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Transliterated multilingualism/globalisation: English disguised in non-Latin linguistic landscapes as new type of world Englishes?

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Abstract

English has, for historical reasons, risen to global prominence as the unchallenged *lingua franca* internationally. World Englishes (WE) has, as a result, established itself as a visible line of research, exploring localised/indigenised varieties of English from around the world (e.g. India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Nigeria). However, most of the discussions so far concern English written in the Latin script as people would normally expect. Against a backdrop of globalisation and the juggernaut of English, this article points to an increasingly salient phenomenon that English especially in superdiverse and/or (post)colonial societies (e.g. India and Pakistan) may disguise in seemingly inscrutable and 'mysterious' local scripts (e.g. Perso-Arabic script and Devanagari script) and even 'pass off' as local languages in these countries' linguistic landscapes through phonetic transliteration. This emerging trend begs the question whether these should be understood as new varieties of local languages or new kinds of world Englishes disguised in non-Roman scripts. This phenomenon is theorised in this paper conceptually. To illustrate our point, examples of authentic signs taken from the linguistic landscapes relating to South Asia and South Asian communities are discussed. As English is increasingly glocalised and becomes part of other less dominant languages,

this article calls on researchers in World Englishes (WE) and (socio)linguistics in general to look beyond English written in the Latin script in a conventional/traditional sense and to expand the scope and remit of WE research to explore how English, as a dominant code, becomes indigenised using local scripts and morphs into and even 'passes off' as 'local' surreptitiously. This fundamentally calls for the crucial need for researchers from diverse and multilingual backgrounds to work together to better understand English and other non-dominant languages' role in the 21st century.

KEYWORDS
English as lingua franca, linguistic landscape, super-diversity, transliteration, world Englishes

لنډيز/خلاصه
انګليسي د تاريخي دلايلو له مخې په نړيواله کچه د غير ننګونې ګډې ژبې(د رابطې د ژبې/فرانکا ژبې) په توګه نړيوال شهرت ته رسيدلې ده. نړيوالې انګليسي د پايلې په توګه، ځان د خپرنې د يوې ښکاره کربنې په توګه رامينځته کړی، د نړۍ له ګوټ ګوټ څخه د انګليسي محلي / داخلي ډولونه سپرنه کوي (د بيلګې په توګه هند، سري لنکا، پاکستان، هانګ کانګ، سنګاپور، نايجيريا). په هرصورت، تر دې دمه ډيری بحثونه په لاتيني رسم الخط کې ليکل شوي انګليسي پورې اړه لري لکه څنګه چې خلک په عمومي توګه تمه لري. د نړيوال کولو او د انګليسي د جاګرناوټ په شا کښې، دا مقاله په زياتيدونکي توګه د پام وړ پديدې ته اشاره کوي چې انګليسي په ځانګړې توګه په پراخه او / يا (وروسته) استعماري ټولنو کې (د بيلګې په توګه هند او پاکستان) کيدای شي په ښکاره ډول ناڅرګند او 'پراسرار' محلي ليکونو کې پټ شي (د مثال په توګه فارسي-عربي رسم الخط او ديوناګري رسم الخط) او حتی د فونيټيک ژبارې له لارې د دې هيوادونو په ژبني منظرو کې د محلي ژبو په توګه تېرېږي. دا راپورته کيدونکی تمايل دا پوښتنه راپورته کوي چې ايا دا بايد د ځايی ژبو نوي ډولونو په توګه وپيژندل شي يا د نړۍ انګليسي نوي ډولونه چې په غير رومي ليکونو کې پټ شوي دي. دا پديده په دې مقاله کې په نظري ډول بيان شوې ده. د دې خبرې د روښانه کولو لپاره د جنوبي اسيا او جنوبي اسيا د ټولنو په اړه له ژبني منظرو څخه د اخستل شويو مستند نخښو بېلګو ته اشاره کوو. لکه څنګه چې انګليسي په زياتيدونکې توګه په نړيواله او ځايي کچه خپرېږي او د نورو لږ واکمنو ژبو برخه کېږي، دا مقاله د نړيوال انګليسي (WE) او (ټولنيز) ژبپوهنې

څېړونکو څخه غوښتنه کوي چې په دوديزه معنا کې د لاتيني رسم الخط ليکل شوي انګليسي هاخوا وکوري او پراخ کړي. د WE د څېړنې ساحه او محدوديت دا وځېرل شي چې څنګه انګليسي، د غالب کوډ په توګه، د محلي سکريپټونو او مورفونو په کارولو سره داخلي کيږي او حتی په پټه توګه د 'سيمه ايز' په توګه 'تيريږي'. دا په بنسټيز ډول د بېلابېلو او څو ژبو شاليدونو(پس منظرونو) څخه د څېړونکو لپاره خورا مهمې ارټيا غوښتنه کوي ترڅو په 12 پيړۍ کې د انګليسي او نورو غير غالب ژبو رول ښه پوهيدو لپاره يوځای کار وکړي.

کليدي ټکي

انګليسي دګډې ژبې په توګه؛ د ژېپوهنې منظره، نړيواله انګليسي، ژبارې، هسک توپير

1 | INTRODUCTION

For various historical, socio-political, and economic reasons, English has established itself as arguably the most prominent and powerful language around the world (Bolton, 2012; Bolton & Jenks, 2022; Crystal, 1997, 2004; Kachru, 1992; Kirkpatrick, 2021; Pandey, 2020). Despite the previous (inglorious) history as language of colonialism and military conquest (Crystal, 2004), English now, for all intents and purposes, has become a bridge, making it possible for meaningful linguistic, cultural, civilisational, ideational, commercial, and technological contacts to take place in our increasingly interconnected and (super)diverse world (Blommaert, 2013; Piller, 2018; Vertovec, 2007). To draw on the wisdom of the English writer George Orwell, it is fair to say that all languages are equal but "some are more equal than others" (Orwell, 1945). This is particularly the case for English. The dominant role of English has generated keen interest from scholars from different perspectives, resulting in several relatively distinct yet related lines of research. These include world Englishes (WE), global Englishes, English as a lingua franca, English as the medium of instruction, English for specific purposes, English for Academic Purposes, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, and Teaching English as a Foreign Language. Despite the different foci, they all point to the dominance and juggernaut of English for various communicative, educational, institutional, socio-political, commercial, and symbolic purposes. A reasonable command of the language, no doubt, can afford various kinds of capital. The English language is also widely perceived as a symbol of modernity, development, progress, liberalism, and sophistication.

In addition to studies that look at English from a formal, normative, idealised, and prescriptivist perspective and studies focusing on the teaching aspects of the language, etc., World Englishes (WE) has gradually established itself as a major approach to studying the role, historical development, and current relevance of the language in a contextualised and glocalised manner (Bolton & Jenks, 2022; Crystal, 1997; Kachru, 1992; Kirkpatrick, 2021). WE is particularly interested in establishing how English has become indigenised and taken on local flavours in an array of geographical, socio-political, cultural, and ethnolinguistic contexts through language contact. So far, scholars have, *inter alia*, explored and foregrounded different regional varieties and versions of English in both outer-circle and expanding-circle societies. That is, scholars have explored English used in post-colonial societies such as India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, and Nigeria (cf. Bao, 1995; Götz, 2022; Kachru, 1992; Mesthrie, 2019; Pandey, 2020; Poon, 2006) and also English used in places without historical ties with the English-speaking world but are relatively recently exposed to the language due to globalisation (e.g., China, Russia, Poland, and Brazil).

However, so far, whether it is WE or other approaches to English, attention has been mostly paid to English understood in a conventional/traditional sense, that is, the spoken English(es) and notably written English(es) in the Latin alphabet. However, these existent approaches have not yet explored another emerging and increasingly pervasive variety of world "English" that involves English becoming localised in local languages in an inter-scriptal fashion. It is especially salient when English is camouflaged in seemingly "exotic" and historically and linguistically distant, if not diametrically different, languages such as Arabic, Urdu, Hindi, and Thai (which embody different religious beliefs and sociocultural worldviews). That is, for various reasons, in (post)colonial and/or globalised societies and beyond, English is routinely transliterated into local languages using local scripts/alphabets at lexical, phrasal, and even sentential levels, thus making significant inroads into and threatening the status of other non-dominant languages at least as far as linguistic purism is concerned. This also blurs the boundaries between formally defined languages.

While a few individual studies have mentioned this relatively recent phenomenon of English transliterated into other languages/scripts largely in passing (e.g., Gu & Almanna, 2023; Mahmood et al., 2021; Manan et al., 2017), there is a lack of overall conceptualisation and theoretical treatment of this emerging trend. To bridge this gap, the research objective of this conceptual paper is to provide some conceptual explorations and help theorise the aforementioned situation whereby English in our increasingly dynamic, super-diverse (Blommaert, 2013; Piller, 2018), and globalised world is often disguised in seemingly exotic and inscrutable local scripts/alphabets and even passes off as a local language surreptitiously. We coined the term "transliterated globalisation", to capture and better theorise this relatively novel and fascinating phenomenon potentially with far-reaching ramifications. In this article, this conceptualisation is further explained and elaborated upon in depth, taking a linguistic landscape (LL) perspective (cf. Ben-Rafael et al., 2006; Landry & Bourhis, 1997; Spolsky & Cooper, 1991) and using real-world examples taken from South Asia and South Asian communities worldwide. We also attempt to explore the underlying reasons behind this phenomenon. Its implications and ramifications for areas such as WE, (socio)linguistics, and applied linguistics are also discussed.

2 | TRANSLITERATED GLOBALISATION: BETWEEN MONOLINGUALISM AND BILINGUALISM

Our world is shaped by globalisation. Our interconnected and increasingly globalised world has witnessed accelerated business, commercial, cultural, ideational, educational, technological, and linguistic contacts at multiple levels. Undoubtedly, there are multiple dimensions to globalisation, covering such areas as politics, economy, language, culture, and people-to-people contact. Sometimes, the plural form "globalisations" is used by scholars to indicate the complexity of globalisation and often the existence of multiple globalisations (cf. Ben-Rafael & Ben-Rafael, 2018). There are high-end globalisation and also low-end globalisation (Mathews, 2007), with Hong Kong's Chungking Mansions, Guangzhou's Xiaobei (Gu, 2024), Bangkok's Soi Arab, and Dubai's Dragon Mart and "Chinatown" (Gu, 2023c) being examples of the latter. Also, there is neoliberal globalisation (Manan & Hajar, 2022), amongst others. However, a main thread across all globalisation(s) involves language, without which any meaningful globalisation is impossible. To meet the pressing communication needs, our world is increasingly reliant on English, the unchallenged global *lingua franca*. Parallel to this, translation of various kinds is also a necessity and a fact of life. Our increasingly multilingual world and increasingly superdiverse 21st century (urban) spaces are vital translation zones (Cronin & Simon, 2014; Gu & Almanna, 2023), pointing to translational landscapes (Song, 2023).

As discussed and demonstrated in more detail later, our world is also notably a transliterated space in an era of globalisation, where sound is increasingly prioritised over meaning and function (cf. Gu & Almanna, 2023). The ubiquity of the practice arguably represents a challenge to many traditional and old-school translation theories advocating faithfulness, accuracy, and equivalence. In this conceptual paper, we focus on the (cross)linguistic or inter-scriptal aspect of globalisation. More specially, we highlight the "transliterated" aspect of the process, arguing that in many cases, globalisation is done through transliteration across different languages and scripts. That is, between resorting only to English monolingualism and employing (bilingual) translation in a strict and purist sense, there is an emerging and

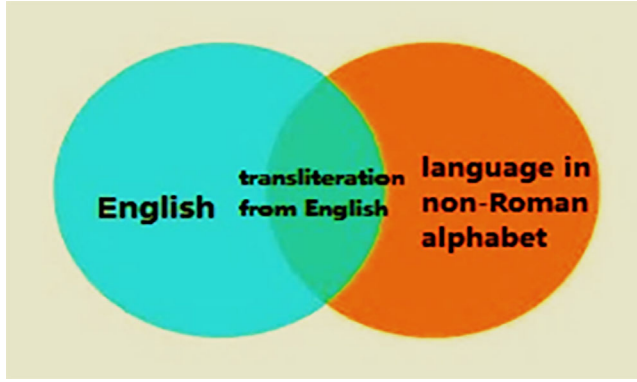

FIGURE 1 Transliteration from English into non-Roman script/alphabet. [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

increasingly visible trend we call "transliterated globalisation" as practiced and enacted on different places' LLs (cf. later sections for examples taken from LLs relating to South Asia and South Asian communities globally). We advance this idea/concept of "transliterated globalisation" to aptly describe and capture such an observed phenomenon that, in our globalised world, names (e.g., from Western contexts) are often transliterated phonetically into local languages in an inter-scriptal way, rather than translated semantically in a traditional and purist sense. This is often not simply due to the existence of lexical gaps but is a result of a complex interplay of various historical, socio-political, pragmatic, practical, psychological, and symbolic reasons (Gu & Almanna, 2023). Transliterating English words, expressions, and even sentences partially or in full into local languages using local scripts, alphabets, or characters is increasingly a common practice in post-colonial and/or diverse societies. This might be understood as a kind of (re)contextualisation or glocalisation to adapt English to local languages/scripts. This ultimately gives rise to multiscriptal English, beyond the taken-for-granted Latin script.

The widespread transliterated use of English in non-Roman scripts is no doubt a relatively new kind of beast, surfacing only in recent decades with the deepening of globalisation. That is, over the past few decades, many societies have been faced with the need for metamorphosis. This has involved a transition from former colonies or a semi-colonial status to independence, which has also more or less coincided with the broader context of globalisation. As such, when confronted with the Western and the foreign as part of the globalisation process, in many cases, transliteration has effectively become an unthinking coping strategy and a knee-jerk reaction for communication. Without a doubt, this adds new linguistic texture to different places' existing linguistic ecology. As we shall see later, the transliterated use of language (from English into local languages) is a growing trend that is *de rigueur* in many societies. This new type of language use is not easily comprehensible and/or is sometimes not welcomed by locals, for example, in the Middle East context as discussed by Al Agha (2006) and Gu and Almanna (2023).

The inherently complex and ambiguous nature of this relatively new genre of language use gives rise to a sense of hybridity, non-belonging, and borderline-ness (see Figure 1). Indeed, this represents a curious scenario that is arguably somewhere in between directly using English and relying on formal translation in a strict sense, thus blurring the traditional boundaries between formally defined languages in a purist sense (e.g., Arabic and English, Thai and English, Urdu and English).

This phenomenon raises many issues and is thought-provoking as far as sociolinguistics and applied linguistics are concerned. For example, this begs the question of whether this should be understood as a new type of local language or a new genre of world English. Also, if neo-colonialism is a new and benign-looking kind of colonialism, the fact that English has infiltrated and become disguised as local languages in local scripts might be understood as a material and concrete manifestation of the continuous yet seemingly innocuous and taken-for-granted (one-way) influence and hegemony of the English-speaking countries and the West in general. However, such infiltration of English into

non-dominant local languages often appears under the veneer of globalisation and modernity. The pervasive strategy of transliteration is most salient and fascinating when distant languages in seemingly incompatible scripts converge and merge into a new form. As we know, the use of a script is often associated with certain religious beliefs, socio-cultural worldviews, and political ideologies. For Pandharipande (2006), the use of script notably plays a central role in indexing religious and sociocultural identity. For example, the Perso-Arabic script is often connected with Islam and its associated religious beliefs, the use of which may evince a sense of traditional, religious, and Muslim identity (cf. Coluzzi, 2022). Similarly, the use of the Devanagari script may, for instance, point to a pan-South Asian Hindu identity (Pandharipande, 2006). From this perspective, transliterating English into local languages using impenetrably "mysterious" and inscrutable local scripts gives rise to new identities sandwiched between the "local and traditional" and the "foreign, global, and international". To some extent, the existence of and preference for such a transliteration strategy in parts of the world ultimately also lead to "transliterated bilingualism" and "transliterated multilingualism", as opposed to "true" bilingualism and multilingualism in a traditional sense (the juxtaposition of "pure" versions in different languages). Figures 3–6 are but some examples out of many that are related to transliterated bilingualism/multilingualism and transliterated globalisation.

3 | LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE AND WORLD ENGLISHES

In this section, the potentially close connections between LL and WE research are explored. As an interdisciplinary line of research, LL constitutes a relatively new approach to multilingualism (Gorter, 2006; Spolsky & Cooper, 1991) that is embedded in sociolinguistics and applied linguistics. LL represents a defining feature of the urban fabric, which is made up of a web of multiple meaning-making items and activities. For Landry and Bourhis (1997), LL research focuses on the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given place. A place's linguistic and semiotic landscape is just like a canvas, which is jointly created and shaped by the locale's language policies, linguistic attitudes and ideologies, and sociolinguistic realities. From this perspective, the "presence (or absence) of language displays in the public space communicates a message, intentional or not" (Shohamy, 2006, p. 110). LL data from different contexts might be understood as "corpora" that contain authentic naturally occurring language use, an examination of which can index and shed light on the broader socio-political, cultural, institutional, and ethnolinguistic aspects of our dynamic and constantly changing world. There are, according to Ben-Rafael et al. (2006), top-down signage and bottom-up signage in the LL of our society.

Interdisciplinary in nature and positioned at the junction of sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, sociology, language policy and planning, linguistic anthropology, demographics, geography, tourism, marketing, urban studies, religious studies, semiotics, typography, and translation studies, a place's LL represents a socially shaped and socially shaping "discourse", providing telling signs that index the socio-political, economic, demographic, ethnolinguistic, ideological, and cultural dimensions of that very locale. For around two decades, a large number of articles, chapters, and books have been published in the area. In 2015, *Linguistic Landscape: An International Journal* was founded. This is an international journal dedicated to LL scholarship, an important milestone for the area. Over the years, LL researchers have explored such issues as language ideology, language maintenance, identity, minority languages, ethnolinguistic vitality, and public health communication (Blommaert, 2013; Coluzzi, 2022; Gu, 2022; Gu, 2023a, 2023b; Landry & Bourhis, 1997) in different geographical and socio-political contexts (Gu, 2023c; Gu, 2024; Hopkyns & van den Hoven, 2022; Huebner, 2006; Lavender, 2020; Lee, 2022; Manan et al., 2017; Taylor-Leech, 2012).

While the ties between LL, WE, and English in general might not seem immediately obvious at first glance, there is considerable overlap between these areas. For instance, Bolton (2012) elaborates on the potentially close relationship between WE and LL; for him, LL research is of direct relevance to the English language and more specifically WE on different levels in our world today. So far, several empirical studies have focused on the (growing) presence and/or dominance of English in various places' LLs (Alomoush, 2023; Foster & Welsh, 2021; Huebner, 2006; Manan & Hajar, 2022; Nikolaou, 2017; Rowland, 2016; Zhang, Tupas, & Norhaida, 2020) and broader linguistic ecologies in general

(Boyle, 2011) over the recent one–two decades. The localities examined are mostly countries or regions belonging to the outer circle and expanding circle, according to Kachru's (1992) influential three concentric circles model.

These studies, however, have largely examined the prominence and visibility of English per se in the Latin script and have often failed to sufficiently and directly explore the dynamic relationship between English and other languages from a comparative and "translation" perspective (cf. Gu & Almanna, 2023). Also, while these studies have more or less pointed to globalisation as a major driving force, they have not elaborated on or characterised the precise nature of this globalisation. This, for instance, highlights the crucial need to explore the relationship(s) between English and other less dominant languages (written in other scripts) to tease out issues of translational practices, power differentials, language policies, language attitudes, language ideologies, etc., and better understand how English dynamically interacts with, impacts on, and even makes inroads into other languages against a backdrop of socio-political and historical changes. To this end, this article zooms in on and advances the concepts of "transliterated globalisation" and "transliterated multilingualism". Characterising and conceptualising globalisation and multilingualism as often being (phonetically) transliterated in nature (notably from the powerful and hegemonic English into local languages/scripts), this article highlights the instrumental role of transliteration (as opposed to translation in a strict, narrow, pure, and idealised sense) in the making of 21st century LLs.

4 | DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Having discussed the idea of "transliterated globalisation" and "transliterated multilingualism" at a conceptual and theoretical level and argued for the importance of LL as a vital site to observe the power relations between languages, we aim to flesh out and shed further empirical light on the concepts using real-world examples extracted from the LLs of South Asia and South Asian communities globally (see Section 5). We demonstrate how traces of English may be disguised and camouflaged in other languages phonetically and in an inter-scriptal fashion. The illustrative examples discussed in this article are from photographic data collected by the authors from different locales where they have lived, worked, studied in, and travelled to over the past 10 years. The locales and the communities covered here (e.g., India, Pakistan, Nepal, the United Kingdom, Hong Kong SAR, and Singapore) are mostly multilingual, superdiverse, and/or (post)colonial societies, which are also faced with the recent trend of globalization, the neoliberal ideology, and the juggernaut of English. These diverse places constitute exciting, fertile, and complex language contact situations for new language experiment and exploration, thus making it possible for unprecedented linguistic creativity.

In collecting the data, a general approach of "walking ethnography" (Gu, 2024; Hopkyns & van den Hoven, 2022), commonly adopted for similar LL-oriented research, was taken, where the researchers documented LL data using a good camera. Given the more conceptual nature of the article and the illustrative nature of the analysis, this generic approach was deemed adequate. That is, rather than focusing on one city in great depth, we believe that we can shed more light upon and give a more convincing idea of the pervasive nature of the phenomenon in question by presenting and qualitatively analysing documented LL data across various South Asian languages (e.g., Hindi, Nepali, Urdu, and Tamil) from multiple geographical locales (e.g., India, Pakistan, Nepal, the United Kingdom, Hong Kong SAR, and Singapore), drawing on the authors' combined linguistic repertoires. This in itself constitutes a kind of triangulation and can lend credence, coherence, and significance to the data analysis and discussion.

5 | DISCUSSIONS WITH ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES CONCERNING SOUTH ASIAN LANGUAGES

Having provided information about the data collected and the methodology adopted, detailed examples are discussed to illustrate our point, with a focus on South Asian languages. South Asia is a dynamic and highly diverse region that was to varying degrees influenced by British colonialism (current-day India and Pakistan, etc., were part of the British

empire and Nepal in effect was more or less a semi-colony influenced by the British empire). As a result, English has had an important place in the region, and South Asian languages have also been influenced by English. For historical and socio-economic reasons, South Asian communities can be found around the world (e.g., in the Gulf region, Southeast Asia, East and South Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia). So far, much of WE scholarship has been dedicated to South Asia (cf. Kachru, 1992; Mesthrie, 2019), focusing on the historical dimensions and the unique features of different South Asian Englishes, etc. Yet, English localised and transliterated into local South Asian languages/scripts has been relatively underexplored in LL and sociolinguistic research, despite its visible presence. Some of the very few LL studies include Manan et al. (2017) and Mahmood et al. (2021), which explore how English has been transliterated in Pakistan's LLs in the form of Urduised English, for instance, in the Perso-Arabic script (e.g., Nastaliq style).

As we shall see in this section in more detail, the observed phenomenon of English being transliterated and passing off as South Asian language(s) is highly visible in the LLs in South Asian countries (e.g., India, Pakistan, and Nepal) and also in the LLs of major global cities (e.g.. in Hong Kong, Manchester, and Singapore) featuring significant South Asian diasporic communities. This is a rather widespread (socio)linguistic phenomenon involving such languages as Urdu, Hindi, Nepali, and Tamil. In other words, there is mounting evidence to suggest that in our globalised world, there is a pervasive tendency for English to be phonetically rendered into local scripts/alphabets either in a wholesale manner or partially, often as opposed to the presumed process of translation in a strict, traditional, formal, and purist sense. As such, the all-powerful English often makes substantive inroads into and becomes glocalised and indigenised as local languages in a way that English surreptitiously morphs into seemingly inscrutable, "mysterious", and impenetrable local languages using non-Roman scripts—languages that conventionally might be considered by outsiders as exotic, traditional, conservative, and "pure".

For ease of illustration, where possible, the concrete empirical examples documented are arranged mostly in the order of Pakistan and Pakistani communities overseas, Nepal, India and Indian communities overseas. As the following examples will show, English often has a dominant presence, appearing in the form of (1) English in the Latin script and/or simultaneously (2) in a local script (e.g., the Perso-Arabic script or Devanagari script). In the latter, English effectively passes off as a local language in local scripts. Arguably, for brand names originally available in English or other foreign languages (e.g., Starbucks, McDonald's, Rolex, Microsoft, Twitter, WHSmith, and Chanel), the use of (inter-scriptal) transliteration is more than justified partly because of a lack of existing equivalents and partly to retain the original flavours and foreignness (Gu & Almanna, 2023).

What is particularly worthy of attention is that the employment of transliteration often has nothing to do with the existence of a lexical gap between different languages. What is more striking and fascinating is that many local businesses tend to come up with English names and their corresponding versions in local languages are often transliterated from the English versions. Therefore, as we shall see later, because of the extensive inter-scriptal phonetic transliteration from English, local languages such as Urdu, Hindi, and Nepali tend to play second fiddle and are only represented in the sense that local scripts are used. Such linguistic practices seemingly weaken the local languages on different levels, resulting in a diluted sense of local identity.

5.1 | English transliterated into urdu script in Pakistan and Pakistani communities' LLs

The phenomenon of transliterating English into Urdu in the Perso-Arabic script, as alluded to earlier, is documented as a salient feature in recent years in Pakistan (Mahmood et al., 2021; Manan et al., 2017). For instance, in an empirical study, Manan et al. (2017) found the pervasiveness of linguistic transliteration to suggest how local LL actors improvise this strategy to make signboards more readable and appealing to the local population, particularly those who are not fully literate in the English language. The authors refer to linguistic improvisation and innovation as a two-way manipulation involving an "Urduised English" and an "Englishised Urdu". To illustrate this (Figure 2), a signboard features the name of a government organization called "PROVINCIAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY". The seemingly

FIGURE 2 PROVINCIAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY transliterated into Urdu script. [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

local name in Urdu (prwanshl diizastr miiniijmnt atharti) is phonetically transliterated from English into the local script.

Instead of using an English version (in Latin script), the sign employs only its corresponding transliteration in the Perso-Arabic script. This may be termed a mono-scriptal billboard with a single script on display. It suggests as if it uses words from a local rather than a foreign language, that is, English. The study also views the interface of a local and a global language as "glocalisation" because, as the data suggest, English permeates deeply the signage as well as public discourses, albeit in local ways and forms. Thus, the transliteration strategy serves a useful pragmatic purpose as it converges and merges a foreign language and a foreign script such as Latin into a local and a readable script, rendering it accessible to the local users/clients.

In a similar study, Mahmood et al. (2021) studied the LL of district Nowshera in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The study also found the pervasive featuring of what has been described as "transliterated multilingualism", which alluded to a visual conversion of sentences and terms constructed in one orthography to their corresponding characters in another orthography. Such style refers to writing that employs other language letters or alphabets by maintaining the original language pronunciation. In this strategy, sentences appear to be in one language, yet they incorporate lexical terms from another language. The strategies found were described as "Englishised Pashto" and "Urduised English". The study concluded that "there is a clear correlation between English lexical elements and multilingual signs in Pakistan and the local multilingual signs overwhelmingly transliterate English lexical terms" (Mahmood et al., 2021, p. 793). Table 1 provides a few examples of transliteration from the above two studies.

This and many other such examples demonstrate how local users appropriate English in localised ways and how such interlacing with the local languages and cross-lingual practices offer significant theoretical and analytical insights into the current debates on the "sociolinguistics of globalization" (Blommaert, 2010) and WE.

In addition to Pakistan, this phenomenon is also visible in Urdu written in the LLs of areas and districts featuring (significant) Pakistani diasporic communities overseas (e.g., in the United Kingdom, the United States, Malaysia, and China's Hong Kong SAR). This is partly a carrying-over of the linguistic practice in Pakistan to Pakistani communities overseas. For illustrative purposes, a few examples taken from Manchester and Hong Kong are discussed.

TABLE 1 More examples of English transliterated into Urdu script.

English	Urdu Transliteration (Perso-Arabic script)
Community health centre	کمیونٹی ہیلتھ سینٹر
Government technical and vocational centre	گورنمنٹ ٹیکنیکل اینڈ ووکیشنل سینٹر
Provincial disaster management authority	پروانشل ڈیزاسٹر مینیجمنٹ اتھارٹی
Bright star English grammar school	برایٹ سٹار انگلش گرایمر سکول
Salam paper and stationary mart	سلام پیپر اینڈ سٹیشنری مارٹ
Noor digital photographer and photostate	نور ڈیجیٹل فوٹوگرافر اینڈ فوٹوسٹیٹ
Madina Electric Store	مدینہ الیکٹرک سٹور
Flora icecream	فلورا آیسکریم
Zain propoerty dealers and commision agents	زین پراپرٹی ڈیلرز اینڈ کمیشن ایجنٹس
Karwan money changer	کاروان منی چینجر
Ali hardware shop	علی ہارڈویر شاپ

FIGURE 3 English partially/fully transliterated into Urdu script in Manchester (UK). [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

First, let us have a look at a few top-down and bottom-up signs in Manchester, a city in Northwest England with a significant British Pakistani population. These signs (Figure 3) were photographed in Manchester's Rusholme, Longsight, and Cheetham Hill Road and adjacent districts. These areas feature significant Pakistani and other Muslim communities and a range of ethnic businesses. In the first sign in Figure 3, top-down information about the Consulate General of Pakistan (which is enacted by the Pakistani government) can be found in both English and Urdu. The sign in Urdu is written in the exquisite, sophisticated, and "exotic"-looking Nastaliq style, which is a calligraphic style using the Perso-Arabic script commonly used for writing languages such as Persian and Urdu. One-to-one equivalents can be seen between the "Urdu" version (phonetically: qunsliit jnrl aaf pakstaan) and its corresponding English version (consulate

FIGURE 4 English partially/fully transliterated into Urdu script in Hong Kong (China). [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

general of Pakistan), and arguably all the words in Urdu are transliterated from English in a wholesale manner. This applies both to proper nouns and formal names (e.g., "Consulate General" and "Pakistan") and the word "of" which indicates grammatical function. A similar phenomenon can be found in the sign relating to "Pakistani Community Centre". Again all the words in Urdu پاکستانی کمیونٹی سینٹر (pakstaani kmiiunti siintr) are transliterated from the English version "Pakistani Community Centre".

In addition to these more top-down/formal signs found in Manchester, the strategy is also more commonly seen in smaller businesses relating to the Pakistani community in the city. In the last two bottom-up signs in Figure 3, the phenomenon is also well documented. In the sign "Special LAHORI KULFI", the English word "special" is directly rendered phonetically into Urdu. Similarly, in the last sign for "SADDIQUE HALAL MEAT", corresponding to the English version "halal meat", the Urdu version is phonetically represented as حلال میٹ ("halal meet"). Unrelated to colonialism and the recent trend of globalisation, meat without doubt is not something new but something that has been consumed by people for centuries. Nevertheless, a transliterated version of the English word "meat" is used, despite the existence of the "pure" and more authentic Urdu word "gosht" (گوشت) for designating "meat". These examples are by no means exceptions but are more or less the common norm found in Pakistani communities in Manchester and the UK in general.

In addition, this linguistic phenomenon can also be visibly found in Urdu signs in Hong Kong's LL. Currently a Special Administrative Region of China since 1997, Hong Kong was formerly a UK colony with historical ties with the Indian subcontinent (e.g., current-day India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh). In Hong Kong, the Pakistani communities and other South Asians in general can be found in Tsim Sha Tsui, Yau Ma Tei, Jordan, Sham Shui Po, and other areas. These bottom-up signs (Figure 4) in English and Urdu are taken from small businesses run by Urdu-speaking Muslims in Hong Kong. In all of the signs, the information in Urdu tends to be Urduised English rendered directly from the English versions "ROYAL HALAL FOOD", "PAKISTAN FOOD STORE", "PAKISTAN CLUB", "Best Quality Grocery" phonetically. In other words, to outsiders, what appear to be exotic, inscrutable, and even religious/Islam-related words in the Perso-Arabic script are merely English disguised and camouflaged in a different writing system. In most of these cases, the transliteration strategy is not necessarily due to lexical gaps. For example, in the first shop sign "ROYAL HALAL FOOD", obvious common words do exist in proper Urdu. For example, "شاھی" (shaahi) is the common word for "royal" in Urdu. Similarly, کھانا (khana) is the common Urdu word for "food". In the last sign (blue background), بیسٹ کوالٹی گروسری (or "beest kwaliti groosri") is used, which is simply a wholesale phonetic representation of "best-quality grocery" in English. This is despite the existence of many authentic words in Urdu to indicate a sense of excellence, superbness, and high quality.

5.2 | English transliterated into Nepali in LLs in Nepal and beyond

Similarly, English has also made appreciable inroads into the LL in Nepal (Pandey, 2020) on different levels. Similar to the case of Urdu, English is also often disguised in the local script. That is, under the veneer of the Devanagari script used to write Nepali (which seemingly indicates a Hindu and South Asian identity), many signs turn out to be English fully or partially transliterated into the local script. This is evidenced in numerous settings and contexts in Kathmandu (cf. Figure 5), ranging from reasonably sized banks, hospitals, educational institutions, to small businesses. For example, in नेपाल स्टक एक्सचेन्ज लिमिटेड (Nepal Stock Exchange Limited), नेपाल बैंक लिमिटेड (Nepal Bank Limited), ग्राण्डी सिटी हस्पिटल (Grande City Hospital), and पब्लिक यूथ क्यामपस (Public Youth Campus), essentially the same information is written in English and also phonetically in the local script (Nepali). Admittedly, some words may be attributable to a lack of relevant terms in Nepali. However, in most cases, this is not due to lexical gaps but constitutes a seemingly deliberate attempt to directly transliterate the English information in a mechanical and automatic way to arrive at a convenient "Nepali" version. This, therefore, points to the omnipresence of English in Nepal's LL in various forms in overt and covert ways, hence a kind of (re)contextualisation or glocalisation to adapt English to local languages/scripts. This is fascinating as distant languages in seemingly incompatible scripts have converged and merged into a new form, thus giving rise to a hybridised variety and identity. This is often taken for granted and appears under the veneer of globalisation and modernity. The same trend is also widely seen in Hong Kong's Jordan and Yau Ma Tei, which are areas with significant Nepali and South Asian populations.

5.3 | English transliterated into India's LLs and LLs relating to Indian communities overseas

Let us now look at the Indian context, which adds to the mounting evidence of the transliterated and glocalised use of English and contributes to the idea of multiscriptal English. Due to its colonial history and also the trend of globalisation, India has also been profoundly influenced by the English language in numerous ways, where English has had a long-standing presence in the country for centuries. Similar to the situations discussed before, the juggernaut of English in India manifests itself in the direct use of English (e.g., instructional and informational signs in English) and also more notably English passing off as local languages in multiple local scripts. The latter scenario gives rise to multiscriptal English. This phenomenon is widely observable in many Indian languages including Indo-Aryan languages (e.g., Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali) and Dravidian languages (e.g., Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam). There are too many examples of this. This is illustrated in Figure 6, which contains three multilingual signs. The first two signs are quadrilingual in Hindi, English, Punjabi, and Urdu found in Delhi, whereas the last sign (bottom) is trilingual in English, Bengali, and Urdu in Kolkata. In all the three signs, despite the different alphabets/scripts used, all the information is transliterated phonetically based on the versions in English. For example, as illustrated in the last sign, the Bengali (লেডিস্ পার্ক) and Urdu (لیڈیز پارک) versions are both phonetic representations of the English version "LADIES PARK". These point to the dominance of English in influencing other languages in different scripts in the Indian context.

In addition to this general discussion, given the limited space, further bilingual examples are briefly provided to illustrate how English has been glocalised/embedded in the local scripts and has become taken for granted as a genuine local language, focusing on Mumbai, Delhi, and Madras/Chennai (cf. Tables 2–4).

Having discussed the tendency of transliterating English into local languages in India, it is worth noting that the same phenomenon is also seen in Indian communities overseas, for example, in China's Hong Kong SAR, Malaysia, and Singapore. In multilingual, multicultural, and post-colonial Singapore, for example, the South Indian language Tamil being directly transliterated from English is a pervasive sight in place names and LL in and around the city's mass rapid transit system. Figure 7 illustrates a few station names available in multilingual versions in Singapore. Given Singapore's colonial history as a British colony, many/most multilingual versions are based on the English versions. These examples vividly show the predominance and power of English in a multilingual society like Singapore on different

TABLE 2 Examples of English transliterated into Hindi/Marathi in Mumbai's linguistic landscape.

English names	Hindi/Marathi names in Devanagari script (transliterations from English)
Ministry of Tourism, Government of India	मिनिस्ट्री ऑफ टुरिझम, गव्हर्नमेंट ऑफ इंडिया
Standard Chartered Bank	स्टँडर्ड चार्टर्ड बँक
Flora fountain	फ्लोरा फाउंटन
Woodside Inn	वुडसाइड इन
Fountain Sizzlers	फाउंटन सिजलर्स
OnePlus Exclusive Service Center	वनप्लस एक्सक्लुसिव्ह सर्विस सेंटर
Cooperage Football Ground	कूपरेज फुटबॉल ग्राउंड
Military Engineer Services	मिलिटरी इंजीनियर सर्विसेस
Times Of India Building	टाइम्स ऑफ इंडिया बिल्डिंग
Reliance Digital	रिलायन्स डिजिटल
New National Market	न्यू नॅशनल मार्केट
Asian Heart Institute	एशियन हार्ट इन्स्टिट्यूट
Grand Hyatt Mumbai Hotel & Residences	ग्रँड हयात मुंबई हॉटेल & रेसिडेन्सेस
Air India Sports Club	एअर इंडिया स्पोर्ट्स क्लब
Everest Grande	एव्हरेस्ट ग्रान्ड

TABLE 3 Examples of English transliterated into Hindi in Delhi's linguistic landscape.

English names	Hindi names in Devanagari script (transliterations from English)
Delhi Public Library	दिल्ली पब्लिक लाइब्रेरी
Sulabh International Museum Of Toilets	सुलभ इंटरनेशनल म्यूज़ियम ऑफ़ टॉयलेट्स
Vishal Mega Mart	विशाल मेगा मार्ट
All India Institute of Medical Sciences	ऑल इंडिया इंस्टिट्यूट ऑफ़ मेडिकल साइंसेस
South Extension I	साउथ एक्सटेंशन।
Delhi Golf Club	दिल्ली गोल्फ क्लब
Museum of Illusions	म्यूज़ियम ऑफ़ इल्यूज़न्स्
Delhi Gate	दिल्ली गेट
Dental Council of India	डेंटल काउंसिल ऑफ इंडिया
Delhi By Cycle Meeting Point	दिल्ली बाय साइकिल मीटिंग पॉइंट
Ashif Department Store	आशिफ डिपार्टमेंट स्टोर
Ivory Mart Jewellers	आइवरी मार्ट ज्वैलर्स
Jain Girls' Senior Secondary School	जैन गर्ल्स सीनियर सेकेंडरी स्कूल
Factory Club	फैक्ट्री क्लब
Old Delhi Railway Parcel Office	पुरानी दिल्ली रेलवे पार्सल ऑफिस
Connaught Place	कनॉट प्लेस
Central Park	सेंट्रल पार्क

FIGURE 5 English partially/fully transliterated into Nepali script in Kathmandu (Nepal). [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

levels. The Malay versions are often identical to English because of the same Latin script used. Malay versions are thus mostly embodied in the English versions. Also, in all of the cases in Figure 7, the Tamil versions are phonetically transliterated from their English counterparts (cf. Table 5). As such, understanding these "Tamil" versions presumes some knowledge of English. In comparison, the Chinese versions tend to involve meaningful information and are more informative (rather than just indicating the "sound").

FIGURE 6 Three multilingual signs featuring English and English transliterated into local languages in India. [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

TABLE 4 Examples of English transliterated into Tamil in Madras or Chennai's linguistic landscape.

English version	Tamil version (transliterated from English)
CHENNAI CITI CENTRE	சென்னை சிட்டி சென்டர்
Indian Overseas Bank	இந்தியன் ஓவர்சீஸ் வங்கி
New Woodlands Hotel	நியூ உட்லண்ட்ஸ் ஹோட்டல்
The Summer House Eatery	தி சம்மர் ஹவுஸ் ஈடேரி
Utopia World	யுட்டோபியா வேர்ல்ட்
The Residency Towers Chennai	தி ரெசிடன்சி டவர்ஸ் சென்னை
Happy Planet Service Apartment	ஹாப்பி பிளானட் சர்வீஸ் அபார்ட்மென்ட்
TNGF Cosmo Golf Club	TNGF காஸ்மோ கோல்ஃப் கிளப்
Absolute Homes	அப்சல்யூட் ஹோம்
Guindy Campus Central Office	கிண்டி கேம்பஸ் சென்ட்ரல் ஆபீஸ்
Modern Bread Company	மாடர்ன் பிரெட் கம்பனி
Cotton House	காட்டன் ஹவுஸ்

6 | TENTATIVE REASONS AND MOTIVATIONS BEHIND THE LINGUISTIC PHENOMENON

As illustrated earlier using real-world examples from the LLs of different regions and contexts, there is mounting documented evidence that a convenient or "lazy" inter-scriptal phonetic rendering approach is widely used as a go-to strategy to create a superficial, decorative, and less meaningful kind of "translation". This is increasingly the

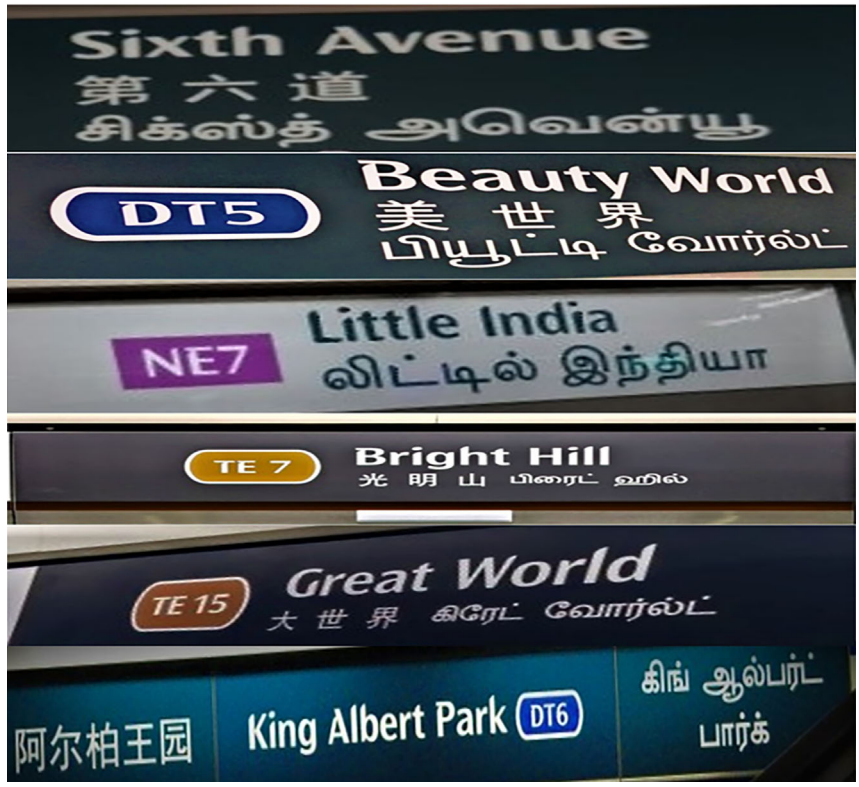

FIGURE 7 English transliterated into Tamil in Singapore's mass rapid transit (MRT) station names. [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

TABLE 5 Examples of English transliterated into Tamil in Singapore's mass rapid transit (MRT) station names.

சிக்ஸ்த் அவென்யூ (Cikst aveṉyū)	Sixth Avenue
பியூட்டி வோர்ல்ட் (Piyūṭṭi+vōrlṭ)	Beauty World
லிட்டில் இந்தியா (Liṭṭil intiyā)	Little India
பிரைட் ஹில் (Piraiṭ hil)	Bright Hill
கிரேட் வோர்ல்ட் (Kirēṭ vōrlṭ)	Great World
கிங் ஆல்பர்ட் பார்க் (Kiṅ ālparṭ pārk)	King Albert Park

rule rather than the exception, which is done through directly transliterating words and even expressions and sentences from English into other smaller and less powerful languages verbatim (e.g., Nepali, Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, and Bengali), even when existing semantic equivalents are readily available. In addition, this trend is also to varying degrees observed in other languages (e.g., Brunei Malay in the Jawi script, Korean, Japanese, Thai, Russian, and Arabic).

The reasons behind this linguistic phenomenon must be varied and complex and can potentially be explained by various historical, sociopolitical, psychological, and practical factors. One reason is that some of these languages developed and absorbed words from English during the colonial period. As a continuation of the previous era, many words gradually stuck around and became part of the language. Another possible reason is that in a globalised world borrowing words from English and rendering them into local scripts may be an easy strategy (e.g., iPhone, iPad, TikTok). If the

first two reasons are more or less to do with the lexical gap between languages, another important reason is that many language users think that English is cool, fashionable, global, and modern in post-colonial societies (cf. Coluzzi, 2022) and also in our globalised, neoliberal, and increasingly superdiverse world (Gu & Almanna, 2023; Manan & Hajar, 2022). Using English transliterated into local scripts may carry snob value and have significant marketability. This represents a conscious or unconscious internalisation of the hegemony of the all-powerful English and arguably even a kind of self-colonisation. Then, these linguistic practices have also been brought to different parts of the world by the diaspora communities (e.g., from Pakistan). In comparison, this phenomenon is less seen in languages such as Chinese, French, and Italian. For instance, in China, France, and Italy, sections of these societies have for various reasons expressed reservations, concerns, and even opposition to the rapid spread of English and its encroachment upon local languages and their linguistic ecologies (the fact that written Chinese does not use a phonetic system is also a reason why English has not made significant inroads into Chinese in comparison). Please see Gu and Almanna (2023), Hussain et al. (2022), and Manan et al. (2017) for more discussions or reflections on the possible reasons behind such interesting language use.

7 | DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

When confronted with the Western and the foreign as part of the globalisation process, in many cases, transliteration has effectively become an unthinking coping strategy and knee-jerk reaction for these (post)colonial and/or developing societies. Arguably, some of the uses of transliteration are justified and considered inevitable (e.g., brand names like Nike, Pepsi, iPhone, and McDonalds). However, in a considerable number of cases, the transliteration approach is adopted even when easy and obvious words exist in the local languages. More strikingly, it is not uncommon to see that many local businesses tend to come up with English/English-sounding names first and then transliterate these into the non-Roman scripts as their corresponding local names.

The employment of transliteration to render English into local languages/scripts is prominent in percentage terms in some of the world's (post)colonial societies, as backed up by Gu and Almanna (2023) and Manan et al. (2017). This highly visible trend is seemingly epidemic, which cuts across different societies. This linguistic practice curiously interweaves distant languages and divergent scripts, thereby permitting a dynamic intermingling and dialogue with each other to form a fascinating new variety. This new variety of language use simultaneously encapsulates the phonetic characteristics of English as well as the scriptal qualities of other local languages (e.g., Urdu/Hindi/Nepali). As such, such hybridized or localised varieties sound like English but read and look like local language(s).

Given the dynamic and changing nature of our (urban) LLs featuring countless signs that come and go, it is not realistic to know the exact percentage in all locations, or perhaps at the end of the day, the exact percentage is neither here nor there. The bottom line is that this is a prominent observed feature with mounting evidence documented in different locales and languages in post-colonial societies and/or against a backdrop of globalisation and language contacts. This points to the idea/concept of "transliterated globalisation" we advance, which vividly captures the phenomenon that in our globalised world there is this common trend for names (e.g., from Western contexts or otherwise) to be transliterated rather than translated in a formal and purist sense. This constitutes a challenge to the traditional view of translation and bilingual and multilingual communication, which conventionally focuses on conveying meaning faithfully and functionally. As discussed by Al Agha (2006) and Gu and Almanna (2023), transliterated language does not always make sense and there can sometimes be a low level of comprehension.

The coined term "transliterated globalisation" permits us to better characterise the nature of globalisation in our societies in the 21st century as far as LL is concerned. This linguistic phenomenon shows how the convenient and seemingly mechanical and "lazy" strategy of transliteration blurs the boundary between the (often) diametrically different and linguistically distant languages (e.g., English and Arabic, English and Urdu, or English and Hindi) in which different

religious ideologies and sociocultural beliefs are embedded and internalised. This therefore results in a scenario of hybridity and a sense of in-betweenness and non-belonging. The phenomenon discussed here has some overlaps with the concept of linguistic glocalisation (Gorter, 2006) and other terms such as Frenglish and Arabinglish in LL research (cf. Alomoush, 2023) yet is also different in various ways. Admittedly, these terms and concepts all involve creative language use and, to varying degrees, border crossing and boundary-blurring between languages. Also, English, the powerful language and global lingua franca, is often the one that makes inroads into other languages. However, glocalisation may be understood as a more general term, which can have multiple realisations and can involve the same script or different scripts. Frenglish and Arabinglish (cf. Alomoush, 2023) have more to do with creative code-mixing in advertising (e.g., blends, compounds, and affixed words). However, the phenomenon discussed here is more specific and arguably more extreme and radical, involving the often wholesale glocalisation and (re)contextualisation of words/expressions/sentences from one script into another script in an inter-scriptal fashion to form a linguistic unit phonetically.

In many ways, this boundary-blurring practice evidenced in transliterating represents a novel kind of local language, giving the local language a new foreign, global, and modern identity. While new identities can be created, the inter-scriptal rendering strategy, if excessively used, can lead to a dilution and even loss of existing linguistic, cultural, and civilisational identities. Arguably, this linguistic phenomenon also gives rise to a new and glocalised type of world English (in a different script). That is, WE may manifest itself in two ways. The first and the most obvious way concerns different indigenized and glocalised versions of English used in different parts of the world (e.g., in the spoken and written form). This represents the outward, ostensible, explicit, and taken-for-granted use and manifestation of world English(es). The other one, as demonstrated in this paper, is the implicit and seemingly innocuous use of English in various forms and at different levels, which may be hidden and disguised surreptitiously in other scripts. The latter scenario is equally worthy of attention in WE research as it saliently points to the influential nature of English and also the flexibility, adaptability, and, more importantly, the fragility and vulnerability of less powerful languages when faced with the juggernaut of English and the inexorable trend of globalisation. Language use is rarely a neutral act but one that is shaped and influenced by history, power, prevailing ideologies, the socioeconomic context, and the ethnolinguistic reality on the ground. The identified trend might be understood as a colonisation of people's minds, which is manifested in a seemingly benign and innocuous way. The linguistic phenomenon to some extent also begs the pertinent question as to what English is and what Hindi, Urdu, Nepali, Tamil, etc., are in the 21st century.

Given the conceptual nature of the paper, we are barely scratching the surface here. Going forward, more attention may be paid to exploring how the same English word may be localised in different scripts (or even in the same script) differently by different agents, how the transliteration strategy may be adopted in full or partially in a locale's LL, how the practices may be juxtaposed with or enhanced by various other multimodal elements in the meaning-making process, and what specific images and identities are being created through this linguistic practice. The linguistic phenomenon is relatively well documented in South Asia and the respective SA diaspora communities overseas. As such, more focused discussions on various other smaller languages from the East and Southeast Asian contexts (e.g., Japanese, Korean, and Thai) and the Middle East context and beyond might be useful and can help contribute to a more holistic picture of this topic. For example, Figure 8 is a "trilingual" restaurant sign written in English, Korean, and Thai, which is found in a restaurant in a grand shopping centre called ICONSIAM in modern Bangkok with many international brands. This sign is a typical case of transliterated globalisation and transliterated multilingualism. The English name "nice two Meat u" is a pun, which sounds like "nice to meet you" but also highlights that this is a restaurant that specialises in serving meat. Interestingly, the corresponding Korean version "나이스 투 미츄" (rough pronunciation: naiseu tu michyu) and the corresponding (seemingly marginalised) Thai version "ไนซ์ ทู มีท ยู" (rough pronunciation: ṇiṣ̣ṭhū mīth yū) in small font size (cf. Huebner, 2006; Gu, 2023c for the idea of "small-print multilingualism") are transliterated from the hegemonic and powerful English. However, the smart wordplay in English is somewhat "lost" in transliteration. Similarly, in Figure 9, the multilingual sign (top) in English, Japanese, and Chinese concerns the shuttle bus service connecting centralwOrld and CENTRAL VILLAGE. Notably, the Japanese version "アウトレットシャ

FIGURE 8 English transliterated into other scripts (e.g., Korean and Thai) beyond South Asian languages. [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

FIGURE 9 English transliterated into other scripts (e.g., Japanese) beyond South Asian languages. [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

トルバスサービス" (rough pronunciation: autorēto shatoru basu sābisu) is simply transliterated from "outlet shuttle bus service". Similarly, in the multilingual sign (Figure 9 bottom), the transliteration strategy is also prominent, where service names such as "Thai massage" and "oil massage" are directly transliterated into Japanese from English. These are but a few examples to illustrate the pervasive nature of the transliteration strategy visible in a range of languages and scripts in the 21st century today beyond South Asian ones. These merit more systematic exploration going forward.

Positioned at the intersection between LL, sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, translation studies, and WE, this topic is essentially interdisciplinary. Given the interdisciplinary and multilingual nature of this topic, this article also calls on researchers in WE and (socio)linguistics in general to look beyond English written in the Latin script in a conventional/traditional sense and to expand the scope and remit of WE research to explore how English, as a dominant code, becomes indigenized using local scripts and morphs into and even "passes off" as "local" surreptitiously. This observed language use offers a solid theoretical grounding for concerned scholars/researchers to re-contextualize as well as reconceptualise WE from the prism of such inter-scriptal rendering and glocalisation. Going from

"monolingual/monoscriptal" to "multilingual/multiscriptal", this fundamentally calls for the need for researchers from diverse and multilingual backgrounds to work together to better understand English and other non-dominant languages' roles in the 21st century. This might also constitute a "multilingual" and "multi-scriptal" turn in WE and English language research in general, leading to "multiscriptal English" beyond the taken-for-granted Latin script, in a context of globalisation, neoliberal ideology, and change.

Also, over the years, applied linguistics has moved beyond the previous (predominant) preoccupations with professional issues in language teaching and learning to explore a wider range of language-related issues, features, and phenomena in numerous real-world settings and contexts from diverse theoretical and methodological perspectives (Li et al., 2023). As far as applied linguistics is concerned, the phenomenon identified in this paper can have multiple real-world implications. This for example includes an awareness of what language use is like in reality in the 21st century. The linguistic phenomenon identified can also be of some help for translators and other language professionals and service providers. As far as teaching is concerned (e.g., in the field of translation, advertising, and multilingual communication), students can be made aware of the recent trend of phonetic transliteration (from English) as a common practice that exists in some parts of the world. They can then be encouraged to critically discuss and explore whether this is a useful and meaningful strategy compared with the more traditional way of translation and communication in general with a focus on conveying the actual meaning.

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no datasets were generated or analysed during the current study.

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