

Original Paper

A Study about Linguistic Landscape in Shaping City Image under the CIS Strategy of Internationally Important Ramsar Sites in Yunnan Province

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Abstract

This study, guided by the City Identity System (CIS) strategic model, investigates the linguistic landscape (such as signage and public notices) of four international important wetlands (Ramsar Sites) in Yunnan Province (Lashihai, Dashanbao, Bitahai, Napahai). Taking Yunnan Province's Ramsar Sites as examples, the current status of linguistic landscapes in ecological wetland areas is surveyed, and the role of ecological linguistic landscapes in enhancing the urban ecological image is explored. This paper also focuses on the phenomenon of multilingual linguistic landscape use. After identifying the problems in the linguistic landscapes of the aforementioned four wetlands, corresponding strategies and suggestions are proposed. This study seeks to promoting the standardized, multilingual, and multi-modal nature of linguistic landscapes in ecological areas, providing theoretical basis and practical evidences for the construction of Green and Beautiful Yunnan Strategy, and in a hope to better global understandings of China's ecological civilization.

Keywords

linguistic landscape; city identity system strategy; city image; multilingualism

1. Introduction

Against the backdrop of raging globalization, the presentation of linguistic landscape in China is highly valued and of is increasingly gaining significance. As one ecological pivote in southwest China, Yunnan displays magnitude in presenting a wholesome and ideal image of Chinese ecological civilization consist of linguistic landscape (e.g., public signs). Linguistic landscape play a crucial role

not only in maintaining harmony and civilization within cities, but also in serving as a “business card” for cities in terms of external publicity. They are an important component of the language and cultural environment of internationalized cities and international tourism destinations.

Therefore, strengthening the construction of linguistic landscape, especially filling the gap in the research of linguistic landscape in ecological contexts, is of great significance for exploring how to build a good urban ecological image and better communicate Xi Jinping Thought on Ecological Civilization. Through this study, I hope to explore the role of linguistic landscape in wetland scenic areas in shaping the international ecological image and internationalized image of cities, provide relevant suggestions, and draw attention from scenic spots and relevant wetland management departments. By using wetland resources as carriers, fully utilizing the role of linguistic landscape, and disseminating Xi Jinping Thought on Ecological civilization through multilingual standardized public notices in scenic spots, we can enhance the ecological and international images of cities.

Facing the international community, we aim to share China’s ecological wisdom and promote the shared concept of ecological civilization. There are three key concepts in this study. Firstly, the language that appears on public road signs, billboards, street names, place names, shop signs and public signs of government buildings together constitutes the linguistic landscape of a territory, region or city cluster (Landry & Bourhis 1997, p. 25). Secondly, what is CIS. The City Identity System originated from Western countries and was derived from the Corporate Identity System, namely the enterprise image identification system. It is called CIS for short and is the internal positioning and unified packaging of the city image (Shang & Zhao, 2014). Ecological image is an important part of the regional image. It is in the ecological environment protection and resource conservation discourse system. It is people’s evaluation and recognition of a region in terms of economic construction, cultural construction, environmental protection, and other aspects. It has a protective effect on the ecological environment for a regional economic development and cultural construction and is the overall impression of resource saving (Deng, 2016). Multi-language (multilingualization) linguistic landscape refers to two or more language categories relative to a single public language, corresponding to a single language (monolingual).

2. Literature Review

At present, the vast majority of research on the translation of public signs in China focuses on English translation, while the research on the multilingual translation of language landscapes, such as Chinese-Japanese, Chinese-Korean, and Chinese-Russian translations, accounts for a very small proportion in the overall ratio. Gao Yu (2008, p. 51) proposed the concept of local language landscape design in 2008. He believes that landscape design needs to interpret local language at a certain level to showcase local characteristics and make the landscape have vitality and sustainability (Gao, 2008). Hu Gengshen (2008, p. 11) proposed a brand-new translation theory in recent years: Eco-translatology is

“an ecological approach to translation studies, or translation studies from an ecological perspective”, which requires translators to start from “the linguistic dimension, the communicative dimension, and the cultural dimension” when translating (Xu, 2010). Based on this, Xue Hongguo (2022, p. 97) studied and analyzed the translation errors or improper translation phenomena in the translation transformation of public signs from the perspectives of “the linguistic dimension, the cultural dimension, and the communicative dimension” and proposed improvement measures. Among them, Lu Songzeng (2018, p. 125) also analyzed the problems existing in the language landscape of red tourism scenic spots and proposed corresponding countermeasures. It can be seen that in recent years, China’s language landscape research has achieved fruitful results, mainly focusing on the description of the scope, functions, language characteristics, and types of translation errors of public signs in the construction of the public space image and the language landscape of tourist attractions. However, the research on language landscapes focusing on the image of ecological civilization is rarely involved. Therefore, this project still has a lot of research space and certain research value. In recent years, the linguistic landscape research achieved fruitful results, mainly concentrated in the public space image construction and tourism scenic spots in the scope of linguistic landscape, function, language characteristics, the description of translation error type, but in the image of ecological civilization linguistic landscape research rarely involved, so this project still has a lot of research space, has certain research value.

There are four main characteristics of overseas language landscape research. First, the research Angle is rich. Foreign studies on language landscape mainly start from the aspects of linguistics, sociology, semiotics, ecolinguistics, language policy etc., and study the social issues related to language landscape. Second, the study of multilingualism is profound. By studying the use of language landscape in multilingual areas, researchers compare the power status of languages and reveal the social and cultural factors behind the language landscape. Third, foreign studies pay more attention to the impact of globalization on language landscape and the gap between language policy and implementation. Fourth, the research started early. Landry and Bourhis (1997, p. 25) first proposed the concept of “linguistic landscape”. “Language landscape” is defined as: “the language appearing on public street signs, billboards, street names, place names, shop signs and public signs of government buildings together constitute the language landscape of a territory, region or urban agglomeration”. Linguistic Landscape is considered to be a part of the city image identity and is crucial to building a good city image.

3. Methods

In this project, the survey method, content analysis method and literature method were used to investigate and study the language landscape status of the internationally important ecological wetland in Yunnan Province. Among them, 149 photos were taken and 99 valid photos were collected. Among them, 42 photos of Bita Sea, 6 photos of Napa Sea, 18 photos of Dashanbao, 33 photos of Lashihai. By collecting and sorting out, reading and analyzing relevant materials and literature, this study uses the

literature method to provide a theoretical basis for this research and to sort out the current situation of language landscape at home and abroad. And the content analysis method was used to travel to Napahai, Bitahai, Dashanbao and Lashihai for three times respectively. Cameras were used to record the language landscape of the wetland, and corpus was collected, including signs, signs, electronic screens, tour maps and other public sign carriers, and the collected corpus of public signs was analyzed and studied. In this study, the use of ecological markers in internationally important ecological wetlands in Yunnan Province was investigated by investigation method.

4. Findings and Discussions

4.1 The Problems on Language Level Found in Linguistic Landscapes

4.1.1 The Misuse of Language-misspelling

For instance, the place name “丽江” should be translated as “Lijiang”. Secondly, place names should be translated from the smallest to the largest range, separated by commas. Therefore, the correct translation is: Lijiang, China. The “J” should not be capitalized. In the name “丽江拉市海（国际）湿地公园”, the brackets are obviously redundant and not in line with the norms. In the corpus, in the proper noun “Lijiang Lashihai Wetland museum”, the first letter of “museum” should be capitalized. The English translation of the place name “纳帕海” as “Napahai” is correct, while “NA PA lake” is an incorrect translation. Moreover, the translation of the scenic spot “春宗” is incorrect. It should be “Chunzong Scenic Spot” instead of “chun zong spot”.

4.1.2 The Misuse of Language-wrong and Improper Translation

In the analysis of the corpus, a considerable number of wrong translations and missed translations were discovered. For example, the English translation of “十二生肖” should be “Chinese Zodiac” rather than “Twelve Zodiac”. Also, there are wrong translations in the multilingual language landscape public signs. For instance, in French, the corresponding word for “码头” is “marina” instead of “port”, as “port” means “港口” in French. Here, there seems to be a confusion between French and English, resulting in translation errors.

Similar mistakes abound. In “参观路线—Visit the route”, the article “the” is superfluous. It should be “Visiting route” or “This way”. For “小件存放”, it should be “Baggage storage”, while “Small store” means “小商店”. “休息小站” can be expressed as “Place for rest”, and “The rest of the station” means “车站的其余部分”. “贴心雨具” can be translated as “Rain Gear”, but “Sweet Rain” in the picture is confusing. It is particularly important to note that “Get lost” in English means “滚开” in a rude or angry way to tell someone to leave. The translation of the public sign in the text is not relevant, inaccurate, unprofessional and not rigorous. If you want to express “失物招领”, the commonly used “Lost and found” is concise and clear. The English word “Advisory” corresponding to “咨询” in the tourist hall means “警报”. Since this is clearly a consultation center, it is recommended to change it to “Information” or “Information Center”.

Furthermore, there is also the problem of stiff translations. The correct translation of “网红打卡基地” is actually “The Photo-taking Site”, but in the picture, it is translated as “The Taking-photo Site”, which is a word-for-word translation and does not conform to English usage conventions.

4.1.3 The Misuse of Language-inconsistent Translations

“观鸟长廊” is displayed as “Birds Watching Corridor” on the road signs, but is translated as “Bird-watching Walkway” in the scenic spot introduction. The inconsistency of the translations is likely to cause confusion. Inconsistent translations of “普达措”: Potatso and Putuo. After verification, Potatso is the official translation.

4.1.4 Printing Dislocation and Maintenance of the Language Landscape.

For example, “停车场” should be “Parking Lot”, but the corresponding English in the corpus is “Security; Police”. And the correct translation for “安全保卫” is actually “Museum”. This not only brings inconvenience to tourists but also greatly affects the image of the scenic area.

4.2 The Insufficiency of Multilingual Services and Supports

Based on the corpus we collected and close observations, the majority of which were Chinese and English versions. Though most of them are home travelers and English is an international language, other language is needed not only to show our respect but more accessibility for those no-English countries. Especially against the backdrop of a more closely connected ecological cooperation in our neighborhoods.

4.3 The Inadequate Exposure and Portray of Ecological Culture and Philosophy

The four wetlands in question enjoy not only scientific value but also ecological significance or even tightly linked to national image. The missions of those are to portraying and express China’s ecological culture and achievements, and our responsibility in response to the calling of the planet. Take KIB (Kunming Institute of Botany) for example, the linguistic landscape is showing traditional and modern Chinese ecological culture by organically relate language and environs together, assuring visitors a memorable and valuable experience.

5. Status Quo of Current Linguistic Landscape and Possible Solutions

5.1 Status Quo of Current Linguistic Landscape

Irregular and non-standard language expressions: grammatical errors, spelling mistakes, inaccurate word usage, and chaotic sentence structures; lack of multilingual services. The languages in the language landscape are mostly Chinese and English. It is suggested to increase multilingual guided tour services or provide multilingual interpretation equipment to meet the needs of different tourists; incorrect and confusing signs: incorrect signs may mislead or confuse tourists, causing them to question the service quality of the scenic area; unfavorable for navigation: incorrect signs may lead tourists to get lost or fail to find their destinations. It is recommended to correct the incorrect signs.

5.2 Possible Solutions

5.2.1 Review and update the signs and guidance boards of the scenic area: ensure that the language expression of all signs, guidance boards and information boards in the scenic area is accurate, clear and consistent with the main language.

5.2.2 Provision of multilingual services: As an internationally important ecological wetland, it is possible to consider the provision of multilingual tour services and speaking equipment to meet the needs of different visitors and ensure the accurate transmission of information.

5.2.3 Collect feedback from tourists: Set up feedback channels to encourage tourists to provide comments and suggestions on the scenic language landscape, so as to find and correct problems in time. The scenic spot can collect feedback through tourist surveys, message boards, online reviews and other means.

5.2.4 Regular maintenance of language landscapes has many significant functions. It can maintain the accuracy and effectiveness of information, avoiding misunderstandings or inconveniences caused by incorrect information; enhance readability, enabling people to read and obtain information more easily; shape a good image, demonstrating the orderliness, regulation, and civilization of the region; inherit and promote culture, passing on local culture, history, and traditions; promote economic development, providing conveniences for commercial activities, attracting tourists and consumers; and also enhance social cohesion, strengthening residents' sense of identity and belonging. The ways of maintaining language landscapes are diverse.

6. Research Results and Limitations

6.1 Research Results

Through research, it has been found that in specific ecological scenic areas, standardized and correct Linguistic Landscape signage can better serve tourists, while non-standard or incorrect signage not only inconveniences tourists, but also has a negative impact on the shaping of urban image. Multilingual signage can not only serve a larger group of tourists, but also enhance the international image of a city or region. Analyzing signage in ecological scenic areas from the perspective of eco-translation studies, it is found that focusing on the "three-dimensional transformation" of signage translation is beneficial for improving the standardization, communicability, and cultural aspects of signage language. Moreover, how to embody our ecology culture through linguistic landscape is still an ongoing process.

6.2 Limitations

Since the objects of this paper are only in Yunnan Province and the collected corpus is limited, the current situation of linguistic landscape in all the domestic ecological wetlands of internationally importance cannot be fully explored. Therefore, the conclusion of this paper may have some limitations. However, with the deepening of future research and the continuous accumulation of corpus collection,

the research on the linguistic landscape in ecological wetland will obtain more data and come to a more reliable and representative conclusion.

7. Conclusion

Based on the CIS strategy for shaping city images, this paper discusses strategies for improving the linguistic landscape of internationally significant ecological wetlands in Yunnan Province from the perspective of eco-translation studies. Firstly, at the language dimension, we encourage the use of accurate and standardized language expressions to avoid translation errors, omissions, and misplacements of public notices, ensuring the accurate and effective transmission of information. Secondly, adding ecological public notices in the linguistic landscape of ecological wetlands, such as plant and animal introductions and descriptions of natural environments within wetland ecosystems, not only enriches the content of linguistic landscapes but also enhances the dissemination of ecological civilization ideology. Furthermore, promoting the multilingualism of the linguistic landscape in ecological wetlands is also crucial. Yunnan, as an important gateway for China to Southeast Asia and South Asia with obvious geographical advantages, serves as a window for economic, political, cultural, and other exchanges and cooperation between China and neighboring countries. Constructing an international city image through the multilingualism of linguistic landscapes in ecological wetlands is beneficial for enhancing dialogue and communication between Yunnan and the international community, promoting diverse cultural exchanges and integration, and ultimately advancing the development and prosperity of Yunnan.

From a cultural dimension, reflecting indigenous cultural languages and considering the cultural backgrounds of tourists are essential for image building in ecological wetlands. Transmitting ecological values through linguistic landscapes, emphasizing the importance of wetlands, the necessity of natural balance, and the concept of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature can stimulate public environmental awareness and actions, reinforcing public identification with local culture and ecological values. Additionally, for foreign tourists, this also helps establish a positive ecological image of our province, promoting the construction of a green and beautiful Yunnan.

In conclusion, by initiating improvement measures from the language, communication, and cultural dimensions, we can enhance the linguistic landscape of internationally significant ecological wetlands in Yunnan Province. These efforts will guide and promote a healthy interaction between language and ecology, increase public awareness and participation in the importance of ecological conservation, and further contribute to the sustainable development of wetlands and the inheritance of ecological civilization ideology.

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