

Analysis of Campus Language Landscape Construction at Longyan University in China

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Abstract

The globalization has propelled an increase in academic exchanges and student mobility, turning university campuses into spaces where multiple languages and cultures intersect. In this context, the language landscape of university campuses has become an important area of research for exploring language diversity, cultural heritage, language policies, and planning. Against the backdrop of the current expansion trend at Longyan University, this study begins with an investigation into the current status of the campus language landscape. It focuses on analyzing the linguistic and coding features of signage and their formation mechanisms, identifying issues existing in language landscape construction. Finally, it proposes improvement strategies, including enhancing the multicultural integration of language landscapes, implementing maintenance and updating work for language landscapes, and enriching the historical, cultural, and contemporary connotations of language landscapes. The aim is to effectively enhance the quality of the campus language landscape, promote the dissemination and development of campus culture, and better serve the faculty and students on campus.

Keywords: university campus, language landscape, multiculturalism

Introduction

Language, as humanity's most important means of communication, preserves and conveys the achievements of human civilization(Cui, 2015). Language landscape serves as the material carrier of language and writing, representing an important form of language application. Initially defined by Landry and Bourhis (1997), language landscape refers to "the common language on public signs, billboards, street names, place names, shop signs, and public signage on government buildings, which collectively constitute the language landscape of a specific area, region, or urban cluster." It is evident that the language landscape presents a concentrated display of local language symbols and serves as an effective means to uphold and continue regional traditional culture. There exists a mutual dependence and connection between culture and language landscape.

The campus language landscape, as an important visual and cultural component of higher education institutions, can reflect a school's educational philosophy and cultural characteristics, showcasing its brand image. On the other hand, excellent campus language landscape design can enhance the sense of belonging for students and faculty, promote the dissemination of campus culture, and simultaneously elevate the campus's level of internationalization.

In recent years, there has been a wave of campus expansions across the country, with an increase in campus size and the number of buildings. Consequently, the construction of the campus language landscape has received more attention and is continuously enriched and developed. This includes an increase in the number of campus signs, diversification of signage language and coding

forms, a trend towards personalized and innovative sign designs, and a greater emphasis on the combination of functionality and aesthetics. However, higher education institutions also face various challenges in the practice of language landscape construction, such as issues related to the standardization of language use, the accuracy of multilingual sign translations, as well as planning and design issues concerning the language landscape and the absence of campus cultural elements. Therefore, researching the language landscape, uncovering the deeper functional value behind language and coding choices, and providing valuable reference suggestions for the planning and construction of the language landscape in higher education institutions, as well as for the inheritance of excellent culture, are of great significance.

Literature review

Scholars hold diverse views on the definition of language landscape, and their perspectives have evolved over time. Some scholars' views may not entirely align across different periods (Landry & Bourhis, 1997; Itagi & Singh, 2002; Ben-Rafael, 2006). Currently, the most widely accepted concept of language landscape still stems from the definition provided by Landry and Bourhis in 1997, upon which this study at Longyan University is based. Scholars have not only researched the definition of language landscape but also created numerous influential and widely used language landscape theories. Among the language landscape theories commonly adopted by researchers are: Scollon & Scollon's Geographic Symbolic Theory (2003), Huebner's SPEAKING Model (2009), Spolsky's Language Choice Theory (2009), Ben-Rafael's Principles of Language Landscape Construction (2009), Trumper-Hecht's Three-Dimensional Model Theory (2010). These theories provide valuable frameworks for understanding and analyzing language landscape phenomena.

With the acceleration of the globalization process and the increase in international student mobility, university campuses have become typical representatives of multilingual environments. The main focuses of foreign research on university campus landscapes include: overall campus landscape planning, research on the functionality of campus language landscapes, research on the connection between campus culture and landscape, and research on the construction of historic campus landscapes (Wang, 2019). Richard Dober's work (1992) in "Campus Design" explored various aspects of campus planning and design, including campus layout, architectural design, landscape design, and spatial utilization. It delved into the concepts and strategies of campus design and their impact on academic environments and community life. Through multiple case studies, effective design principles and methodologies were proposed, aiming to create educational spaces that are both aesthetically pleasing and highly functional. Marcus and Francis's "People Places" (1997) emphasizes a human-centric design philosophy, stressing that environmental design should meet the needs of different demographics. They highlighted the differences in the needs and usage patterns of open spaces among different racial, age, and gender groups. They proposed guiding principles such as "place-supportive" design and specific design principles for various types of spaces, covering all aspects of open space planning and design. Their insights into how campus landscapes should be planned and designed to fulfill their intended roles hold significant guiding significance.

With the in-depth research by foreign scholars on language landscapes, this field has gradually entered the purview of domestic linguists in China. The study of language landscapes in the Chinese linguistic community began in the early 21st century and is currently in a developmental stage. However, with the acceleration of China's urbanization process and the development of multiculturalism, research on language landscapes is increasingly receiving attention. Chinese scholars' definitions of language landscapes include both the globally accepted understanding — visual representations of written language in public spaces such as street signs, advertisements, and shop signs

— and broader cultural and social dimensions. These dimensions encompass the use and manifestation of language in specific social, cultural, and historical contexts, as well as how language influences and shapes social relationships and identity. Domestic scholars also hold different views on the concept of language landscapes (e.g., Wang, 2013; Shang & Zhao, 2014), which not only reveal the essence of language landscapes but also provide an important theoretical basis for scholars to understand and study them.

In China, research related to landscape in university campus planning and construction started relatively late, but it has achieved certain research outcomes. Key aspects of research on landscape planning and construction in university campuses include: overall planning and layout of campus landscapes, research on the inheritance of campus culture through landscapes, and research on campus landscape design and the shaping of campus environmental characteristics. For instance, Zhou and Song (1994) elaborated on various aspects such as site selection, overall layout, architecture and environmental design, campus construction, and campus culture in the book "Architectural Planning and Environmental Design of Higher Education Institutions." Li (2006) used Chongqing University of Arts and Sciences' Honghe Campus as an example to discuss the crucial role of campus culture in the development of universities, such as embodying school characteristics, inheriting spiritual concepts, and enhancing cohesion. He emphasized the significant role of campus landscapes, architecture, and signage systems in the construction of new campus culture, considering campus landscapes as symbolic cultural symbols with aesthetic, educational, and connotative functions that can manifest the essence of campus culture.

Methodology

The study focuses on the language landscape of Longyan University, selecting the teaching building area, student dormitory area, cafeteria area, streets, and other areas within the university as survey locations. The investigation primarily targets written language in the form of signage found in the university's roads, buildings, shop signs, public notices, and promotional slogans. In January 2023, we conducted a 15-day formal study to obtain data on language signs in Longyan University and the intentions of sign makers. In the survey, we used digital cameras to take photos of the linguistic landscape in the university and took 316 photos.

When making statistics on the collected linguistic landscape corpus, this study adopts the individual method of Backhaus (2006), that is, any written text in a spatially definable frame is regarded as a language sign. The range of language signs is relatively broad, with no restrictions on size, orientation, material, and other aspects. Signs with the only graphic patterns are not included in the statistics. The collected language signs in the survey area are categorized into monolingual and multilingual signs. Traditionally, monolingual and multilingual signs are defined based on the number of languages appearing on the signs. Signs featuring only one language are considered monolingual, those appearing in two languages are considered bilingual, and those appearing in three or more languages are considered multilingual.

Results and Discussion

Language codes election analysis

According to statistics, a total of 316 language landscape samples were collected within Longyan University. Among these, there were 187 monolingual signs, accounting for 59.2% of the total; 127 bilingual signs, accounting for 40.2% of the total; and only 2 multilingual signs, accounting for 0.6%. The specific breakdown is as follows (see Table 1).

Table 1 The sample numbers of language signs in research location

Type of sign	Number	Percentage
Monolingual	187	59.2%
Bilingual	127	40.2%
Multilingual	2	0.6%
Overall	316	100%

Through data comparison, it is evident that monolingual signs have the highest proportion of samples, followed by bilingual signs, with multilingual signs being the least frequent. Therefore, monolingual signs have the highest coverage rate within Longyan University. Further observation reveals that among the bilingual sign samples, English appears in 99% of cases. In the multilingual sign samples, Chinese, English, Japanese, and Korean appear, with English having a 66.7% occurrence rate, followed by Japanese with 2 occurrences, and Korean with only 1 occurrence. Thus, among numerous foreign languages, English monopolizes bilingual signage, appearing on the majority of bilingual signs. The specific breakdown is as follows (see Table 2).

Table 2. Code combinations for bilingual / multilingual language landscapes in research location

Types of code combination	Number	Percentage
Chinese+English	126	97.6%
Chinese+Japanese	1	0.8%
Chinese+English+Japanese	1	0.8%
Chinese+English+Japanese+Korean	1	0.8%
Overall	129	100%

The monolingual signs at Longyan University are predominantly in Chinese (Mandarin), without any pure English text. This emphasis on pure Chinese language landscape reflects the dominant position of Mandarin and complies with the requirements of the national language policy. Language policy falls under public policy and its formulation and implementation aim to standardize and regulate the use of the national language, facilitating its better utilization in social life to enhance economic and cultural exchanges among various ethnic groups and regions (Jiang, 2022). In China's educational system, Mandarin is a compulsory subject, which reinforces its status on campuses. Longyan University, situated in the western part of Fujian Province, is influenced by both national and local language policies. Consequently, the language landscape samples collected within Longyan University predominantly consist of Mandarin text.

Due to the relatively small proportion of "Chinese + English + Japanese" and "Chinese + English + Japanese + Korean" combinations, they will not be analyzed separately here. This article will focus on analyzing the situation of the "Chinese + English" language combination. The reason for the significant proportion of the "Chinese + English" language combination: In the context of globalization, foreign languages have become essential tools for Chinese people to actively engage with and understand the world, as well as to participate in international communication. Demand is the best opportunity for development. Universities serve as crucial platforms for talent cultivation, scientific research, social services, and cross-cultural communication. By providing various forms of academic exchange, cultural interaction, and language education, universities promote students' understanding and respect for the commonalities and differences among different cultures, fostering an

open and inclusive international perspective. Therefore, against this backdrop and mission, Longyan University actively integrates foreign languages into the campus language landscape construction.

Language Code Orientation Analysis

An important indicator considered during the analysis of language code orientation is the prominence of languages, which can be reflected through the size and arrangement of language codes on bilingual or multilingual signs. Language code size refers to the volume occupied by different language codes within the same sign, while language code arrangement pertains to the sequence in which language codes are placed on the sign (Zheng, 2001). Among the collected samples of bilingual or multilingual language landscapes, the most common are those featuring English-Chinese language combinations. This article will examine the size, or font size, of Chinese and English language codes as well as their arrangement on signs featuring English-Chinese language combinations.

Language Code Size

According to the survey, in the collected samples of bilingual signs featuring English and Chinese at Longyan University, Chinese characters generally occupy a larger area and volume on the signs, while English characters tend to be relatively smaller. Among the samples collected, the number of signs where "Chinese characters are larger than English characters" is the highest, reaching 115, accounting for 90% of the collected samples. This is significantly higher compared to the other two categories of signs. The number of signs where "English characters are larger than Chinese characters" is 8, approximately 6% of the collected samples, while the number of signs where "Chinese and English characters are of the same size" is 4, accounting for around 3%. In summary, it can be inferred that in the language landscape of Longyan University, Chinese characters hold a prominent advantage in terms of volume, establishing themselves as the dominant language code on the campus signs. The specific breakdown is as follows (see Table 3).

Table 3. The font sizes of language codes in the Chinese-English combination language landscape in the research location

Font size	Number	Percentage
Chinese characters larger	115	90.6%
English characters larger	8	6.3%
Equal size in Chinese and English	4	3.1%
Overall	127	100%

The diagram represents three scenarios observed in bilingual signage featuring English and Chinese: "Chinese characters larger than English characters," "English characters larger than Chinese characters," and "Chinese and English characters of equal size." Specific details are shown in Figures 1-3.

Language Code Arrangement

According to the survey conducted at Longyan University, among the 127 bilingual signs collected, there are various arrangements for English-Chinese language combination signage. Signs with language codes arranged vertically account for 72, with "Chinese characters above English" signs totaling 58, approximately 46% of the English-Chinese language combination samples. Signs with "English above Chinese characters" total 14, making up around 11%. Signs with language codes arranged horizontally account for 50, with "Chinese characters on the left and English on the right" totaling 38, approximately 30% of the samples. Signs with "English on the left and Chinese

on the right" total 12, making up around 9%. There are 5 signs with a central surround structure, all featuring "Chinese characters surrounding English," accounting for about 4%. Specific details are as follows (see Table 4).



Figure 1. Chinese characters larger



Figure 2. English characters larger



Figure 3. Equal size in Chinese and English

Table 4. The arrangement of language codes on bilingual signage featuring English and Chinese in research location

Language Code Arrangement Format	Number	Percentage
Top Chinese bottom English	58	45.6%
Top English bottom Chinese	14	11%
Left Chinese right English	38	30%
Left English right Chinese	12	9.4%
Chinese surrounding English	5	4%
Overall	127	100%

Comparatively, among the collected samples of bilingual language landscapes featuring English and Chinese, the "top-bottom" and "left-right" arrangements are more frequent and widely used. Additionally, the "top Chinese bottom English" and "left Chinese right English" arrangements are more prevalent. In the central surround arrangement, most signs feature Chinese language codes in the central position. Specific details are illustrated in Figures 4-8.



Figure 4. Top Chinese bottom English



Figure 5. Top English bottom Chinese



Figure 6. Left Chinese right English

Therefore, based on the analysis of the font size and arrangement data of language codes in the signage samples at Longyan University, it can be inferred that in the language landscape of the university campus, Chinese language codes are predominantly placed in the most prominent positions such as the top, left, and center of the signs, highlighting their prominence as the dominant language code, while English is of secondary prominence.

The language landscape in an administrative region, including the types of language code combinations, arrangement of language codes, font sizes, and the amount of information presented, varies significantly and is determined by the setters of the language landscape, the anticipated au-

dience, and the symbolic value. The first two factors are contingent upon objective facts, while the third factor reflects the political and socio-psychological context of the language landscape, reflecting language policies, ideologies, values, and so forth, which in turn demonstrate the status, power, and social reality of language use in different languages (Liu & Zhang, 2022).



Figure 7. Left English right Chinese



Figure 8. Chinese surrounding English

The reasons for Chinese being the dominant language code can be analyzed from the perspectives of the anticipated audience and symbolic value of the language landscape. From the perspective of the audience of the language landscape, the main audience of signage at Longyan University comprises teachers and students from various regions of China, whose mother tongue and primary language of use are Chinese. From the perspective of linguistic power, Chinese is recognized as the official language of China, and the government vigorously supports its promotion and use. Additionally, the language landscape serves as a crucial manifestation of identity. Language use in

public spaces often reflects the identity characteristics and values of a particular group. As the national language of China, using Chinese can strengthen the sense of identity for both individuals and groups. Using Chinese is not merely a linguistic choice but also an expression of cultural and national identity.

Firstly, a recent investigation revealed that the linguistic landscape within Longyan University's campus predominantly features Mandarin, with limited diversity in language combinations, mainly comprising "Chinese + English" bilingual signs and a notable scarcity of multilingual signage. In recent years, Longyan University has intensified communication and exchanges with various foreign universities, seeking to learn and adapt their academic and teaching methodologies. However, the limited variety of language codes and combinations on campus signage fails to adequately reflect the university's academic environment and international outlook.

Secondly, during the current investigation, it was observed that certain language signs at Longyan University are inevitably affected by the outdoor environment. Over time, exposure to elements such as sunlight and rain has caused gradual erosion, fading, and blurring of text on outdoor language signs, thereby compromising the effectiveness of information transmission. Take the road sign at Longyan University depicted in Figure 9 as an example. This language sign exhibits severe wear and tear, with the directional arrow becoming blurred, leading to obstacles in information transmission. This not only diminishes the reading experience for students but also weakens the instructional function of the language sign.

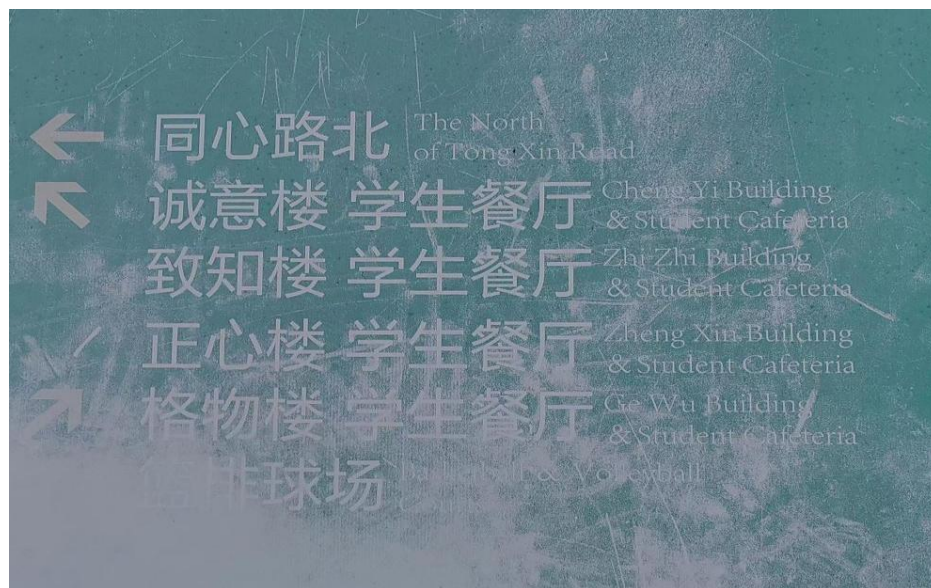


Figure 9. The damaged road sign in research location

Thirdly, traditional Chinese culture is profound and rich, encompassing traditional virtues, etiquette, traditional festivals, calligraphy, and more. However, the samples collected and organized in this article reflect a relatively thin representation of traditional culture. Among the 316 language landscape samples collected and organized in this article, only 30 highlight Chinese traditional culture. Among these, 8 samples reflect calligraphy culture, while 7 samples reflect traditional Chinese virtues. Figure 10 displays Taoist philosophical culture and traditional Chinese philosophical thoughts in the language landscape of Longyan University. These samples serve to reflect the endur-

ing influence of Daoist philosophy and traditional Chinese philosophical thought within the language landscape in the research location. They symbolize the university's commitment to preserving and promoting aspects of traditional Chinese culture amidst the modernization and globalization of higher education.



Figure 10. Calligraphy artworks in the library corridor

Conclusion

The language landscape at Longyan University reveals important insights into the institution's cultural identity, linguistic policies, and its position within the context of globalization. Through the analysis of 316 language signs on campus, it is evident that the dominant presence of Mandarin reflects not only compliance with national language policies but also a deeper expression of Chinese cultural identity. The predominance of monolingual and bilingual signage, especially those featuring "Chinese + English," highlights the institution's balance between preserving traditional culture and embracing internationalization. However, the scarcity of multilingual signs suggests that while efforts are being made to create an international atmosphere, there is room for greater linguistic diversity.

From the analysis of language code orientation, the arrangement and prominence of Chinese on signage reinforce the central role of Mandarin as the official and preferred language of communication on campus. Yet, the inclusion of English in many signs signifies the university's commitment to fostering global engagement, reflecting the practical need for students and staff to engage with the wider academic world.

Challenges remain in enhancing the visual and functional quality of the language landscape at Longyan University. Some signs, especially outdoor ones, suffer from wear and tear, affecting their readability and effectiveness. Moreover, the limited representation of traditional Chinese culture in signage suggests that there is an opportunity to further integrate cultural heritage into the campus environment, enhancing the educational and aesthetic impact of the language landscape.

In conclusion, Longyan University's language landscape serves as a microcosm of its broader cultural and educational objectives. While it effectively reflects both national language policies

and a commitment to internationalization, the findings suggest that improvements can be made in the diversity of language representation and the integration of traditional cultural elements. Addressing these aspects will not only strengthen the university's brand image but also contribute to creating a more inclusive and enriching campus environment.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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