

Analysis of Language Landscape in Minority Areas Based on Domain Correlation

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Abstract: As a carrier and medium for displaying information, language signs are visible in today's real world. Language is a sign of national identity. The emergence of minority languages in the language landscape can directly help members of the ethnic group to construct positive national identity. The study of public language signs in urban areas has become the research interest of many scholars all over the world, and gradually developed into the study of language landscape in a certain area now. Chuxiong Yi ancient town is a scenic spot located in minority areas. Based on the domain correlation analysis of its language landscape, this paper explores the characteristics of multilingual language use in tourist attractions in minority areas in order to promote the development of tourism in minority areas.

1. Introduction

The concept of language landscape was formally put forward in 1997 and was introduced into China as a professional term in the past ten years. However, Chinese scholars began to study the relevant contents of language landscape as early as the end of 1970s. The purpose of language landscape research is to examine “the visibility and salience of language on public and commercial signs in a certain territory or region” [1]. Since the concept was put forward, the motivation and mechanism behind various signs and their language choices have been widely concerned by scholars. Language landscape has rapidly grown into a hot topic in sociolinguistics and applied linguistics. Linguists believe that the languages on various signs in a certain geographical area together form the language landscape of this specific area or city group. These signs include shop signs, billboards, public transportation signs, place names, street names and public signs of government agencies, etc. [2]. On the basis of a brief analysis of the origin and function of foreign language landscape research, Xu Honggang and others emphatically introduced the common themes in language landscape research and the enlightenment for us to carry out research in this field [3]. Therefore, based on the language landscape theory put forward by predecessors, this paper attempts to take Chuxiong Yi ancient town as an example to explore the multilingual language landscape features of tourist attractions in minority areas based on domain correlation.

2. A Survey of Language Landscape Research

2.1 Debate on the Concept of Language Landscape

The concept of “language landscape” was first put forward and used by Canadian scholars Rodrigue Landry and Richard Y. Bourhis. they believe that the languages on public facilities such as road signs, billboards, street names, place names, shop signs and public signs of government buildings together constitute the language landscape of a region or city group [4]. Language landscape has two major functions, namely, information function and symbolic function. The information function embodies the direct practical function of the language landscape and plays a role in communication and information transmission. According to this theory, a large part of the ethnic identity among members of ethnic minority groups comes from the linguistic style within the group, that is to say, among the members of these groups, they are more inclined to speak the language of their own group than other languages [5]. The study of city cases reflects the

characteristics of different city language landscapes. This is the most widely quoted definition in the study of language landscape. It indicates that language landscape is a macro and overall concept by way of enumeration. All kinds of language signs appearing in public space are its constituent elements. Readers can obtain some implicit information through the symbolic function of the language landscape, such as the cultural status and social identity of the language group corresponding to the language. In recent years, language landscape has attracted much attention and has become a new research field in sociolinguistics.

2.2 Particularity of Research Objects and Methods

Language landscape research takes language signs as the main object of investigation to reveal the way and process of discourse construction among language planning agencies, language users and sign readers. Through the code orientation of ethnic languages and Chinese in minority areas, the function, status and language policy behind the language landscape are reflected. Language landscape can show a region's social and cultural context, and it can provide information on a region's language characteristics, language social status, language diversity, etc. In a sense, the spoken language is also a symbol of identity, which makes it easier to distinguish different ethnic groups. Moreover, their enthusiasm for learning mainstream languages is not high and their motivation for learning is insufficient. They hope to use languages with their own characteristics to clarify their national identity. For example, Yang Jinlong put forward the contents and problems of the toponymic language standard, and pointed out the six principles of the toponymic language standard: motivation principle, distinction principle, identity principle, standardization principle, simplicity principle and habitual principle [6]. Generally speaking, language signs are always displayed in a position within public sight for people to read, refer to or pay attention to. For countless kinds of language signs around, people are not aware of the language behaviors and symbolic meanings contained in them except for extracting some relevant information occasionally, which is the core of language landscape research.

3. Research Design

3.1 Case Introduction

Chuxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture is one of the autonomous prefectures under the jurisdiction of Yunnan Province. It is located in the middle of Yunnan Province, with Kunming City in the East, Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture in the west, Pu'er City and Yuxi City in the south, Panzhihua City in Sichuan Province in the north. Naxi people account for about 57.5% of the total population (the main data of the sixth national census in 2010). Chuxiong City is the state capital of Chuxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture. It is an important connecting point and logistics hub for Kunming, the capital of the province, to 8 states and cities in western Yunnan, and to enter Southeast Asia and South Asia. Chuxiong is not only an important connection point between Kunming, the capital of Yunnan, and Dali, Lijiang, Shangri-La and Tengchong gold tourist routes in western Yunnan and northwest Yunnan, but also the north gate of Yunnan into Sichuan. Yi ancient town is located in the north of Longchuan River and the northwest of Chuxiong City. It is a national AAAA tourist attraction with an annual traffic of 7 million people. The ancient town inherits the essence of national culture and is the intersection, blend and collision between tradition and modernity, Yi culture and other national cultures [7].

3.2 Data Collection

This research uses observation, photo collection and interview to collect data. First of all, through observation, researchers identified three streets with relatively more multilingual signs as research sites. The main method of data collection is taking pictures, and the popularity of digital cameras makes data collection easier and easier. In addition, this paper also designed a questionnaire to assist the investigation. The questionnaire includes two parts: ethnic identity and language attitude. The ethnic identity part is revised and compiled according to Phinney's ethnic

identity measurement scale. In this study, 6 people were randomly selected as the interviewees, including 2 tourists, 2 shopkeepers and 2 locals. Since there is no international consensus on the classification standard of language signs in language landscape research, the classification standard of this research mainly refers to the method adopted by Cenoz & Gorter(2009), that is, each independent unit or institution (not every symbol) constitutes a complete analysis unit. Through the analysis of the phonetic features and grammatical structure features of plaque language, the cultural psychology of people pursuing fashion or restoring ancient ways is studied.

4. Research Results and Analysis

4.1 Code Selection of Signs and National Perception

Code selection refers to the selection and determination of codes in a multilingual society on the one hand, and the selection of codes by individuals in social communication on the other hand [8]. This paper mainly examines the number and specific types of codes used for private signs. It is found that the multilingual language landscape in Chuxiong Yi ancient town has the following characteristics. Judging from the number of languages on the sign, there are mainly four languages, three languages and two languages. Since the two types of signs respectively reflect the official language standards and the specific use of the public, studying the similarities and differences between the two can help us understand the extent to which there is a gap between language practice and language policy in a society or language community and why there is such a gap. In the case study, the corpus mostly comes from commercial areas and tourist attractions in the city, and the areas covered are mostly commercial areas. Therefore, there is a problem that the corpus source is too single in the study of language landscape.

In this study, 220 analysis units separated from the shooting were statistically analyzed. According to the number of sign codes, there are four languages, namely, Chinese, Yi, English and Korean, and the statistics are shown in Table 1 according to the number of occurrences. The results show that each sign contains Chinese code. Yi and English codes have the same frequency, but the number is far less than Chinese codes. The Korean language code is the least, and only one sign appears.

Table 1 Frequency of Occurrence of Various Codes on Private Signs

Language	Chinese	Yi language	English	Korean
Frequency	220	15	17	3

According to statistical data, among the three languages most used on landscape signs, Yi people have in common in using a single language that Chinese is the most prominent language while English is the least prominent. Among these multilingual signs, the number of Chinese is the largest, and Chinese appears on every multilingual sign. The second is English and Yi. Burmese, Hui and Korean are the languages with the lowest number. Private signs appear in more languages than official signs. In addition, official signs basically contain Japanese, but many private signs do not contain Japanese. Secondly, languages have different functions: different languages on official multilingual signs provide equivalent information, while different languages on private multilingual signs may provide different information. The study of symbolic landscape in language landscape pays more attention to the multimodal analysis of space, including anything visual or auditory. Therefore, the author believes that apart from paying attention to language symbols, language landscape should also extend its research perspective to other modal forms, such as image form, audio form, video form, color form, etc. Although there are no clear requirements for the use of foreign languages, the vast majority of foreign languages used in street language landscapes are English. If the words on the sign are written vertically, the Yi language is arranged on the right side of other languages. The arrangement of multilingual characters on unofficial signs is diversified and there is no relatively uniform format [9].

4.2 Code-Oriented Signs and National Attitudes

Code orientation is the priority relation between different languages on the language sign to reflect their social status. The relatively high social status is called priority code. Through observation, it is not difficult to find that there are many shop signs, street signs, road signs, warning signs, billboards, etc. in Chuxiong Yi ancient town, which belong to multilingual signs. Language landscape research is an effective way to understand a region's language ecology. Language signs have information function, which can help people understand the geographical boundaries and composition of a language group and the characteristics of the language used in the community.

In terms of code types, there are Chinese single code signs, Chinese-Yi, Chinese-English, Chinese-Korean bilingual signs and Chinese-Yi-English trilingual signs, as shown in Table 2. More than one-fifth of signage languages are monolingual, about one-quarter are bilingual, and more than half are multilingual. Multilingual signs can also play a decorative role and increase the attraction of tourist attractions. Generally speaking, most interviewees think it is necessary to set up multilingual signs in tourist attractions.

Table 2 Code Types of Private Signs

Code type	Quantity	Percentage (%)
Chinese monolingual	189	86.31
Chinese and Yi Bilingual	15	6.33
Bilingual	14	5.89
China and South Korea are bilingual	10	4.14
Chinese, Yi and English	5	2.06

In the current study of language landscape, the relatively mature theoretical framework mostly comes from foreign countries, and the real theory of language landscape is not mature. Domestic studies also mostly refer to foreign research theories. As a scenic spot featuring Yi culture, the ancient town of Yi people should show as many cultural features as possible. However, through observation, it is found that the language and culture of Yi people are not well displayed in the ancient town. It can be seen from this that although there are clear regulations requiring the use of local minority languages in the language landscape, foreign languages still have no obvious advantages.

4.3 Sign Function and National Identity

Language signs have two functions: information function and symbolic function [10]. From the perspective of national identity, this study pays more attention to the symbolic function of signs. Symbolic function can reflect language power, social identity and status of language groups, etc. In terms of language use and salience, Chinese is the most prominent language in language signs. In the order of language use, Korean has obvious advantages as the first order language in the language sign, while English has the lowest proportion among the three most used languages. Official multilingual signs in ancient Yi towns usually have Yi language. If the characters on the signs are written horizontally, the Yi language will be arranged above other languages. However, the establishment of multilingual signs in many places in a certain area shows the social phenomenon of multilingual coexistence in the area. Secondly, the study of language landscape can see through the language power and social identity and status of ethnic groups within a certain region. The appearance of a certain ethnic language on the sign will make the people of that ethnic group think that the language of that ethnic group is of status and value. However, if it does not appear, people will feel that the language's social status is very low and of little value. Although East Chinese has an advantage in the first language order, it is not prominent in both street language landscape signs. As an international common language, English has been widely used in the language landscape of minority areas.

5. Conclusion

After investigating the ancient towns of Yi nationality and analyzing with the help of the information function and symbolic function of the language landscape, we can see that there is a phenomenon of multi-language coexistence in Chuxiong region, but Chinese is the main language used in the region. In countries and regions that use multiple languages, which language or languages are chosen for the language sign and which language order comes first, the meaning of language policy and planning is often hidden behind it, and it is not a random choice. On the language sign of the ancient town of Yi people, the Yi language has not been highlighted and its visibility is very low. When the visibility of a language is too low, the language is likely to be weakened or marginalized, or even endangered. In addition, although language landscape research still faces some challenges in methodology, such as how to determine the analysis unit and the intention of the signage creator, etc., the development prospect is very clear. However, in this study, the language landscape in the ancient Yi town has not put this idea into practice, only a few private signs have Yi characters written on them. This phenomenon is closely related to the local government's language policy and language education. It can be said that language and tourism are inseparable, and the local minority languages should be regarded as a tourism cultural resource that can be utilized and developed to play an important role in the development of tourism in minority areas.

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