

Research on the Language Landscape of Historical Places

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Abstract

The existing review studies mostly focus on the facts and remain at the surface level, failing to discover the deep-seated problems in current language landscape research. Most of the relevant theses are master's dissertations, with few doctoral theses related to this topic. There are still few research results related to the language landscape of historical and cultural cities, towns, and villages. The existing research results are mostly at the synchronic level, with few at the diachronic level. Existing research has focused more on the individual differences between language landscapes and has neglected the exploration of intrinsic commonalities. It is important to investigate, record, and interview the language landscapes of historical and cultural cities, towns, and villages. In the research process, we will combine synchronic and diachronic approaches to identify the factors, mechanisms, and sequence levels that affect the language landscape of historical and cultural cities, towns, and villages.

Keywords

Language Landscape, Historical and Cultural, Famous Cities, Towns, and Villages, Synchronic Level, Duration Level

1. Introduction

The policy document “Opinions on Further Strengthening the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage” issued by the state clearly requires strengthening the “excavation of cultural resources in historical and cultural cities, towns, and villages.” Conducting research in this area is a concrete practice of implementing this spirit and providing language services to society. The study of language landscapes in historical and cultural cities, towns, and villages also involves the protection and development of historical and cultural heritage. Our research and achievements will contribute to the protection of historical and cultural heritage,

and will be carried out in a deep and sustainable manner. To promote the investigation, research, and theoretical exploration of historical and cultural language landscapes, it is necessary to explore both the general attributes of synchronic language landscape research and the historical and cultural evolution paths of language landscapes in famous cities, towns, and villages, in order to deeply explore and refine them. The historical places in this study mainly refer to famous historical and cultural cities, towns, and villages.

Language landscape refers to the language and text used in public places, including signs, road signs, vehicle advertisements, and other aspects. This study searched databases such as China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), the National Journal of Philosophy and Social Sciences, and Wanfang, and found that there are currently many papers exploring the language landscape, especially in recent years, where achievements have continuously emerged. There are many papers displayed on CNKI alone, some of which are dissertations. However, most of these papers were published in general journals, and all of the theses were master's theses, with no doctoral thesis choosing this topic. This indicates that there are currently few studies that directly use this question as a research topic. The existing research mainly focuses on master's theses, such as He (2019), Lv (2019), Liu (2019), Ren (2019), etc. These master's dissertations are mainly written by students majoring in linguistics and applied linguistics or international communication of Chinese language, as well as students majoring in foreign language studies. Next are journal articles, which include: firstly, research on the language landscape in China; secondly, research on the language landscape of parks or scenic spots, such as Jin (2020), Liu & Huang (2019), Zhu (2019), Li (2019), etc. The second is to study the language landscape of commercial districts, such as Peng, Luo & Gao (2018), etc. The third one is to discuss the language landscape of the entire city, such as Gao (2019). The fourth one is that most papers focus on Han ethnic settlements, and there are also achievements in studying the language landscape of ethnic minority areas, such as Li & Xia (2017), Li (2020), Suo et al., (2021), etc.

1) Research on the language landscape in China, and secondly, research on the language landscape of parks or scenic spots. The second is to study the language landscape of commercial districts. The third is to discuss the language landscape of the entire city. The fourth is that most papers focus on Han ethnic settlements, and there are also achievements in studying the language landscape of ethnic minority areas. In addition, there have been some achievements in studying the campus language landscape.

2) The second one is the study of foreign language landscapes, mainly focusing on the language landscapes of neighboring countries in China, such as Lv (2017), etc. They mainly focus on the language landscape of neighboring countries such as Thailand, Indonesia, Japan, etc., and mainly study the language landscape of Chinese neighborhoods in these countries. There have also been achievements in translating foreign research on language landscapes. In addition, there have also

been achievements in studying the foreign language landscape in China, as well as attempts to introduce other theories to study the language landscape.

3) There have been some achievements in exploring the urban language landscape, mainly including *Zhang & Lv (2019)*, etc. There is also an introduction to the history of Western language landscape research, research on virtual space language landscape, and research on website language landscape. Some papers on language landscape research are often cited, such as *Shang & Zhao (2014)*. In fact, some early research results, although not expressed as “language landscape,” actually belong to the category of language landscape research, such as “Problems, Objectives, and Methods of Research on Outdoor Slogans in China.”

In terms of reviews, there are several papers; however, most of the existing reviews are based on facts and statistics on the publication status of papers, which are limited to the surface and fail to reveal the deep-seated problems in current language landscape research.

From the above, it can be found that a considerable number of research results combining language landscape have been published in recent years, especially after 2019. This indicates that the study of language landscapes is increasingly attracting people’s attention. The scholars involved include those from the linguistic community (including foreign languages, Chinese, and minority languages), as well as those from the fields of tourism and urban planning. Among them, some provinces and cities have also established projects related to language landscapes, mostly social science projects, and even natural science projects related to language landscapes.

Although there have been many previous research results on various language landscape phenomena, there are also many problems, such as:

1) There is still a lack of research results on the language landscape of historical and cultural cities, towns, and villages. Although there have been many studies on language landscapes, there are still few achievements specifically studying the language landscapes of historical and cultural cities, towns, and villages. Research in this area urgently needs to be strengthened.

2) They only focus on the synchronic aspect and neglect the diachronic aspect. Previous studies have almost always been synchronic, lacking comparative research on historical linguistic landscapes. The same applies to research on the language landscape of cities, towns, or villages, which is mostly synchronic in nature and rarely compared from a diachronic perspective.

Most of the existing research results are based on facts and lack theoretical refinement and sublimation, resulting in insufficient depth. The existing achievements lack in-depth theoretical refinement and have not yet formed a systematic theory on the language landscape of historical and cultural cities, towns, and villages. The existing research results mostly remain at the level of general analysis of survey results, lacking depth. Existing research has mostly focused on the surface phenomena of language landscapes, without delving into the underlying governing factors behind these language usage phenomena. Even if some achieve-

ments are mentioned, they are only brief introductions to research on foreign language landscapes, and there have been no original theoretical results based on domestic language landscape materials. In addition, existing studies often only focus on text and images of language landscapes, while neglecting audio materials within language landscapes, such as sales language, government public welfare propaganda language, and broadcasting propaganda in public places during epidemics.

In addition, there are some other problems, such as emphasizing individual differences in language landscapes and neglecting the exploration of commonalities. Existing research often focuses more on regional or domain differences in language landscapes, while neglecting the exploration of commonalities behind these language landscapes.

In summary, there is still a lot of room for research in this area and great potential. The research on the language landscape of historical and cultural cities, towns, and villages has great value.

2. Path Analysis for Conducting Research

The language landscape of historical and cultural cities, towns, and villages that we want to research refers to the current public language landscape of historical and cultural cities, towns, and villages, as well as the historical language landscape of historical and cultural cities, towns, and villages (obtained through combing historical documents), reflected in plaques, couplets, building signs, signage, etc. At the same time as conducting a synchronic survey, comparisons over time are also made. In existing research on language landscape, there are few achievements in this area. The content of this research mainly includes the following aspects:

1) We need to carefully review the relevant research status and changes of previous scholars, and point out areas that can be further studied. In addition, this section also explains the significance of this study and the various elements involved, such as research methods, language, and the relevant status of landscape field investigations.

2) Survey on the Current Status of Language Landscape in Historical and Cultural Cities, Towns, and Villages through field investigation methods, with Guangdong as a representative, we will focus on selecting some typical historical and cultural cities, towns, and villages for investigation. Conduct comprehensive surveys, interviews, etc. at various locations as much as possible. This section lays the foundation for the following analysis and discussion.

3) Conduct language landscape analysis of historical and cultural cities, towns, and villages. Here, our main focus is on conducting a relevant analysis of the survey results. We are located in various universities and provide support for conducting surveys in this area. This section focuses on discussing the elements, mechanisms, sequence levels, and other factors that affect the language landscape of historical and cultural cities, towns, and villages.

4) Comparison of Language Landscapes in Historical and Cultural Cities, Towns,

and Villages over Time. We will compare the results of the synchronic survey with the linguistic landscape of historical and cultural cities, towns, and villages over time, which has been a scarce area of research in the past. In fact, historical and cultural cities, towns, and villages often have literature, such as local chronicles and other local documents. Previous studies have overlooked these aspects. We will combine synchronic and diachronic approaches, and there will be some new discoveries.

5) Discussion on research results. On the basis of previous work, we have condensed the theory and gained some valuable insights. Our discussion results provide support for further research on language landscapes. Finally, we summarize the main conclusions of this study and elaborate on some insights and reflections gained from it.

Our focus is on comprehensively and truthfully investigating the language landscape of historical and cultural cities, towns, and villages. Develop a scientifically effective investigation plan and make appropriate adjustments based on the actual situation during the investigation process. The main difficulty lies in how to comprehensively and objectively investigate the language landscape of historical and cultural cities, towns, and villages, while searching for historical literature materials on these language landscapes and extracting theories.

3. Conclusion

Our main goal is to conduct field investigations to understand the language and landscape conditions of historical and cultural cities, towns, and villages, and to obtain first-hand and vivid materials. Therefore, based on the investigation, we will delve into some theoretical issues and provide support for further research in academia. The main features of this study include things, such as:

1) This research not only focuses on the synchronic language landscape, but also on the diachronic evolution of the language landscape. We not only focus on the static aspects of language landscape research, but also on outlining its dynamic paths.

2) Compared with previous research, this research focuses more on exploring the combination of history and culture. We pay more attention to the reflection and influence of historical and cultural factors in the linguistic landscape.

This research will provide a reference for the academic community to further develop the language landscape of historical and cultural cities, towns, and villages. The language landscape of historical and cultural cities, towns, and villages involves aspects such as historical culture and urban construction. At the same time, the language landscape of the village also involves the central government's call for rural revitalization, cultural tourism, and so on. The expected results will also contribute to the protection and development of historical and cultural resources, rural revitalization, cultural tourism, and other social public utilities, helping to promote social and cultural development and generate a positive social impact.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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