Original Paper

Study of the Linguistic Landscape in Ningnan County from the Perspective of Place Semiotics

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Abstract

The linguistic landscape reveals the linguistic power and linguistic policy of a particular region. Scholars have conducted extensive research on linguistic landscapes, but the research on linguistic landscapes in minority areas is still relatively lacking. Based on the theory of place semiotics, this paper explores the characteristics and problems of the linguistic landscape in Ningnan County by conducting a field survey. It was found that the linguistic landscape of Ningnan County is characterized by Chinese, Yi language, and English. The bilingual code accounts for a high proportion, with Chinese and Yi bilingualism dominating, Chinese being a strong language in a dominant position. In terms of inscription, the top-down and bottom-up signs are consistent in font usage, traditional and simplified character usage, and sign material, but the bottom-up signs are more diversified in font and character usage and emphasize their individuality. In terms of emplacement, both top-down and bottom-up signs are primarily reasonable and standardized, but there is still room for improvement in bottom-up signs. The linguistic landscape in Ningnan County mainly suffers from improper use of Chinese, damage to some characters, and transgressive semiotics, which requires relevant departments, signage creators, and residents to enhance language awareness and protect the signs. This paper shows the language power and language policy in Ningnan County and provides a basis for the protection and inheritance of Yi language.

Keywords

linguistic landscape, Ningnan County, minority areas

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Linguistic landscape has become a hot topic in sociolinguistics in recent years. The concept of linguistic landscape was first proposed by Rodrigue Landry and Richard Y Bourhis, that is, "the

language that appears on public road signs, billboards, street names, place names, store signs, and public signs attached to government buildings collectively constitutes the linguistic landscape of a particular area, region, or urban agglomeration". Scholars have continued to add to the concept and extension of the linguistic landscape, and the research has become increasingly rich. Linguistic landscape reflects the relationship between language and society and the practice of urban governance. Analyzing various signs in the city from a linguistic point of view can provide professional suggestions for urban development and enhance urban civilization. Many empirical studies related to linguistic landscapes have appeared in China, but they mainly focus on urban linguistic landscapes and linguistic landscapes of tourist attractions, and relatively few studies have been conducted for ethnic minority areas. At present, while vigorously promoting Chinese as the national common language, China also insists on protecting minority languages and promoting the scientific development of minority languages. The linguistic landscape of ethnic minority regions can reflect the implementation of national language policies. Ningnan County, located in Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture of Sichuan Province, is a mountainous agricultural county with Han as the leading ethnic group and Yi, Buyi, Tibetans, and other multi-ethnic groups living in a mixed community. Ningnan County, as an area of multi-ethnicity integration and cohabitation, has diverse and well-preserved language resources. Chinese and Yi language are the most used languages in Ningnan. This paper investigates the linguistic landscape of Ningnan County by applying the theory of place semiotics to explore the use and vitality of language in the hope of providing a basis for the protection of the Yi language and culture and the formulation of appropriate language policies.

1.2 Research Questions and Methods

This paper analyses the linguistic landscape of Ningnan County based on the theory of place semiotics and explores the following two questions:

(1) What are the characteristics of the linguistic landscape of Ningnan County?

(2) What problems exist in the linguistic landscape of Ningnan County?

First, I find papers and books about linguistic landscape and linguistic landscape in minority areas, and conduct the research of this paper on the basis of previous research. Second, I take the field survey method to take photos of several streets' linguistic landscapes in the county and decode these photos. Finally, I adopt the mixed method to analyze the use of codes, inscription, and emplacements of linguistic landscapes in Ningnan County and explore their characteristics and problems.

2. Literature Review

Foreign research on linguistic landscape began in the 1970s, and in 1997, Rodrigue Landry and Richard Y Bourhis first defined the concept of linguistic landscape from the perspective of sociolinguistics. Since then, many papers and books on linguistic landscape research have been published abroad.

From the perspective of theoretical research, the theoretical research on the linguistic landscape in

foreign countries is comprehensive and diversified. Scollon and Scollon Wong (2003) put forward the theory of place semiotics, which consists of code preference, inscription, emplacement, and other subsystems to analyze the power of language in the society. Huebner (1972) introduced Hymes's SPEAKING theory into the study of linguistic landscape and explored eight aspects of linguistic landscape, namely, background and occasions, participants, purpose, sequence of behavior, tone, medium, statute, and genre. Ben-Rafael (2009) proposed four principles to construct linguistic landscapes, including the presentation of self, good-reasons, collective identity, and power relations. Trumper-Hecht (2010) argues that the linguistic landscape can be examined from three dimensions: physical, political, and experiential, which examines both the actual distribution of the linguistic landscape and the understanding of the linguistic landscape by decision-makers and participants. Spolsky (2009) proposes a theory of language choice for public signage. He argues that the language of public signage should be chosen in a language that the creator is familiar with, a language that the reader can read and understand, and a language that is his or her own or that identifies him or her. In China, linguistic landscape research started late, mostly drawing on foreign research theories, with less theoretical innovation. Shang Guowen and Zhao Shouhui published two articles in 2014 to provide a more systematic and comprehensive introduction to foreign linguistic landscape research theories, perspectives, dimensions, methods, and theoretical frameworks. Zhou Xiaochun (2019) constructed the multidimensional analysis model of "two levels and six dimensions" for linguistic landscape research, i.e., through the information function and symbolic function, as well as through the six dimensions of language selection, code distribution, character transformation, language power, identity and language ideology, to grasp the overall current situation and deep information of the linguistic landscape. Shang Guowen and Zhou Xianwu (2020) introduced the concept of 'periphery linguistic landscapes' based on foreign research and elaborated on its types, characteristics, and research perspectives, opening up a new horizon for studying of linguistic landscapes in China.

At the level of applied research, studies have covered a wide range of fields and perspectives. Ben-Rafael (2006) examined the visibility of three languages, Hebrew, Arabic, and English, in the linguistic landscapes of Jewish neighborhoods, Israeli Palestinian neighborhoods, and non-Israeli Palestinian neighborhoods in Israel, and by examining the phenomenon of polyglotism they found that the linguistic landscapes did not faithfully reflect the linguistic diversity of the Israeli nation. Cenoz and Gorter (2008) explored the role that the linguistic landscape can have in SLA by looking at its potential use as a source of input and in the acquisition of pragmatic competence. They found that the linguistic landscape is a learning context and can also be used for raising awareness in SLA. Linguistic landscape can also play the remediating role in the production and consumption of sign. Banda and Jimaima(2015) adopted the walking methodology to investigate the linguistic landscapes in the rural communities where the oral language is dominant. They found that attention to semiotic ecology in multimodal linguistic landscapes helps to highlight the multimodal and diverse processes that characterize meaning making even in areas that do not have scripted signs. Erik (2024) explores the

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affordances and challenges of using computer vision and large language models in linguistic landscape research and discusses methods to remedy the disadvantages of the manual approach. Taking Bangkok and Chiang Mai as examples, Wei Chao et al. (2024) examine the perception and identification of Thai residents, Chinese tourists, and foreign tourists with Chinese and English linguistic landscapes in a multilingual and multi-subject social environment by means of a comparative study and find that different subjects hold different perceptions and identifications of the linguistic landscapes in the multilingual areas. This study makes up for the shortcomings of previous studies focusing on a single language and subject and provides new ideas and methods for studying linguistic landscapes in international tourist destinations. By analyzing 1,391 valid samples of linguistic landscapes collected from four sampling districts in Macau, Zhang Yuanyuan and Zhang Binhua (2016) concluded that the linguistic landscape in Macau is dominated by Chinese, English, and Portuguese, with less Portuguese used as the unofficial language and less English used in the local neighborhoods. Dai Zhaohui (2024) took the linguistic landscapes of Shanghai's tourist attractions as samples to explore hypertextual practices and problems in translation. The study found that the translation of Shanghai's linguistic landscapes was translanguaging, but the rate of mistranslation at the cultural level was high. Chang Jianxia et al. (2023) explored the effect of linguistic landscape on tourists' visual attention through an eye-tracking experiment based on the informational-symbolic function theory and emotional appeal theory of linguistic landscape. The experiment showed that linguistic landscapes can quickly attract customers' attention, and linguistic landscapes with symbolic function and emotional appeal can significantly enhance tourists' visual attention and perceived attractiveness.

In conclusion, although the study of linguistic landscape is in a prosperous state, the number of research on the linguistic landscape in ethnic minority areas is relatively small, and the research area is not extensive enough. Therefore, this paper can enrich linguistic landscape research in minority areas. Secondly, the linguistic landscape to understand the language use in Ningnan County can provide a basis for the formulation of relevant language policies and promote the improvement of the linguistic landscape.

3. Theoretical Framework

Scollon and Scollon Wong (2003) use Kress and van Leeuwen's visual semiotics to study discourses in place and call it geosemiotics to see how discourses express meaning in specific places. Place semiotics consists of subsystems such as code preference, inscription, and emplacement, which are used to analyze linguistic symbol systems in real-world environments.

Code preference refers to the preferential relationship between languages on bilingual or multilingual signage as a reflection of their power within the language community. When a text is in multiple codes or orthographies, there is a preference system. There are several conditions for the distribution of codes or languages. The preferred code is located above the secondary or peripheral codes if they are aligned vertically; if they are aligned horizontally, the preferred code is located in the left position, and the

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peripheral code is located in the right position. The preferred code is located in the center, and the peripheral code is placed around the periphery.

Inscription is a system of meaning that reflects the way language is presented, including fonts, materials, layering, and state changes. Font refers to how language or other written symbols are written, including handwriting, calligraphy, and print, including size, shape, or color. Differences in writing styles largely reflect the author's purpose and use. Material refers to the carrier of the word engraving, and the material can produce different meanings, including permanence, temporary or novelty, and good or bad quality. Layering refers to the addition of an inscription to another, usually more permanent, inscription. These added inscriptions convey meanings that are usually temporary. The status change reflects the state of the business through the state of the background lighting, e.g., a store is open when the "open" sign is on and closed when it is not.

Placement studies the meaning activated by placing a sign at a location, which is the most fundamental concern of geosemiotics. The forms of emplacement contain three categories: decontextualized semiotics, transgressive semiotics, and situated semiotics. Decontextualized semiotics refers to all forms of symbols, pictures, and texts, which always appear in the same form in different scenarios. Most brands' linguistic presentation falls into the category of decontextualized semiotics, where the same style is always presented, whether it is a product poster or a package. Transgressive semiotics means that the linguistic landscape appears where it should not. The most common type of transgressive semiotics is graffiti or small advertisements posted in public areas. Situated semiotics indicates that the sign serves its function in the proper context. The name of an organization or a store is a typical example of a scenario-placed linguistic landscape that provides appropriate information.

4. Results and Analysis

This empirical investigation chooses Nansi Road, Baihetan Avenue, Xinglong Street, Shuimian West Road, Shuncheng North Street, and the center street of Ningnan County as the sampling points. In this paper, the corpus includes typical linguistic landscapes, such as street signs and billboards and some atypical linguistic landscapes, such as LED screen information, banners, and graffiti. The categorization criteria of linguistic landscapes adopt Backhaus' method, which considers each linguistic entity, regardless of its size, as a unit of analysis. On this basis, photos were taken in Ningnan County, and 1046 linguistic landscapes were taken. As the samples cover a wide range of contents, according to the difference of the establishers and uses, the samples are divided into top-down and bottom-up signs for analysis. Table 1 shows 203 top-down signs in the sample, accounting for 17.7%, and 943 bottom-up signs, accounting for 82.3%. As a visible carrier of policy implementation, top-down signs reflect the government's language planning orientation and expression of official will. In contrast, although bottom-up signs are influenced by official policies, their language choices are more diverse and individualized, highlighting the aesthetic orientation and cultural background of individuals and society. Together, these elements constitute a pluralistic picture of language ecology in Ningnan

County.

Table 1. Linguistic Landscape Classification in Ningnan County

Types	Number Ratio Form
Top-down signs 203	17.7% official names, announcements, road signs
Bottom-up signs 943 82.3% Store names, commercials, graffiti

4.1 Code Analysis

Code types, combinations, and preferences can reveal the function of different codes and the socio-cultural meanings they carry in multilingual environments. This section analyzes code use in the linguistic landscape in terms of code types, combinations, and code preference.

4.1.1 Code Types and Combinations

The type of code is an important channel to identify language visibility and language diversity. As can be seen from Table 2, among the 203 top-down signs, only Chinese, Yi language, and English are represented. Chinese has the largest share, followed by Yi and, finally, English. The establishment of the top-down signs takes into account the status of Chinese as the national lingua franca, as well as the practicality and popularity of the Chinese. At the same time, Ningnan County is inhabited by a large number of Yi residents, so the establishment of the top-down signs also takes into account the status of Yi language as the mother tongue of the majority of Yi compatriots, reflecting ethnicity and specificity. While Ningnan County is located in the mountainous area of Liangshan Prefecture, the degree of openness to the outside world is relatively low, and the influence of English on Ningnan County is relatively small. Therefore, English is least used in top-down signs.

Table 2. The Codes of Linguistic Landscape in Ningnan County

Types	Language Number Ratio
Top-down signs	
Chinese 203 100%	
Yi language 66 32.5%	
English 14 6.9%	
Bottom-up signs	
Chinese 938 99.4%	
Yi language 330 35%	
English 99 10.5%	

Among the 943 bottom-up signs, Chinese appeared 938 times, Yi language 330 times, and English 99 times. Chinese is still dominant in the establishment of bottom-up signs, and the proportion of Yi

language is higher than that of English. Most of the Chinese appeared in commercial advertisements, which have a better function of transmitting information; the vast majority of store names contained Yi language, reflecting the ethnic self-confidence and identity of Yi compatriots, as well as local residents' awareness of the protection and inheritance of Yi language. English as an international lingua franca appears in the store names or slogans of some chain brands. At the same time, business people also incorporate English into their store names or signage to increase the fashion and beauty of their stores to attract customers better.

In general, the linguistic landscape of Ningnan County has a consistency between top-down and bottom-up signs in terms of code selection. Chinese is dominant and is a strong language. That is because Chinese is the national lingua franca, and at the same time, Chinese can transmit information across ethnic limitations and has a high degree of practicality. As the mother tongue of the Yi people, the Yi language appears in a higher proportion in bottom-up signs than in top-down signs, which reflects the sense of national identity as well as the policy of protecting and passing on minority languages. English, on the other hand, has a relatively low occurrence rate in both top-down and bottom-up signs, which is related to the geographical location of Ningnan County. The relatively high rate of English in bottom-up signs is related to the psychology of curiosity and commercial strategies to attract customers.

4.1.2 Code Preference

Code preference can reflect the priority relationship between languages in a bilingual or multilingual landscape, show the status of languages, and reflect the symbolic function of the linguistic landscape. Generally speaking, in horizontally arranged texts, the dominant code is located at the top, and the non-dominant code is located at the bottom; in vertically arranged texts, the dominant code is located at the left, and the non-dominant code is located at the right; and in surrounded arranged texts, the dominant code is located at the center, and the non-dominant code is located at the edge.

From Table 3, it can be seen that the linguistic landscape of Ningnan County has three categories: monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual. Among the monolingual codes, Chinese occupies an absolute position; among the bilingual codes, Chinese-Yi bilingualism occupies an absolute dominant position; and the proportion of multilingual codes is relatively low. The high salience and visibility of Chinese in different code combinations reflect the special status of Chinese as the national lingua franca, the high degree of fulfillment of language policies at the national level, and, on another level, the fact that Chinese-speaking communities have a higher status and power than those who use other languages. The very high visibility of the Yi language in the linguistic landscape indicates that the Yi language is more dynamic, reflecting the national policy of protecting minority languages. The frequent use of the Chinese-Yi bilingual code indicates that both the official and private sectors are able to consciously balance the relationship between the Chinese and Yi languages, which is conducive to the maintenance of a good language ecology and the protection and transmission of the Yi language. English as an international lingua franca is also presented in the linguistic landscape of Ningnan County. However, its

visibility is not high, indicating that Ningnan County is affected by the trend of urban internationalization, but the degree of influence is low.

Table 3. The Codes Combination of Linguistic Landscape in Ningnan County

Types	Codes combination	Number
Top-down signs	Chinese	128
	Yi	0
	English	0
	Chinese + Yi	61
	Chinese+ English	9
	Yi +English	0
	Chinese+ Yi+ English	5
Bottom-up signs	Chinese	536
	Yi	0
	English	5
	Chinese + Yi	308
	Chinese+ English	72
	Yi +English	0
	Chinese+ Yi+ English	22

The linguistic landscape of Ningnan County presents both horizontal and vertical arrangements. Regardless of whether it is a top-down sign or a bottom-up sign, horizontally arranged or vertically arranged, the position of Chinese is mainly at the core and part of the Chinese code, even if it does not appear in what is traditionally considered to be the core position, tends to be larger in font than the other codes and is more eye-catching. Generally speaking, Chinese is the absolutely dominant code, which shows that Chinese occupies an important position in the official language power and the unofficial recognition of Chinese, reflecting the important position of Chinese as the national lingua franca. When arranged horizontally, Yi language is usually at the top, but its font is often smaller than that of Chinese at the bottom and does not have a prominent advantage. When arranged vertically, the Yi language is usually on the right, thus reflecting its slightly lower linguistic status than Chinese. English is positioned below or to the right in all the multilingual signs, and its language status is the lowest among the three codes in Ningnan County. That is mainly due to the fact that English, as an international lingua franca, is spoken by a smaller number of people than the other two codes, and its ability to convey information is lower in a mountainous ethnic minority agricultural county, except for some chain brands or private merchants who use English to promote their products and attract customers. As a result, English also tends to be marginalized in the linguistic landscape.

4.2 Inscription Analysis

Inscription is an analysis of the way in which a linguistic landscape is presented, including font usage, the use of traditional and simplified characters, and the materials used in the linguistic landscape. Inscription can reflect the needs and purposes of the creators of linguistic landscapes and express the permanent or temporary nature of linguistic landscapes, as well as the quality of linguistic landscapes. This section discusses font usage, the use of traditional and simplified characters, and the material of the linguistic landscape carrier. Only Chinese characters are discussed in terms of font usage and character usage.

In terms of the types of linguistic landscapes, the use of fonts for top-down signs is relatively concentrated, mainly in boldface and Song typeface, with less use of regular script and other handwriting styles. Song typeface is mostly found in the names of official organizations and places, which have good information transmission and visual effects. Boldface is mainly used in road signs and warning signs, which is convenient for people to identify the information quickly. Some of the publicity slogans are written in regular script or other fonts, which conveys the information and also increases the beauty of the signs. The use of fonts in bottom-up signs is more abundant than that of top-down signs, including boldface, Song typeface, regular script, mixed font, art font, and so on. The use of fonts in the private shop sign is rich and creative, with more shop names using mixed and art fonts, which can expand the visual impact of the signage and attract customers. Most advertising and informative linguistic landscapes use boldface and Song typeface, which can convey important information well and draw attention.

In Ningnan County, there are three kinds of traditional and simplified characters used in linguistic landscapes: simplified characters, traditional characters, and simplified characters co-occurring with traditional characters. The usage of traditional and simple characters in top-down and bottom-up signs is basically the same, with predominantly simplified characters, accounting for 99.5% and 99%, respectively. That reflects the national language policy of promoting simplified Chinese characters, and the implementation of this policy in both official and private sectors has been very effective. There is only one case of traditional Chinese characters in the top-down sign, which is used in the name of the county library. The use of traditional Chinese characters can well reflect the characteristics of the library and emphasize the cultural atmosphere. In the bottom-up signs, there are ten cases of traditional and simplified characters, which are found on the signboards of stores. The use of traditional and simplified characters can emphasize the cultural atmosphere of the stores, enhance the aesthetics of the signboards and attract customers, reflecting the businessmen's purpose of setting up the signboards in order to increase the exposure and opportunities for the sales of their products. At the same time, it is also an attempt to seek and establish a unique identity. The use of traditional and simplified characters can stand out from the majority of store signboards that use simplified characters, reflecting the aesthetic orientation and identity construction of the individual merchant.

The materials of linguistic landscape carriers can be classified into permanent and temporary materials.

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Permanent materials include metal, concrete, and other solid and stable materials; temporary materials include paper, cloth, and other materials that are easy to move and destroy. The top-down signs use more permanent materials than the bottom-up signs. Metal is more often used in official organizations' names, road signs, and other linguistic landscapes, which can make such signs last for a long time and keep their beauty and solidity. Plastic and cloth are mostly used in the publicity slogans and warnings. These two types of materials are easy to process and design, and different colors and fonts can be used according to the official purpose, which attracts people's attention and plays a better role in education. The materials used in bottom-up signs are abundant; the most permanent material is metal, followed by wood. Temporary materials such as paper and cloth are used most; LED and adhesive-backed posters are also used. Aluminum composite panel is the most used metal material in shop signage. This type of material can convey information well, at the same time is not easy to damage and can save costs. Paper and cloth are most used in commercial advertising. This type of material is low cost and can be replaced at any time, which can meet the needs of business people to save costs while constantly updating the information. It is worth noting that the use of LED screens in pharmacies and stores has increased significantly, which reflects that material will continue to change with the development of technology. In general, the top-down and bottom-up signs carrier materials used to a greater extent reflect the information function of the linguistic landscape and the different needs of signage establishments.

4.3 Emplacement Analysis

Place semiotics divides emplacement into three categories: situated semiotics, decontextualized semiotics, and transgressive semiotics. The emplacement of the linguistic landscape can reflect the landscape of the area as well as urban planning issues.

Table 4. Emplacement of Linguistic Landscape in Ningnan County

Types	Emplacement	Number	Ratio
Top-down signs	situated semiotics	169	83.3%
	decontextualized semiotics	34	16.7%
Bottom-up signs	situated semiotics	886	94%
	decontextualized semiotics	42	4.5%
	transgressive semiotics	15	1.5%

From Table 4, it can be seen that the emplacement of top-down signs in Ningnan County exists situated semiotics and decontextualized semiotics, with a ratio of 83.3% and 16.7%, reflecting the reasonableness and standardization of the emplacement of top-down signs. Linguistic landscapes that

are placed in a contextualized manner mainly include the names of organizations and signage, which can provide information to the public in a simple and quick manner. Decontextualized emplacement mainly involves publicity slogans and warning slogans. These signs remain in the same form everywhere, which can subconsciously enhance people's understanding of the publicity content, thus playing the role of publicity or persuasion. Bottom-up signs have the highest number of situated semiotics at 94%, followed by decontextualized semiotics at 4.5% and transgressive semiotics at 1.5%. That indicates that bottom-up signs are generally standardized in terms of emplacement, but some areas still need to be improved and optimized. Private store signboards and commercial advertisements are primarily placed in contextualization, aiming at highlighting oneself, novelty, and attracting customers. While chain enterprise signboards are mostly decontextualized emplacements, the enterprise signboards keep the same look in different locations to deepen the audience's impression of the enterprise signboards and promote the promotion of the enterprise. Graffiti and some advertisements belong to the transgressive emplacement. Although some advertisements can play a promotional role, the form and location of their posting to a certain extent damaging to the city's image, the need for the relevant departments of the city to clean up timely and strengthen the promotion of the public together with the people to build a better civilized city image.

4.4 Questions and Suggestions

The linguistic landscape in Ningnan County mainly suffers from improper matching of Chinese characters, defacement of character carvings, and improper placement of linguistic landscapes.

The use of standardized language in the linguistic landscape can influence people's language habits and promote the formation of a society-wide culture of using standardized language and characters. The inappropriate matching of Chinese characters appears on the signboard of a private shop, whose name is "Guangming Glasses." "Guang" is an onomatopoeia describing the sound of vibration, which is inappropriate and should be changed to "Guangming Glasses", which is more in line with the standardized use of characters and the nature of the shop. Therefore, the shops concerned should take into account the standard use of Chinese characters when designing their names. In addition to this problem, both top-down and bottom-up signs have some damaged and old characters, which, to some extent, is not conducive to the transmission of information and is detrimental to the image of the city. Therefore, the relevant authorities should take measures in advance to inspect and replace the signs in a timely manner. Some bottom-up signs are placed in a transgressive manner. Advertisements or graffiti are pasted or attached to public facilities, affecting the aesthetics of the city. Relevant departments should increase the cleaning and supervision of this type of linguistic landscape.

5. Conclusions

Based on the theory of place semiotics, this paper takes the linguistic landscape of Ningnan County as the research object, collects corpus through the field survey method, and carries out a comprehensive analysis of the characteristics and problems of the linguistic landscape in the region. The code types in

Ningnan County are Chinese, Yi language, and English, reflecting a relatively rich language ecology in the region; bilingualism accounts for a high proportion, with Chinese and Yi bilingualism predominating, of which Chinese is a strong language with absolute dominance in the region. The local linguistic landscape largely reflects the importance of Chinese as the national lingua franca and the language policy of protecting and inheriting minority languages. In terms of inscription, the linguistic landscape has a variety of fonts usage, and bottom-up signs have a richer choice of fonts. The use of traditional and simplified characters on top-down and bottom-up signs is the same, with more simplified characters. The materials used in the carriers of top-down and bottom-up signs are diverse. Regarding the emplacement of linguistic landscapes, top-down signs have only two types of emplacements: situated semiotics and decontextualized semiotics, which reflect the standardized and reasonable management of signs. Bottom-up signs include situated semiotics, decontextualized semiotics, and transgressive semiotics. Transgressive semiotics has a certain negative effect on the city's image, which needs to be cleaned up and regulated. The linguistic landscape of Ningnan County also suffers from inappropriate use of Chinese characters, damage to some characters, and transgressive semiotics, which requires the relevant departments, signage creators, and residents to enhance their linguistic awareness and to maintain a good socio-linguistic ecological environment.

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