising billboards, commercial shop signs, and public road signs. Besides, we can also find the elements of LL in virtual space like Google, Facebook and websites too.

Ivković and Lotherington (2009) have defined the word ‘virtual’ not as imaginary or unreal landscapes, but it mostly suggests the non-physical linguistic sign in the public space of

electronic integration and digital technologies. The virtual linguistic landscape explains the linguistic cyberscape just the way Linguistic Landscape illustrates the linguistic cityscape (Ivkovic & Lotherington, 2009). The virtual LL is defined as a specific place or surrounding of language interaction in cyberspace and by broadening the sociolinguistic conversation of the Linguistic Landscape study to a new medium that represents “Cultural objects which use digital computer technology for distribution and exhibition” (Manovich, 2010, p. 17). The linguistic content that is used in the physical landscape demonstrates ownership, identity, and laws and they are more fixed and constant than that available in VLL. (Ivkovic & Lotherington, 2009).

Most of the linguistic landscape comprises the understanding of multimodal signs and this multimodality refers to different modes in a situation where there is interaction. In Linguistic landscape the most common approaches are images, writing, colors and this mode serves particular purpose. For example – instead of long and lengthy words, images can be applied or when the images cannot convey a message properly for color highlights specific features than written words can be used (Kress, 2010). Every text contains multimodality and several semiotic modes are included to make a complete meaning of a text (van Leeuwen, 2001). To explain Linguistic Landscape the theory of indexicality and multimodality is needed. Besides geosemiotic system is also labeled as the “grammar of indexicality” (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 25). The work of Indexicality is to find out how the meaning of a sign is produced when it is located next to other signs in the world. It is said that Indexicality mostly refers to the characteristic of sign that gives direction to any location or any specific object like thing. We can say that it normally depends on signs like arrows and languages. Indexicality has some orders according to Scollon and Scollon (2003) and they are demonstratives, deictic adverbials,

personal pronouns, and tense. “In Linguistic Landscape demonstratives (‘this’, ‘that’) is used for explaining what is there in real. To communicate with customers by using words, a personal pronoun (‘you’, ‘we’) is used in that LL. Deictic adverbs (‘here’, ‘there’, ‘now’, ‘then’) are being used by the LL actors for giving ideas to viewers about any context and content. Lastly, tense [the sense of past, present, and future] articulates the period of time on LL” (Scollon & Scollon, 2003).

According to David Harvey (2006), there are many explanations of space and they vary significantly. For Harvey, we can see how things are structured in language and also images. It has been said that space does not always come as a physical space; rather it can come as e.g., material, metaphorical, personal, social and many more (Harvey, 2006). Therefore, it becomes essential to observe how language is arranged in the virtual space on that specific platform. The space of a university campus or a departmental building has significant meaning the way it is arranged, organized or simply because of its location. One has to look at the linguistic landscape, distribution of images and how things are organized there. Considering numerous spatial categories, Harvey (2006) has described space in three categories, which are absolute, relative and relational. According to Harvey (2006), absolute space is fixed and there is no space outside of this. Next, the relative space compares one space with another. Lastly, relational space is linked with time and the idea of space and this can be different for individuals according to their relation to that space.

1.3 Statement of the problem

The aim of this research is to see how during corona the identity of ULAB is raised and portrayed through the multimodal features in the virtual linguistic landscapes of this university. It is important to make sure that the signs demonstrated in the virtual landscape of ULAB during corona create the identity of a university. It is very tough because very few works have been done about this topic. Corona has set new circumstances for the world and it is important to make sure that the virtual landscape of ULAB represents similarly to the social and physical world. There is hardly any study conducted on the virtual linguistic landscape of academic institutions in Bangladesh. I could find very few studies done in this area in Bangladesh (e.g., Zabin, 2018; Mozumder, 2019). This study analyses what linguistic landscaping is seen in the virtual space of University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB). It is expected that the linguistic landscape of the institution through the display of different signs would correspond to the identity that it aims to create.

1.4 Research Questions

This study answers the following research question:

Q.1) In the virtual linguistic landscape, what multimodal texts are found in the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB)?

Q.2) How do textual features that are portrayed online create the identity of a university?

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter has given a key idea to the concept used in the current study titled, “Landscaping ULAB in the time of Corona” The theoretical concepts (i.e., linguistic landscape, virtual linguistic landscape, geosemiotics, multimodality, indexicality, Harvey’s Space) have been described and explained in detail in the following chapter.

Chapter TWO

Literature Review

2. 1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to give a review of literature on different features of linguistic landscape (LL). The researcher classifies the field of LL by adding in thought on virtual linguistic landscape geosemiotics, multimodality and indexicality, followed by discussions on the background to the field of LL and its current meaning. We will get to see Harvey's Space and the virtual linguistic landscape of educational institutions mostly ULAB in the situation of Corona.

2. 2 Linguistic Landscape

Linguistic landscape's study emphasizes on any written language that is being displayed, but not completely. Besides, it also looks for multimodal, semiotic, other visual and even spoken words. (Cenoz & Gorter, 2015). The term Linguistic landscape was first created by Landry and Bourhis (1997) with the quoted definition, "The Language of public road signs, advertising billboards, commercial shop signs and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a give territory, region, or urban agglomeration." (p. 23) and most of the studies are put up based on this definition of linguistic landscape. It has been stated that there are six types of signs, while in the case of technology we can see that new signs have developed, for example: touch screens, scrolling banners and flat-panel displays (Cenoz & Gorter, 2015). Shohamy and Gorter has stated that language, words and images that are shown in public space do become the

center of interest in any area and this gives us the meaning of linguistic landscape (Shohamy & Gorter, 2009). So, we can say that the linguistic landscape is related to the way the language is being displayed in any public field.

Some more items of LL have been added by Spolsky and Cooper (1991). They have divided it into eight types and they are, “Street signs, advertising signs, warning notices and prohibitions, building names, informative signs (directions, hours of opening), commemorative plaques, objects (postbox, police call box), and graffiti.” There is a link between the information and the figurative signs for making a complete meaning of LL, ‘building signs and commemorative plaques on the symbolic end and warning notices and informative signs on the informative end’ (Spolsky, 2009). According to Huebner, Linguistic Landscape as “linguistic context” is mostly seen in the public space that is around us and that is why he termed LL as “environmental print” (Huebner, 2006, p. 31).

The studies of Linguistic landscape have been carried out in urban areas, for example, Bangkok (Huebner, 2009); Tokyo (Backhaus, 2006; Backhaus, 2007); and Taipei (Curtin, 2009); Israel (Ben-Rafael, Shohamy, Amara & Trumper-Hetct, 2006); Bangkok (Huebner, 2009). We have seen that some researchers have named LL as “linguistic cityscape” (Coulmas, 2009; Gorter, 2006; Spolsky, 2009). In Bangladesh, Rubaiya has studied the Mohammadpur area in Dhaka and has explained LL as ‘streetscape’ (Rubaiya, 2017) and Mozumder has showcased the linguistic ‘lanescape’ of a Suburb in Dhaka city, namely Old Dhaka (Mozumder, 2019).

As stated by Gorter, the word “landscape” is a noun and it consists of two meanings in the dictionary.

“On the one hand, the literal meaning of the piece or expanse of scenery that can be seen at one time from one place. On the other hand, a picture represents such a view of natural inland scenery, as distinguished from a sea picture or a portrait” (Gorter, 2006, p.1).

Gorter says that in the study of LL both the meanings can be used. Firstly, the literal study of the languages in the signs that are used and then the representation of the languages as it is connected to the growth of identity and culture to the developing presence of English and renewal of minority languages. (Gorter, 2006, p.1). Linguists have tried to look for different topics to study on particular aspects of Linguistic landscape in public spaces. There are themes like (i.e., language as an informational marker, power relations between majority and minority groups and language maintenance, authority of English as a global language; bilingual or multilingual contexts; government language policy and top-down versus bottom-up language practice; multilingualism and individual identity construction; influence of signs and symbolic construction) and the researchers of this LL studies are (i.e., Landry & Bourhis, 1997; Gorter, 2006; Huebner, 2006; Backhaus, 2006; Ben-Rafael, Shohamy, Amara & Trumper-Hecht, 2006; Curtin, 2009; Malinowski, 2009).

The researches of LL are limited to specific geographic areas that mostly are a city, street, neighborhood or a country (Gorter, 2013). Many studies state that the linguistic landscape of any area serves two functions: informational function and symbolic function. The differences between these two were pointed out clearly by Spolsky and Cooper (1991) but we could see a more social psychological view focusing on the relationship among the in-group and out-group from Landry and Bourhis (1997). Informative function of language sign shows the limitations of the territory inhabited by a group of linguists. Besides, it is important to see the availability of specific languages present in the linguistic landscape to communicate in that region. Then again,

symbolic function indicates the viewpoint of people in a community of the value, power and status of their language in comparison to other languages (p.29). So we can say the most dominant language in the linguistic landscape tells us the language has importance in the area with more value, status, strength and power. According to Dagenais, the meaning deduced from symbolic functions relates to some factors which include cultural relationship, identity, and the status of language and power relations. (Dagenais, et al., 2009). Bourhis (1997) has shown an example that the application of Basque in bilingual signs in Donostia is both informative and symbolic function, because everybody gets information in Spanish which is an informative function and the feelings of Basque works as a symbol of identity therefore it is a symbolic function. English that is used in commercial signs can be interpreted as an informative function for foreign visitors, but its growing presence gives a strong symbolic function for the local people in both Friesland and Basque country.

It is said by Piller (2001) that English is considered to be more ‘prestigious and modern’ compared to local languages (Cited in Backhaus, 2006, pp. 78-79). When there is more than one language within a linguistic landscape, it is observed that there is a competition for symbolic power. Shohamy and Gorter (2009) said that the experiences express the information about relative power relations and ideological matters in a multilingual society (p.2). Ben Rafael (2009) indicates a point about how different languages come into view together in a range of public places like “street, parks or public institutions” (pp.40-41).

There can be dissimilar classification of sign analysis by different researchers which can be problematic (Gorter, 2006). Although it can be seen that many researchers have categorized signs as official and nonofficial. It can be observed that the terms are defined differently, but

both the terms are used in this field of research, such as Huebner (2006) and Backhaus (2006). These signs have been categorized in two types; one is top-down and another bottom-up (Gorter, 2006). While studying LL, it can help us to find difference between the top-down sign that is official and it is placed by government or related organizations for example street names or names of buildings, on the other hand bottom-up sign that is nonofficial and mostly placed by private organizations or person for example shop names or street posters (Gorter, 2006). In case of educational settings top-down signs are made by the education administrators and in case of bottom-up signs it is made by the faculties and students (Dressler, 2015).

According to Coupland, landscape itself is a “mediated visualization of nature” (2007, p. 77). It tells us that the thought of Landscape is mostly created socially and it can help to indicate visually different surroundings. Similarly, to know the role of LL in an educational place, the main thing to look for is whether the institution is a planned space, loaded with socio-historical interactions and rituals. In educational institutions the environment is being built and delivers planned meaning to the public and also emphasizes on social conventions and norms. In educational institutions the literacy objects in LL play a vital role to provide any information and it is good for social interaction for both group and individual agency. So, in this research the term agency implies the socio-culturally mediated capacity to perform. (Zabin, 2018) In this study, the virtual ULAB can be recognized and discussed on power-relations, interaction positions, representations and ideological and institutional characteristics of existing positions in LL.

According to Garvin and Eisenhower (2010) whenever people go to an enclosed space they try to understand the activities of that place, behavior and movements through signage like

“Informational”, “Expressive”, “Navigational”, “Interactive”, and “Symbolic”. As a result, we can say that the signs that are stated can be created from the ideology and identity of a specific place. The Ideas of an identity suggested by Castells, Pavlenko and Blackledge are similar. As said by Castells (2010), identity is a method of creating a meaning on the basis of cultural attributes and it is also stated that power relation also plays a great role in any context to identify social construction. (p. 80). On one hand Castella says that identity is always negotiation and on the other hand Coupland states identity as a social construction that creates meaning for any individual or group who negotiate identities. In this research, pictures are being taken from the website and Facebook page of ULAB and analyzed for identities (see Chapter Four). It is important to see how the institution is developing in the virtual landscape and how they are developing identities that are presented in the educational institution.

2. 3 Virtual Linguistic Landscape

During the pandemic an unpredictable disaster took place in the world of educational landscape. The universities decided to close their traditional classrooms and shifted to the digital platform until the situation normalizes. We get to see how the physical space and linguistic landscape of ULAB has changed to a virtual linguistic landscape for all through the pandemic.

Linguistic Landscape (LL) is being extended and shown how the linguistic variety is practiced in a cyber space mostly in a public space of electronic communication as it observes the nature of language that is present in the cyberspace, is known to be the Virtual Linguistic Landscape (VLL), (Gomaa, 2020). According to Ivkovic and Lotherington (2009) any computer-mediated communication that takes place on the Web or online in any software for example Second Life (SL) is said to be virtual space. They also stated that in this platform of digital and virtual setting

many multilingual interactions create different LL. Virtual space can be considered as another way for communicating just as VLL describes the linguistic landscape of any virtual space, LL also describes the linguistic landscape of a physical space like cityscape or schoolscape (Biro, 2018). The word ‘virtual’ refers to non-physical linguistic images in any electronic communication or digital technologies and it is not an imaginary landscape (Gomaa, 2020).

Ivkovic and Lotherington (2009) have portrayed some valid distinctions between the physical linguistic landscape and virtual linguistic landscape. The characteristics of LL in cityscape for example, street names, transportation stops or any public sign are eventually stable and if the signs need to be changed then it requires new material, time and also labor cost. On the other hand for VLL only the web content needs to be updated of the web page if any change of sign is needed and it is also less expensive (Ivkovic & Lotherington, 2009). We can say that LL is more fixed, stable and requires more investment, but VLL can be done in a short period of time and it is not costly. In case of LL the signs are more visible in nature which includes commercial materials, entertainment posters and recyclable resources such as billboards of any good or service, public notices or business and political notices. In contrast, VLL has the scope to always change the contents and signs as it is easier to maintain and can be developed and expanded in a short period of time with less value, but LL has more residual value (Ivkovic & Lotherington, 2009). In LL an individual can enter a physical territory and interact linguistically in a special boundary. On the other side in VLL anyone can enter from anywhere and interact in that virtual space (Ivkovic & Lotherington, 2009).

In VLL multilingual communication takes place as it gets disposed to particular groups of users and it can be characterized by code-switching, code-mixing or translanguaging (Ivkovic &

Lotherington, 2009). It is also very important for learners to have an engagement with multilingual communities and use L2 in digital practices (Vandergriff, 2016). While practicing multilingualism in the virtual space, it is said to have two limits: Firstly, when an individual becomes part of the virtual world it means they are digitally connected to others and it needs two-way communication. Secondly, when being in the network and being part of the virtual linguistic landscape of social media and Web, it refers to a one-way communication (Biro, 2018). There are various apps for language learning like Duolingo and Facebook groups that offer materials to practice and it also creates connection between a learner and user (Biro, 2018).

The evolution of the web always added new features of researching the linguistic landscape of virtual space. A British researcher Tim Berners-Lee introduced the World Wide Web in 1991, which is Web 1.0 and it permits users to connect to static websites where the user can only read and it's a one-way communication (Biro, 2018). The change took place with the development of Semantic Web and Web 2.0 where the users can interact with the web for example MySpace, Flickr, Youtube and many more (Ivkovic & Lotherington, 2009). In Web 2.0 it is a two-way communication where users can tag and read-write too (Biro, 2018). We are already on a phase of using Web 3.0 which is a three-way communication and we can find smart applications, live streaming, social media facilities and most importantly it is portable (Biro, 2018). Besides, it is predicted that Web 4.0 that has not been introduced yet will be able to produce communication between machines and humans moreover it will be referred to as the Internet of things (IoT) (Biro, 2018). The intention of this research is to observe how the LL of ULAB has converted its space to VLL and whether it could create the landscape it intends to as an educational space.

2. 4 Geosemiotics

Charles S Peirce has theorized Geosemiotics from the theory of semiotics. The study of signs is portrayed to the researchers according to when, how and where the sign is placed and this becomes the discourse in place. According to Scollon and Scollon (2003), “Geosemiotics is the study of social meaning of the material placement of signs and discourses and of our action in the material world” (2003, p. 211). Besides, it is said that signs and symbols gives most of the meaning from where and how it is placed, therefore they say that signs are everywhere and it is part of our daily life in all discourses, also our appearance in a particular place and time gives a meaning (Scollon & Scollon, 2003).

There are three orders of geosemiotics and they are interaction order, visual semiotics and Place semiotics (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). Goffman has set up the interaction order and it is based on the concept of social interaction which is based on how differently we interact with people when the setting is different, it can be either ordinary or professional encounter (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). Secondly we see Kress and Van Leeuwen’s term visual semiotic, which focuses on how the pictures like graphic, text, photographs, paintings and sign images are produced to give a whole meaning (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). Following Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996) description, Scollon argues that visual images can be read as ‘text’ ; moreover it is arranged and structured with its own grammar. Visual semiotics is based on three aspects by Kress and Van Leeuwen and they are:

The representation of real-world actions in visual images, the problem of how visual images index the real world in which they are placed and thirdly, the problem of how social actors index these images which are so abundant in our world, constructing

ongoing social performances as part of the social situation front (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 84).

The ‘place semiotics’ is connected to the material world where signs and other semiotics are created by social actors to sustain a social interaction by placing accurate settings in time (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). In geosemiotics, the perception of every sign depends on the characteristics of indexicality which stands for “simple gesture of pointing” (Scollon & Scollon, 2003).

2. 5 Multimodality and Indexicality

To analyze the linguistic landscape it is important to use multimodality and indexicality in research methodologies. Multimodality is built up socially with cultural resources that give a meaning. LL provides interesting texts of different levels- colorful images, one word with in depth meaning and knowledge, sounds and moving items and many different innovative images which present a certain identity of any area with a specific message (Shohamy & Gorter, 2009). We can understand the meaning better when multiple modalities are displayed, because each modality showcases different meanings and provides meaningful understanding (van Leeuwen, 2015). Besides, to reveal the social realities and get a better understanding of the meaning, all communication needs to be understood as ‘multimodal’ (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996).

The term modality is connected with visual communication that represents people, places and things that exist and that do not exist like fantasy, caricatures and many more. All representations can be analyzed, for example when an image is brighter in color it becomes ‘more than real’ and

when it is less bright, it is “less than real”. The pictures have different perspectives and detail as well like sharpness, color, etc (Kress & Gunther, 2006).

It is important to have proper information about indexicality to know the meaning of signs. To know the significance of language it is important to know the placement of text in a sign. According to Scollon and Scollon, indexicality works as a real-time process where meanings are created and it also indicates different modes to make a meaning for the readers (2003). In this research the two terms multimodality and indexicality will be used to explore the data collected.

2. 5 Harvey’s Space

According to David Harvey, there are many definitions of space and they differ significantly. For Harvey, we see how things are organized in language and also images (Harvey, 2006). During Corona, ULAB has shifted all its work and as such its spatial activities from an offline to an online campus. It is important to see how communication and activities differ once there is a change in space. As language is multimodal, it is relevant to understand how information is organized multimodality in a website, online classroom or a Facebook page. Harvey says that space does not always come as a physical space, e.g., material, metaphorical, personal, social and many more (Harvey, 2006). Accordingly it becomes necessary to examine how language is organized in the virtual space on that platform.

The space of a university campus or a departmental building has significant meaning the way it is arranged, organized or simply because of its location. One has to look at the linguistic landscape, distribution of images and how things are organized there. Considering multiple spatial categories, Harvey describes space in three categories, which are absolute, relative and

relational (Harvey, 2006). In regards to absolute, Harvey says, ‘If we regard space as absolute it becomes a “thing in itself” with an existence independent of matter’ that there is no space outside of this (Harvey, 2006, p.4). For example, if I am in the online classroom now, this is the absolute space and there is nothing outside this. In fact such a space is “fixed” and “we record or plan events within its frame” (Harvey, 2006, p.5). Next, we see the relative space which shows the relationship between existing object and it is relatable only because it exists and can relate to each other, by this he meant we can compare one space with another (Harvey, 2006). The relational space is connected to the time, and space-time implies the internal and external relation (Harvey, 2006).

2. 6 Conclusion

In this chapter there is a portrayal of the geosemiotics, multimodality, indexicality and virtual linguistic landscape in the study of linguistics. The previous scholar’s literatures on LL have been elaborately discussed, including Harvey’s Space as a keyword. This will help readers to understand the following chapter: methodology and data analysis.

Chapter THREE

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter there will be a discussion based on the research design employed by describing the method that the researcher has followed. The researcher has selected ULAB which is one of the well respected private institutions in Dhaka city. Information has been collected online to illustrate what identity it carries, as it has shifted from physical to virtual during the pandemic. This researcher has followed the steps of Durk Gorter (2006) and avoided the ‘sampling’ problem and collected photographs of the signage used in ULAB’s website, Facebook page and groups. Besides, the images have been categorized according to the functions of various signs like Navigational, Informative; etc.

3.1.1 Research Design

This research is based on a mixed method to study the data collected. Both the methods qualitative and quantitative focused on the signs that are presented in the virtual landscape of the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB), and this helped the researcher to explore more data. The collected information contains many modes and mediums that could be analyzed and help the researcher to clarify the identities and ideologies assembled in the virtual landscape of ULAB. Quantitative is used to collect images from the virtual space of ULAB, but this study is mostly qualitative in nature.

3. 2 Procedure of Data Collection

The procedures of collecting the data have been explained in the following section.

3. 2. 1 Location

The physical landscape and the main campus of ULAB is situated at Ramchandrapur, Mohammadpur, Dhaka. During the pandemic ULAB has shifted all its activities online, thus I have selected the virtual landscape of ULAB as the part of my data collection procedure.

3. 2. 2 Nature of Data

The data was gathered in formation of photographs of linguistic signs of virtual landscape which is to be found in the website, Facebook page and selected online discussion groups of ULAB. The images are of an online library, virtual notice board, advertisement, online video programs and online events as well. Mobile phones and laptops have been used to collect pictures by taking screenshots of the signage for the research. As it is a virtual platform, it was easy for the researcher to get access and assemble almost 70 pictures in 2 days.

3.3 Procedure of Data Analysis

3. 3. 1 Sampling

According to Gorter (2006), it is difficult to do sampling when there is a large number of data collected. It is also said that a large number of photographs face numerous difficulties, so to avoid this problem the researcher has chosen to categorize the images. While collecting data, the

researcher took screenshots and images for the study. The researcher kept all the pictures in her phone and laptop. Some pictures of status, captions, events, notices have been collected by taking screenshots and saved as photos from the internet. From 70 pictures, only 32 pictures were purposely chosen for discussion, analysis and interpretation to perform the research and the rest of the images were excluded as they belonged to different categories. The photographs were taken from the virtual space of ULAB mostly the website, Facebook page and group and it contained different signs like Navigational, Informational, Expressive, Interactive and Symbolic. Besides, the virtual space is specified in three categories and they are absolute, relative and relational.

3. 3. 2 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Among seventy images, thirty two pictures were chosen to be analyzed and interpreted for this research paper. Following the approach of Linguistic Landscape by Landry and Bourhis (1997), this research explains and analyses the position and meaning of multimodal features and text in the virtual space of ULAB and also explores its identity. The researcher has gathered and classified the signs in cyberspace by their placement along with purpose and afterwards analyzed the forms, content and meanings to look for the characteristic which is based on multi-modal demonstration in the virtual linguistic landscape of ULAB. This research showcases the virtual linguistic landscape in ULAB and this online platform indicates the culture, identity of an institution and the way educational activities and ideologies portray the languages, texts, images and symbols. The photographs have been collected where signs were visible; mostly the website's home shows all information in the navigation bar like administration, library, academics and many more. Besides, the latest news, notices and events are shown in the website

which are upgraded regularly in the virtual space of ULAB. From Facebook pages and groups, images have been taken of statuses that are being uploaded during the pandemic, also pictures of online events and interaction of participants using multilingualism gave an identity of how code-mixing and code-switching takes place in this online platform. Besides, the data collected in the virtual space will also show the development in the Web of ULAB. By analyzing the data collected, mostly five functional categories of signs are found and they are: Navigational, informational, expressive, interactive and symbolic. In addition, the data collected by the researcher is sorted in three different categories, as stated by Harvey and they are absolute, relative and relational space (Harvey, 2006).

3. 4 Conclusion

This is the final step of the studies requirement for the explanation and analysis of the result based on the meaning of the signs. This chapter gives the outline of researcher's progress toward methodology. By using the tools mentioned in this chapter, the researcher will analyze the data collected.

Chapter FOUR

Data Analysis

4. 1 Introduction

This chapter reports the analysis of the data that has been collected by the researcher from the virtual space of ULAB. The researcher has collected data in the form of pictures and analyzed the signs according to: Navigational, Informational, Expressive, Interactive and Symbolic +signage (Garvin & Eisenhower, 2010). As it is a digital space, VLL multilingualism communication takes place and this collected data is characterized by code-switching, code-mixing or translanguaging (Ivkovic & Lotherington, 2009). This information collected shows multilingual practice in the virtual space has two limits, one is two-way communication and the other is one-way communication (Biro, 2018) and this helped to analyze the data collected in the digital space of ULAB. This research is to observe how the LL of ULAB has converted its space to VLL and for this the data collected has been analyzed and seen if it has been on the phase of using Web 3.0 which is a three-way communication. The researcher has collected photos from ULAB's website, Facebook page and groups and in total 70 photos has been collected. Among those 32 images were kept for analysis. The permanent campus of ULAB is in Mohammadpur and the linguistic landscape of that space illustrates that it is an educational institution where you can find the admission, registrar, IT and account offices including a cafeteria where faculties and students can relax. Besides, there is a Library, group study room, English writing zone, LABs, auditorium, faculty floor and many classrooms. On the other hand when looking at the virtual landscape of ULAB, the scenario is a bit different.

The researcher has collected photos from ULAB's website which carries the pictures of the home page where firstly we can see the image of ULAB's permanent campus. Next there is the navigation bar on top consisting of the URMS, Moodle, Library and options for Applying online and looking for the faculties in ULAB. One thing that we will always see in the Website is the logo of ULAB. The second navigation bar has information about the university, academics, research, administration and information about Covid-19. After scrolling down, the researcher has taken pictures of the notice board, events and latest updates of ULAB news. Image of Facebook page and groups helped the researcher to collect more data that shows communication like interactions in the comment section. According to Kress (1996), mostly the images consist of two types of participants, firstly the represented participant which includes people, place and things that are portrayed in the picture. Secondly, are the interactive participants and they usually communicate with one another through images. The researcher has also collected images of status and events updates on Facebook pages and groups. These photographs are analyzed by Navigational sign which refers to pictures that show directional arrows. Next is Informative sign that is not directly related to Navigational sign but the sign in the picture gives a wide range of information. Third is Expressive signage and it expresses identity and agency. The Interactive signage is open dialogues or the interactions in the Linguistic Landscape. Lastly is the Symbolic signage which carries meaning of the logos and icons in the images. Next, the images are evaluated by Harvey's definition of space which is: absolute, relative and relational (Harvey, 2006). Absolute space is fixed and there is no space outside of this. In the case of relative space it compares one space with another. The relational space is connected to the time and the idea of space will be different for individuals in that space.

4.2 Qualitative Findings

4.2.1 Navigational Signage

Navigational signage refers to images that demonstrate directional arrows. Before the pandemic, the navigational signs were in the physical space of ULAB campus. The blue stickers with white letters were pasted in the sliding doors for the room numbers. It was seen that the wayfinding sign is used for directing the Admission office, IT help and also washroom as Navigational Signage. The signs of exit, entrance, showing Id sign and no parking sign have also been distinguished as Navigational signage. In ULAB, wearing an ID card is compulsory for everyone including students, faculties and staff members, so the signage showing ID and entrance sign are placed outside the door on the entrance before the staircases and this is a professional signage. As Mohammadpur is a crowded area and it is huge, “No parking” sign is used to avoid any disturbance in the physical space of ULAB.

During the pandemic, ULAB has shifted from physical landscape to virtual landscape. As a result, we can say that the Navigational signage that is in ULAB’s physical space has changed as well and it is different in the virtual space. The researcher has looked for navigational signs on the website of ULAB. After entering the website, the researcher took a screenshot of the first page which is the home page. It includes the navigation bar at the top where the viewer will get all the information which includes: URMS, moodle, library, administration and many more. There is an image of ULAB campus and at the right and left hand side there are arrows, which indicate that there are more pictures and information about ULAB we can slide on to see and this can be considered as navigational signage. Next, we see a ‘search’ sign on top right of the website’s home page, and it indicates that anyone can enter and look for their information

regarding ULAB. In the website there are small yellow colored arrows below the “event section” and it is written “view all events’. Similar arrows have been seen on the website’s ‘notice board, quick links and news on campus’ which suggests that the reader will get more information if they click on the arrow and these are also said to be navigational signage. In the navigation bar of ‘Future student’, we get to see the present students of ULAB sharing their experience about this institution. There are arrows that help the reader to slide right and left to view more notes. Besides, there is a yellow arrow on top where one can view all the testimonials together and here we get to see the navigation sign too. This yellow small arrow sign is mostly used to show that more information is there to look for and this also helps to show all the topics neatly in one place without being crowded. All this navigational signage indicates that ULAB as an educational institution makes it easier for students to look for information they wish to know.

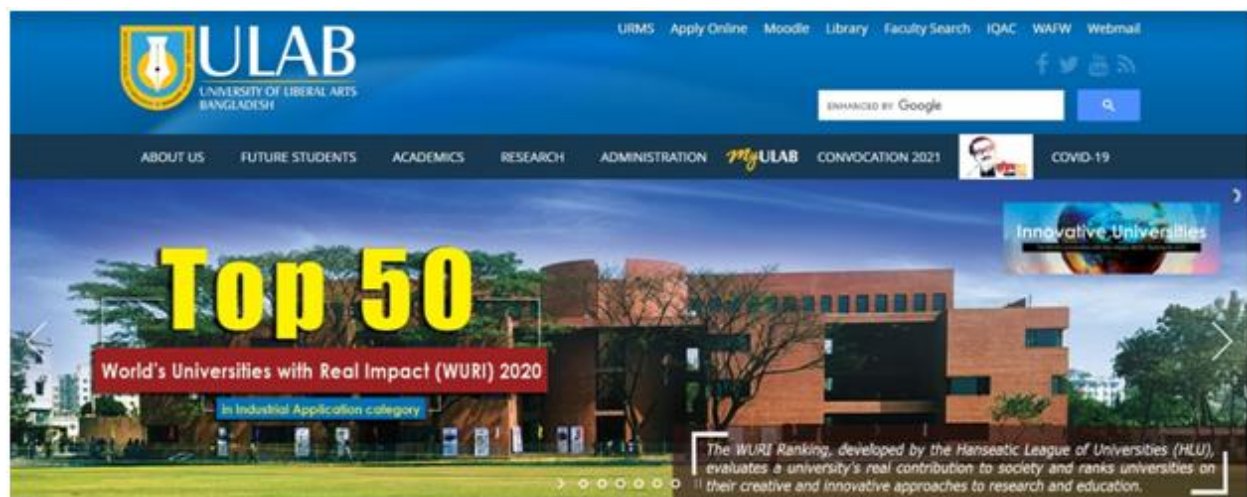


Figure 1: Home Page of ULAB website

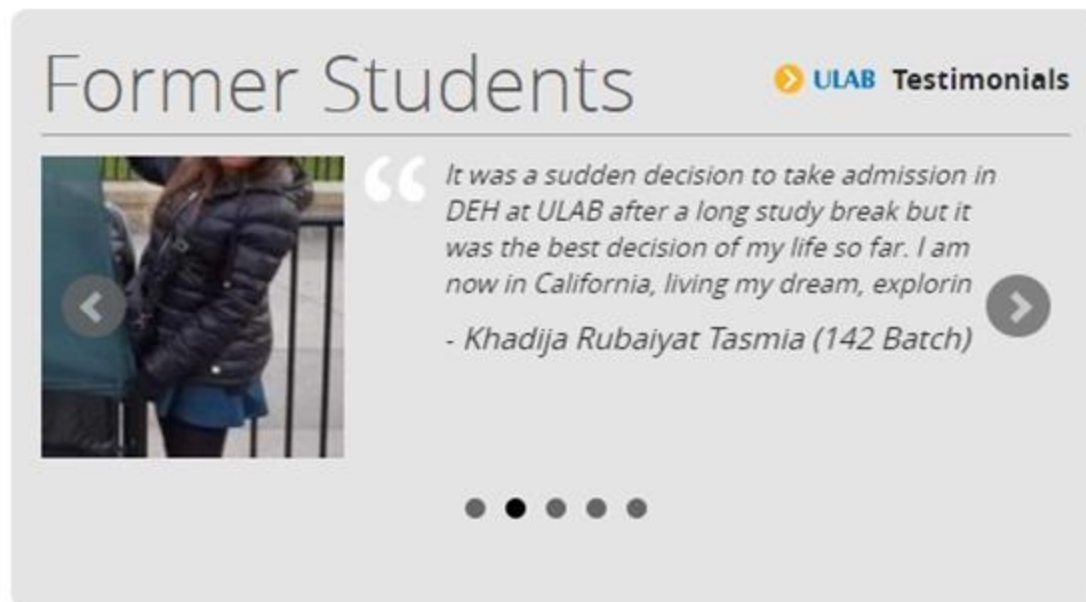


Figure 2: Students sharing their experience - Testimonials

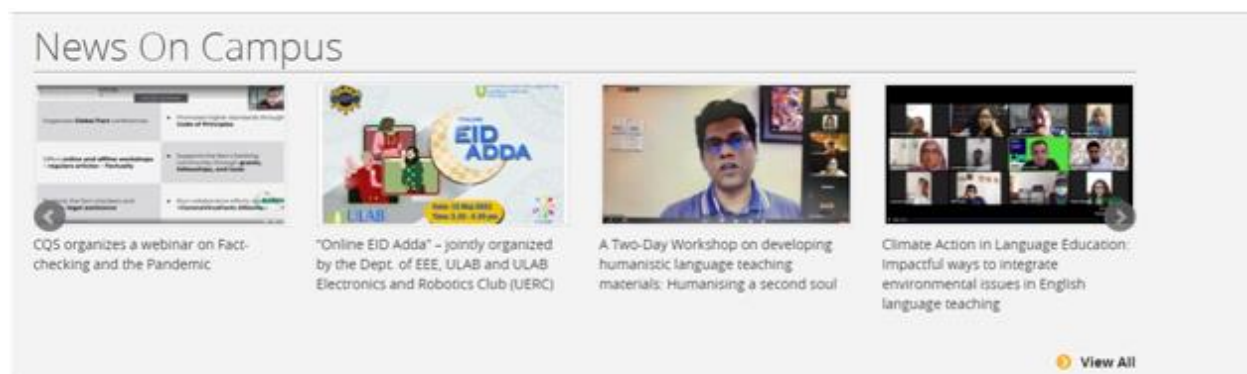


Figure 3: Latest news on ULAB's website with arrow sign to see all.

Notice Board

Convocation 2021 Registration

Register before June 15, 2021

Holiday – Eid-ul-Fitr 2021

Wednesday, May 12, 2021 to Wednesday, May 19, 2021

Holiday-Shab-e-Qadr

Monday, 10 May 2021

 [ULAB Notice Board](#)

Figure 4: Virtual Notice Board and direction sign to see all the updated notices

Events

APR
01

Two-Day Workshop on Developing humanistic language teaching materials: Humanising a second soul



[View All Events](#)

Figure 5: Listing of Events and their updates

4.2.2 Informational Signage

Informational signages are those signs in the picture that give an extensive range of information. Before the pandemic the scenario of ULAB's space was different and we got to see many signs around the campus that portrayed informational signage. ULAB has set signs for the smoke detector, leaving canteen, fire extinguisher use, emergency fire exit, library authority signs and many more that are placed in the Informational signage group. All these signs are placed in the proper location of the university like, the fire exits sign and emergency exits sign are placed just beside the staircase and lift so that it is reachable during an urgent situation. English language is mostly used in ULAB, but Bengali is equally needed as it is a multilingual society. Important information is presented here like 'emergency exits' and 'leaving canteen' and these two are informational signs in ULAB. Colors of different shades are used for individual purposes and for representing a message to the reader. For example: For emergency exit signs, green with white letters is used. Then we can see that for the emergency exit, red and yellow color is used and for fire extinguisher green color is used with red letters to give smoke detector meaning. It is also seen that the pink and yellow color is used by the authority of the library to give important information to students. Informational signs are considered as an asset of the university, as it helps the institution to represent its identity as an educational space. These placements of informational signs are targeted at students, faculties and staff members.

Informational signs in the physical landscape and cyberspace are very different. The researcher has collected images from Facebook and the website of ULAB where the informational signs are represented. In the ULAB website, in the section on Library, we firstly see in big fonts, it is written that the library service is always available. We get to see the variation in font size and

color of green, black, blue and orange just to make it stand out and the writing represents different meanings. Besides, the text “Click to Get Service” and “Wear mask, Get service” is written in both English and Bengali language, so we can also see multilingualism taking place here. This message provides the same meaning in two different languages and this is also informational signage. As we slide down in the Library section we get to see some fonts as heading in orange color that shows library database, library time schedule, Physical visit to ULAB Library and Open E-resources during covid-19. The texts Live Chat and Video Consultancy in the Library section are green in color. The links are in blue color so a reader can understand that the text needs to be clicked to view. Before entering the URMS, the user gets two options: “Student URMS” in blue and “Faculty URMS ” in green. Here we can also see how the accounts for Faculty and students have been separated in two boxes and in different colors. Facebook is a virtual space where students get the latest updates of the university and ULAB is very active in this space as they have their own verified page and group, and it keeps their students and teachers connected. In this cyber space known as Facebook, some Informational signs like the address of ULAB have been placed as a link on the left section with a sign of location and the text is blue in color. If someone clicks on the link it would guide a person to the exact location of the university.



Figure 6: The Library section states its activities

Open E-resources during COVID-19

Due to Covid-19, ULAB Library is open for a limited time (9:00 am to 4:30 pm) from Sunday-Thursday. Its [services](#) and [resources](#) are now available online and can access through the RemoteXs account. To visit the library physically, please book a [time slot](#). For more information please contact [ULAB library](#).

[COVID-19 Open Access Resources](#) | [E-resources on COVID-19](#)

Library Database

[search](#).

Library Time Schedule (During Covid-19)

Sunday – Thursday | 9:00 am – 4:30 pm

Physical visit to ULAB Library

[book a timeslot](#)

[Wear Mask, Get Service](#) | মাস্ক পরিধান করুন, সেবা নিন

Library Documentary

[Store of Knowledge](#)

Figure 7: The Library section with more detail

Live Chat

07:30 am - 04:30 pm | Sunday - Thursday
10:00 am - 12:00 pm | Friday - Saturday

Live chat icon is available at right bottom corner

Video Consultancy

(Meet with meet)

09:30 am - 04:30 pm | Sunday - Thursday

Why Video Consultancy?

[Register for Video Consultancy](#)

Training

- Reference and Citation Management - Zotero
- Library Management Software - Koha



Figure 8: The Library section showing Live Chat and Video Consultancy in the website



Welcome to the ULAB Resource Management System (URMS), where you can check:

- Pre-Registration
- Class Routine
- Billing
- Grade Results



Figure 9: The URMS section from the website

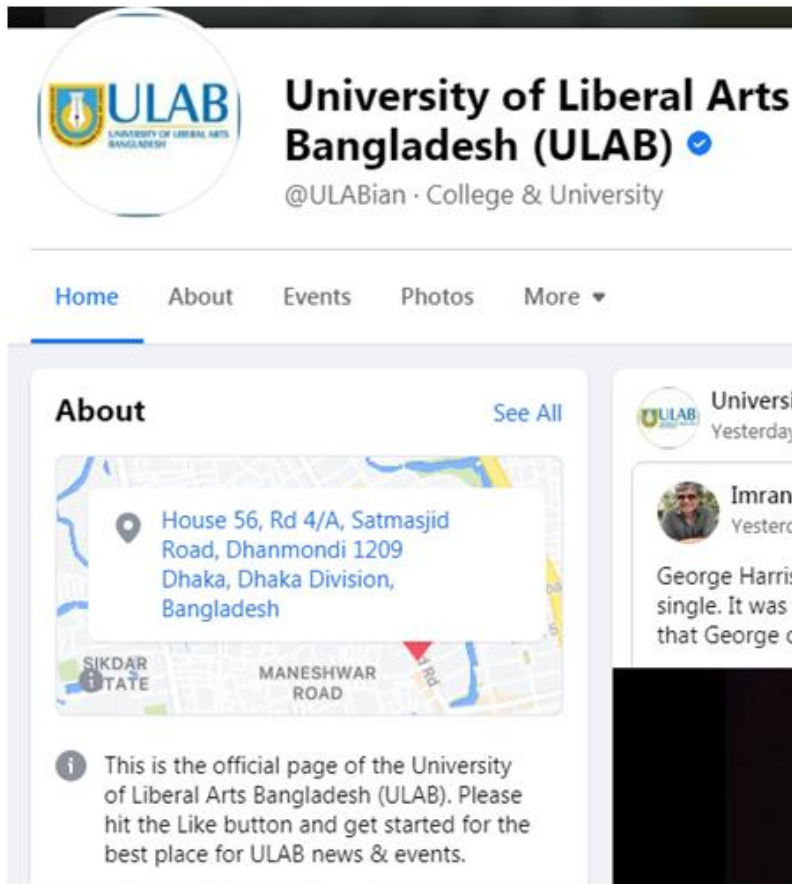


Figure 10: ULAB's Facebook home page showing the location of the institution

4. 2. 3 Expressive Signage

We know that Expressive signage states identity and agency. Most of the signs seen in the physical space of ULAB are Expressive signs. The Expressive signs that are recognized carried English language proverbs, used quotes that encouraged and motivated students to gain more knowledge for being successful in life. It is observed and seen that most of the images in the Expressive signage category contained identity like market arts, decorating works with cultural values. It also presents a message that invites, instructs, inspires and advises the reader. ULAB has been maintaining a reputation of organizing amazing seminars and workshops for the students and these inviting messages are mostly Expressive information. This also gives us the message that ULAB as an educational institution not only offers courses to the students but also encourages them to do extra-curricular activities that go on as a part of everyday academic exercise. In the physical space of ULAB we get to see many posters and banners of seminars and events organized by the university and also by different clubs of the university. Thus, we can say this invitation of seminars and workshops inspires students to grow their knowledge besides doing everyday academic work.

During the pandemic, the virtual landscape of ULAB has also succeeded in presenting the Expressive sign in cyberspace. The researcher has collected images from the Facebook page of ULAB, different groups of ULAB's clubs, website and Instagram. In the virtual landscape ULAB has posted inviting messages in Facebook, images of seminars and workshops, greeting signs and cultural value signs as Expressive signage. The researcher has taken screenshots of images that show expressive signs. The first picture is of an Email sent by the director of ULAB's Student Affairs Office and it is an invitation of a webinar on 'Surviving the second

wave: Discussion on the new virus' where the time, date and Zoom link has been provided. The second image is of an invitation to join a live session on the Facebook page of ULAB on "Theory and practice in applied linguistics and TESOL: future directions", and the students are encouraged to join the session. There are many clubs in ULAB and one of them is ULAB Nutrition and Wellness club. In the Facebook group of this club we can see the image of an event organized by the club and it is portrayed by a poster with images that would draw attention of the viewer. We can also see in the post written 'join us' which is an expressive sign. Students are encouraged to participate online, and if they are interested they can contribute their works online. The researcher collected a picture from the ULAB website, the image of "National Collegiate Programming Contest" was posted to motivate students to participate and it is also mentioned that there is 'cash prize' for the winner which is an expressive sign too. There are also events organized where students can get future opportunities like internships, scholarships and jobs. The online poster attracts the students and encourages them to look for more future opportunities. The researcher has found online greeting images like Eid wishes, Bangla New year wish, greetings of Independence Day and these are expressive signs as well. The use of Bengali Language shows us how code-switching takes place in this online landscape. Besides, ULAB tries to make their students more connected to their culture and be efficient in every way possible. All this invitation and online post of events, seminars, workshops and advising messages with images in the online platform helps the students of ULAB bring out the best within themselves and gain more knowledge that would help them in their future.



Figure 11: E-mail sent to students as an invitation of a Webinar

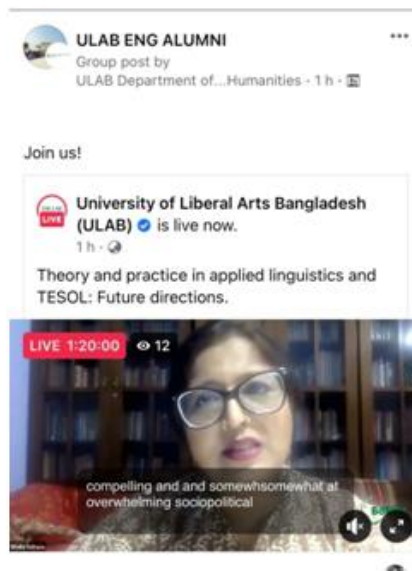


Figure 12: Online session of an event posted in ULAB's Facebook page



Figure 15: Online poster of an Event organized by the university

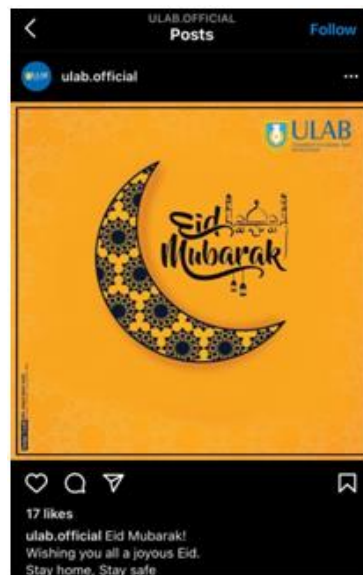


Figure 16: ULAB's EID greeting on Instagram



Figure 17: ULAB’s greeting in Bengali Language of Independence Day.



Figure 18: The University’s Sangskriti Shangshad club inviting students to register online

4. 2. 4 Interactive Signage

We already know that the Interactive signage is mostly open dialogues or the interactions in the Linguistic Landscape. It would be different in this paper because the researcher has collected data as images from ULAB's Facebook page and groups of Interactive signs in the virtual landscape. In the physical space of ULAB the Interactive signage would be the message written in every class 'IS ANYTHING ON? SWITCH OFF BEFORE YOU LEAVE'. This instruction message is written just above the switch board to remind students to switch off the lights and fan before they leave. Through this the institution is also helping the students create awareness and helps them to be a better citizen. Interactive sign is also seen beside the elevators of ULAB where it is written in blue stickers with white letters "Faculty/Admin" and "Students". This text helps the user to understand about the usage of elevators as the elevators usage is separate for faculty members and students. In the Library of ULAB the section of Magazine and Journals are separately shown in a blue sticker with white letters, so when the students need any magazine or journal they can easily notice the caption and this communication is an Interactive signage in the physical landscape of ULAB. Thus, we can say that ULAB presents the institutional ideologies in the physical space of the university by using Interactive signage.

On the other hand, we can see how Interactive signage has changed after ULAB has shifted from physical space to virtual space during the pandemic. The researcher has collected images from ULAB's Facebook page and groups of different departments and clubs too. After the research is done it is seen that there is more Interactive Signage taking place in the virtual landscape compared to the physical space. The researcher has taken an image from the ULAB website, the URMS section, where the accounts of students and faculties have been separated. This is an

Interactive signage because this helps the user to understand which one is appropriate for them. In the virtual space mostly in Facebook pages and groups the users can easily write their thoughts and opinions in the comment section of any post. The researcher has collected pictures of ULAB's Facebook page where it is clearly seen how the students express their thoughts and opinions by commenting on the post. By commenting they state their feelings, thoughts, opinion, and greetings given to one another they even ask questions and all this is Interactive signage. The existence of multilingualism is also seen here, because in this space there is no restriction of language usage and anyone can come and state their views and this is an Interactive sign too. The students of ULAB are mostly noticed In the Facebook pages and groups, beside this it is seen that students who are interested in getting admission in this institution come and comment on their queries. The researcher has taken images from the website of ULAB where the students can interact with the ULAB Library and can ask any question. Not only by using text one can express their feelings but also by giving reactions of like, dislike, sad, happy and angry in the post or in anyone's comment. It is written in the chat section "Hi! How can we help you?" which is creating some kind of communication, so we can say Interactive signs are also taking place here. It is seen that after the pandemic started the tuition is preferred to be paid online through URMS and there we get to see how instruction is given to students by 'Check and Proceed to Payment' which is placed just below payment detail. This instruction is also considered as Interactive signage.

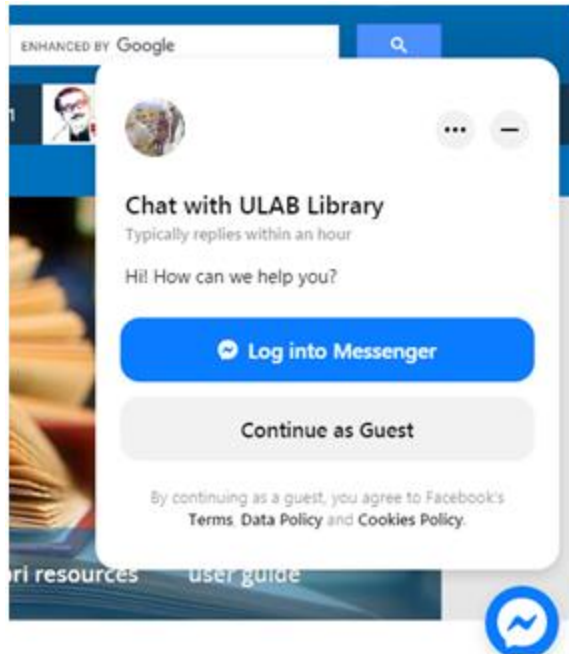


Figure 19: Chat option with the ULAB Library



Figure 20: URMS section

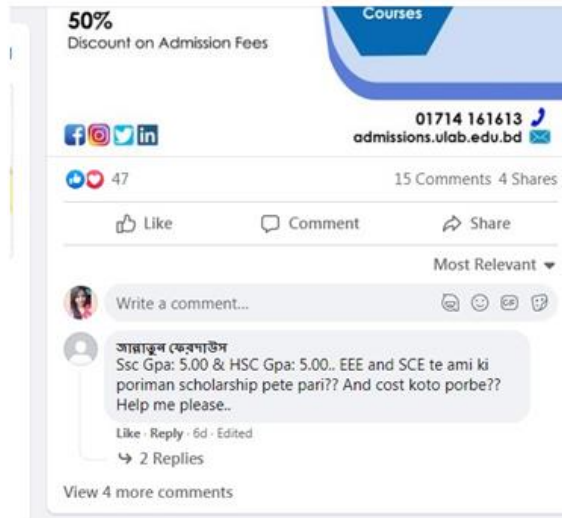


Figure 21: Question asked in a post by ULABian News regarding admission



Figure 22: Question asked by a Student and others trying to help

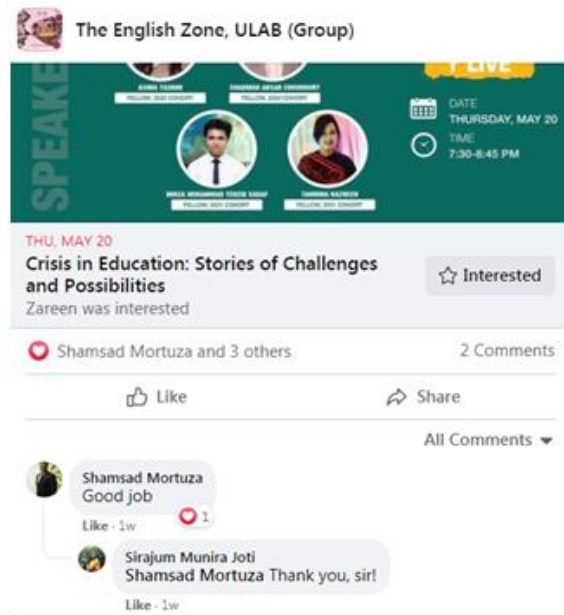


Figure 23: Faculty wrote a comment to encourage students

ULAB
UNIVERSITY OF LIBERAL ARTS
BANGLADESH

Home | Teacher Evaluation | Course Evaluation | Preregistration | Schedule | Billing | Result | Profile | Logout

Payment Information

Semester: 211 (Spring 2021) Student: 193055015 Parisha Parvin
Adviser: Dr. Tabassum Zaman

Payment Details

Amount

Check and Proceed to Payment

System developed by: ValuePLUS Computer Systems Ltd.

Figure 24: Payment details in the URMS



Figure 25: Comments of Students in a Facebook post of ULAB

4. 2. 5 Symbolic Signage

Symbolic signage holds the meaning of the logos and icons in the images. In ULAB's physical space these icons and logos represent ULAB as an educational institution and represents meaning in the context. To create an identity of an institution ULAB has shown many Symbolic signs in space of ULAB's campus and one of the main signs is the logo of ULAB that symbolizes the ULAB life of students. The slogan set by ULAB Life is "MORE THAN A DEGREE: The Best Years of your Life" which shows the identity of an ideal student and also shows friendship and love. This is placed in a glass frame on the wall at the entrance of ULAB.

The scenario of Symbolic signage in the virtual space is different. We get to see Symbolic signs in almost every place of ULAB's virtual space as images and logos of ULAB are being used in the website of ULAB; in every post given in Facebook pages, groups and in Instagram too. ULAB has not only presented its educational landscape in website, Facebook and Instagram but also in Twitter and YouTube, and these symbols are available in the website of ULAB which tells us it is a Symbolic sign as well that linguistic diversity is experienced in cyberspace-as-a-landscape. In this virtual space the researcher has shown an image where the slogan is set in the website of ULAB "The Best Years of your Life". This was also seen in the physical space of ULAB and they have tried holding the identity of framing ULAB as an educational institution both in physical and virtual space. The logo of ULAB is seen in all the virtual spaces where the institution has tried to reach their students and communicate, interact and share their latest updates about the university. This logo portrays the true picture of an educational landscape in the virtual space and shows the Symbolic signs. Symbolic signage is seen in Logo of clubs in ULAB which also gives a message to everyone about how it helps the students grow and develop

more with co-curricular activities. Some of the clubs which are related to the plan have tried bringing behavioral changes among students to be aware of the natural resources like “Greening ULAB” or “ULAB Goes Green”. Many workshops are held to make students ideal and create an institutional identity and ideology with the logos and this is a Symbolic sign as well, but their activities are less visible during the pandemic.



Figure 26: Symbolic Sign and the logo of ULAB with information on Leadership



Figure 27: Symbols of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube



Figure 28: ULAB presented Basic Information, Motto and Logo



Figure 29: ULAB presented the logos of clubs in the main website

4. 2. 6 Harvey's Space

According to David Harvey, there are many explanations of space and they vary significantly. For Harvey, we see how things are organized in language and also images. During Corona, ULAB has shifted all its work and as such its spatial activities from an offline to an online campus. It is important to see how communication and activities differ once there is a change in space. As language is multimodal, it is relevant to understand how information is organized multimodally in a website, online classroom or a Facebook page. Harvey said that space does not always come as a physical space, e.g., material, metaphorical, personal, and social (Harvey, 2006). Accordingly it becomes necessary to examine how language is organized in the virtual space on that platform. The space of a university campus or a departmental building has significant meaning the way it is arranged, organized or simply because of its location. One has to look at the linguistic landscape, distribution of images and how things are organized there.

Considering multiple spatial categories, Harvey describes space in three categories, which are absolute, relative and relational. In regards to absolute, Harvey says, 'If we regard space as absolute it becomes a "thing in itself" with an existence independent of matter' (Harvey, 2006, p.4) that there is no space outside of this. For example, if I am in the online classroom now, this is the absolute space and there is nothing outside this. In fact such a space is "fixed" and "we record or plan events within its frame" (Harvey, 2006, p.5). Take for instance, ULAB, the campus is situated in Satmasjid road of Dhaka. The courses of all departments take place in the classrooms which are well organized with chairs set in a way from where the teachers can see all the students. There is a board, projector and an air conditioner that give the vibe of a proper

classroom and how the space is organized. In all the classrooms there is a picture below the switch board where it is written that, “Before you leave the classroom switch off the lights and fans” indicating that ULAB is trying to take green culture seriously, mainly the greening of the University. When students enter the building where the University is housed, they get to see an electronic notice board where the department’s new seminars and other notices are shown. Most of the seminars are held in the auditorium which is located on the fifth floor. Once the eager visitors enter the auditorium, they would find that the space is structured in a way that the audience can easily view the speakers behind a podium on the stage. Besides academic talks, plays and cultural functions of different departments are also held in this space.

After Covid-19, all the events from physical space have been transferred to virtual space as classes are held in Google classrooms while seminars and cultural programs are conducted via Zoom sessions. Instead of being present physically, teachers share their ideas on the screen through virtual boards and slides and the students give their opinions by using chat boxes. Notices are received solely through email and instead of designated notice boards in the physical campus, they are pasted in websites and Facebook pages.

Next, we see the relative space as said by Harvey. It tells us, “The view of relative space proposes that it be understood as a relationship between objects which exists only because objects exist and relate to each other.” (Harvey, 2006). By this he meant we can compare one space with another. By relative space we can compare ULAB with other universities. If we compare ULAB with a public university then ULAB has started an online platform to conduct classes during this pandemic, but the Public universities do not have access to online. They could

not continue their semesters smoothly for the lack of an online platform whereas ULAB has chosen the virtual space to connect with their students easily and continued their academic sessions. As ULAB is an English medium education provider and the medium of instruction and communication is in English as well, we see how it is also placed in a greater position. We see most of the students are from nearby areas of Dhanmondi. Students from other cities come to ULAB as well and we can consider it to be in a position of hierarchy. During the time of corona the accessibility is easier as students can easily join classes and complete all other works only easier as students can easily join classes and complete all other works online.

The relational space is connected to the time, which shows us the importance of ULAB now and how it is more interdisciplinary than it was before. Space-time implies the internal and external relation. When students enter ULAB they have a different background and perspective, because they have different goals and knowledge about the departments. They also have individual thoughts about what they will do in the future with the certificate they get from here. We can say that relational space is more like Structures of feelings of Raymond William. We cannot say that the idea of ULAB as a Space will be the same for me, my other classmates or my teacher. Everyone has their own background, position and perspective. In order to define relational space in a virtual landscape, the goal, knowledge and viewpoint about departments of students are the same as it is in physical space. When joining a class or viewing a post online the idea of ULAB as a Space and mostly virtual space will be different for me, my other classmates and my teacher, because not everyone has the same environment or proper mind's stability during the pandemic. We can say that ULAB has created an environment that frames the space of an educational

institute, but when experiencing and viewing the virtual space the viewer might not have the same feeling.



Figure 30: ULAB having online Curriculum Integration Event



Figure 31: ULAB having online Orientation



Figure 32: A Celebration of Poetry in the virtual space of ULAB

4. 4 Critical Analysis

It has been noticed in the virtual space of ULAB that the usage of English Language is in comparison more than Bengali language. Wherever it is necessary to use Bengali Language ULAB has used it as ULAB is located in Bangladesh and it is a multilingual society. Still we have seen the usage of English language in most of the text in the website of ULAB and posts in Facebook pages and groups and in Instagram. So, we can presume that English is portrayed in ULAB as a prestigious status and it is one of the major characteristics of the virtual linguistic landscape of this university.

In the virtual linguistic landscape of ULAB, the culture values, events, seminars and activities are shown and it defines the educational ideologies and policies. In case of Language use, it has been noticed that the institution has used both the languages English and Bengali, when delivering important information and wanted to emphasize more on the topic. The text “Click to Get Service” and “Wear mask, Get service” is written in both English and Bengali language in the website of ULAB. In our country, English is not our native language or the official language. The language is not even generally spoken, but we use this language in a specific context for a particular purpose and mostly for academic purposes. By analyzing, the researcher has found that the linguistic landscape of a physical space is different from the virtual space. It is seen in the physical space how the directions are given to the students for fire extinguisher, wash room, cafeteria and many others. Whereas in the virtual landscape this is not really required for the students rather they get direction for changing images and viewing posts in more detail. There is a small yellow arrow sign which is used for showing more information. All this navigational signage points out that ULAB as an educational institution makes it easier for students to look for information they desire to know.

Before the pandemic the physical landscape of ULAB had all the services the students needed like the admission office, IT Office, registrar office and the semester tuition could be submitted in the university or in the Bank. After the virus, this entire work is mostly done online. ULAB's website has all the links and contact details where students can easily contact the authority and complete their works and even payments can be easily done online too. The landscape of the Library section of ULAB before the pandemic was very relaxed where students could easily grab the books and journals they looked for. After the university was closed the library had to shift its work to the virtual space mostly in the website of ULAB. The library has provided online services for the students where they can join live sessions, ask questions, book appointments for a visit with proper precaution and they can also have video consultancy. In the physical landscape of ULAB the seminars and events mostly took place in the auditorium where we could see the faculty members and the students. However the situation in virtual landscape is not the same, mostly the events, meetings, workshops, seminars and orientations take place online through Zoom or Google meet. This Live session and programs are shared in the Facebook page of ULAB to reach more audience and the lives are mostly saved, so that students and faculties who could not join can view it later. In the case of physical space it would not be possible for members to join if they are at work, but in virtual space members can join from anywhere.

Even in the case of doing classes the students can join from anywhere they want to and the classes are always recorded for the ones who could not join as students from rural areas most of the time face problems with the internet connection. The interaction of students and faculties were different in the physical space, moreover they face to face interaction. In case of virtual space the students do not have a face to face interaction but they can communicate with the faculties during class, through Google classroom and Email. Besides the interaction in ULAB's

Facebook page and groups are most visible because both students and faculty members can comment and react on the posts. It is also seen that different clubs of ULAB completed their registration of new members online. They have also encouraged students to participate in different workshops, competitions and events online. ULAB has created the environment of an educational institution in the virtual landscape by not only reaching the students by means of ULAB's website and Facebook page but also Facebook groups, Instagram, Twitter and Youtube. In case of any seminar, meeting or classes they mostly use Zoom or Google meet.

4. 5 Conclusion

This chapter has analyzed the Navigational, Informational, Expressive, Interactive, Symbolic signage in the virtual Linguistic Landscape of ULAB. Besides, ULAB's virtual space is also analyzed according to Harvey's description about space. The signs that are used in the virtual space mostly in ULAB's websites, Facebook posts in ULAB's page and groups have illustrated and given an insight on ULAB. The data collected from the virtual landscape of ULAB revealed discourses as well as institutional identities and ideologies. It is also noticed that students of ULAB attend online workshops and seminars; and extra-curricular activities in addition to their everyday academic exercises. In the following chapter, I have concluded the thesis.

Chapter FIVE

Conclusion

5. 1 Introduction

In this chapter the conclusions from the study are discussed. It also talks about the significance of the study. In addition, the researcher proposes some recommendations for further study on Linguistic Landscape besides stating the limitations of the research.

5. 2 Significance of the Study

The identity of University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) in the virtual landscape has been represented in this research. In this study the researcher has collected data as pictures from the virtual space of ULAB to illustrate the identity of the university. This study is very important because it allows the members of this institution to understand what kind of educational environment, constructing identities and interactions through the students' cultural behavior in the virtual linguistic landscape of the university is created in this situation of pandemic. It is seen that most of the signs belonged to Expressive signage where the invitation messages through Email and posts for joining workshops and events are found. The researcher has discovered through this study that these posts of invitation messages from ULAB's Facebook pages, groups and clubs for joining clubs and workshops informs us that this university not only focuses on how many courses are offered but also emphasizes on what they are doing as a part of their everyday academic exercise.

ULAB as a university has many activities going around which we can see in the institution's website, Facebook pages, groups and in Instagram posts and this communication has been formed through the signs. The posts are created as posters with different colors and messages that inspire the students of ULAB to go ahead and move toward success through the knowledge they gain. In the research it is seen that students from outside are asking questions out of curiosity and showing interest to join ULAB in the future. It is noticed that most of the posts are in English language, but some posts do have Bengali Language too. The post of greeting on Independence Day and some posts that had important information from the website contained Bengali language beside English Language in ULAB's virtual space. The researcher has observed points from the discussion that shows linguistic context and language policy all through ULAB and Bangladesh as a whole. The relative placement of Bengali language seemed to be less used on the virtual display. English language is not our official language, but it is used in daily practice and it also creates a global image. People use Bengali language for Informational purpose which means to inform. The reason for using Bengali language in some posts of ULAB is to pass on the information to the majority of people who can understand Bengali language.

In the virtual linguistic landscape of ULAB it is noticed that they tend to use prominent colors for their posts online. The different colors that are mostly used are red, blue, black, black, white, green, yellow, and orange. They also use a different style of fonts that highlights the letters of the post placed in the virtual linguistic landscape of ULAB. These are considered to be different modes of communication and all these modes join together and create a more accurate meaning that helps us to understand the virtual space of ULAB.

5. 3 Limitations

In the domain of Linguistic landscape studies most of the well-known researchers conducted their year-long research following ethnographic methods, for example Shohamy and Gorter (2006), Curtain (2006), Ben-Rafael (2009) and Huebner (2009). This project could have been more informative if the researcher could get a few months more. Due to time limitations, the researcher could not portray the landscape of ULAB's virtual classroom after the pandemic. Besides, the researcher could not interview the students and faculty members of ULAB because of time constraints. This information could have added their experience and the way they see the virtual landscape of the institution and whether the educational institution truly represents what it claims to. Interviews of people who created the posts online in the virtual space of ULAB could have included more information too, but due to time limitation it was not possible. Also, the researcher could not explore other universities' virtual landscapes to see the similarities and differences with the space of ULAB.

5. 4 Recommendations for Future Research

It is observed that very little research has been done on linguistic landscape and hardly any study is done on virtual linguistic landscape in our country. The recommendation would be that this type of research should be conducted in our country as study on linguistic landscape (LL) and virtual linguistic landscape (VLL) of educational institutions in Bangladesh in order that students can have the proper idea about different universities. This will also help them to have a better understanding of the setting, behaviors and manners, identities, discourses, and ideologies of those institutions. This kind of research's exploration will help university students or students

who are doing higher education because this helps them to have a better reflection on the educational institutions during this pandemic.

5. 5 Conclusion

The aim of this research was to find out how the linguistic landscape of University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) and has it changed from physical space to virtual space during the pandemic besides whether the virtual landscape is demonstrating the true image of ULAB as an educational institution. This study also showed the functions and symbolic value of signs and linguistic expressions used in online platforms. This kind of study gives us a view of the intercultural linguistic negotiations that takes place among teachers and students who are working and studying in a different landscape which is the virtual space. It is seen that the linguistic landscape is often taken for granted, but it is the most essential element that gives us the insight of any institution or space. We often fail to understand the main role of LL in any space, so to observe the space of ULAB during this pandemic and studying whether the institution is portraying the true picture of an educational institute in the virtual landscape was important.

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