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A Review of Research on the Relationship between Linguistic Landscape and Space

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Abstract. In recent years, the linguistic landscape research has gradually attracted the attention of scholars in many related research fields. This paper mainly combines the core research topics in the research field of linguistic landscape, from the definition of linguistic landscape and the function of linguistic landscape, the definition of related academic terms and concepts, the empirical research of linguistic landscape in urban blocks at home and abroad, the theoretical study of linguistic landscape, and the relationship between linguistic landscape and spatial dimensions. Five levels of research, the current situation of domestic and foreign urban linguistic landscape studies and the overall research related to this paper are reviewed. To sum up, the stylistic characteristics, structure and function of linguistic landscapes reflect the characteristics of the study area to a certain extent. The study found that linguistic landscape is closely related to public space and indoor space. The special characteristics and regional functions of space can affect the characteristics and functions of linguistic landscapes. At the same time, there is a relationship between linguistic landscape and space. On the whole, this study provides a clear development direction for the core research questions in future linguistic landscape research. Linguistic landscape research focuses on the combination of micro and macro research perspectives and aims to reveal the relationship between linguistic landscape and its space. The study of linguistic landscape mainly focuses on the interaction between language, visual activities, spatial practice and cultural dimensions, especially the construction of spatial discourse with text as the medium and the use of symbolic resources.

Key words: linguistic landscape; spatial relationship; sociolinguistics; language environment; multi-lingualism.

Introduction

Scholars in different research fields of linguistic landscape [Landry & Bourhis 1997: 25; Ben-Rafael 2009: 43] have given various definitions of linguistic landscape. The research aim of linguistic landscape is mainly language signs, including public places' signs, street signs, billboards, warning signs, shop signs, slogans, tourist brochures, tourist attraction language and other signs displayed in the public eye. The focus of linguistic landscape research is to examine the construction methods and processes of language symbols between language planning departments, language users and language recipients, the spatiality of linguistic landscapes, and the relevant information and symbolic meanings contained in linguistic landscapes. At first, the core background of linguistic landscape research was "public space", but with the deepening and expansion of studies in this field, the research scope has extended from public space to different spaces such as private space, indoor space and virtual space [Shang Guowen & Zhao Shouhui 2014a: 214; 2014b: 88].

Looking at the current situation in linguistic landscape research at home and abroad, Landry & Bourhis first proposed the authoritative academic research term "linguistic landscape" in 1997 [Landry & Bourhis 1997: 23]. Based on this, linguistic researchers at home and abroad have carried out related research from the perspective of review and empirical studies. Specifically, the comprehensive research mainly covers the overall situation of the linguistic landscape research field (a comprehensive overview of the background, methods, theories, prospects and challenges of linguistic landscape research), the analysis dimension and theoretical construction of linguistic landscape, the development process of linguistic landscape research and linguistic landscape research stage [Landry & Bourhis 1997: 27; Shang Guowen & Zhao Shouhui 2014b: 87; Li Lisheng 2015: 6; Fu Wenli & Bai Limei 2017: 46; Xu Ming 2017: 60; Wu Xili & Zhan Ju & Liu Xiaobo 2017: 172; Zhang Tianwei 2020: 52]. These review articles by scholars at home and abroad more comprehensively reflect the current theoretical system and theoretical construction of linguistic landscape research at home and abroad. Under the background of the theoretical basis and theoretical innovation of linguistic landscape research, scholars in the field of linguistic landscape research at home and abroad have carried out empirical research. The current empirical research on linguistic landscape mainly covers the perspective of multilingualism, urban linguistic landscape research [Cenoz & Gorter 2006: 270; Barni & Bagna 2010: 8; Kallen & Dhonnacha 2010: 24], and sociolinguistic and sociological dimension urban linguistic land-

scape research [Backhaus 2006: 56; Ben-Rafael 2009: 42; Huebner 2009: 77], research on linguistic landscape of urban blocks [Backhaus 2006: 54; Tian Feiyang & Zhang Weijia 2014: 40], research on the dimension of linguistic landscape and spatial relationship [Ron Scollon & Suzie Wong Scollon 2003: 3; Blommaert 2006: 20; Jaworski & Thurlow 2010: 10; Pennycook 2010: 14; Lu Deping 2022: 1] and other research dimensions of the linguistic landscape.

In the existing research on the dimension of linguistic landscape and spatial relationship at home and abroad, there are two main research clues in current linguistic landscape studies [ibid.: 2]. The first research clue is language orientation, and the second is spatial orientation. Among them, the language orientation of linguistic landscape research focuses on "language in spatial symbols", that is, "language status issues concerned by language policy and language planning, and language power issues concerned by sociolinguistics" [Blommaert 2013:126]. The spatial orientation of linguistic landscape research focuses on "symbols in space", that is, "the urban spatial characteristics that characterize urban social practices expressed in language and other multimodal signs in the linguistic landscape" [Pennycook 2010:67].

Definition and Function of Linguistic Landscape

Based on the authoritative definition of linguistic landscape proposed by Landry & Bourhis, other well-known scholars have also proposed different definitions of the research nature of linguistic landscape. "The symbolic architecture presented in a visual public space can be regarded as a linguistic landscape, because the language it expresses and the symbols it uses are the 'things' happening in that social space" [Ben-Rafael 2009: 41]. In the *monograph Semiotic Landscapes: Language, Image, Space*, co-published by Jaworski & Thurlow in 2010, the definition of "linguistic landscape" is deepened. It has been expanded into a "semiotic landscape" and defined as "any public space that is visible and shaped by people's intentional intervention in meaning construction" [Jaworski & Thurlow 2010: 2]. Therefore, the method of multimodal discourse analysis is often used in the research related to linguistic landscape, and linguistic landscape is no longer regarded as just a reflection of the sociolinguistic situation in a certain spatial field, but as a geographical space in the form of speech.

Linguistic landscape has two main functions. One is informative function and the other is the symbolic function. With regard to informative function, "linguistic landscapes help inform the linguistic characteristics, territorial extent and linguistic boundaries

of the entered areas within and outside the group” [Landry & Bourhis 1997: 25]. In addition to informative function, symbolic function is also crucial. The presence or absence of certain languages on public signage does affect the understanding and perception of those languages in the speech community. “Most private and government signs are printed with their own language, which should help people perceive the language on these signs as more valuable and status in the group than other languages in the sociolinguistic context” [ibid.: 27]. The symbolic function of linguistic landscape means language power and language status reflected by linguistic landscape.

Multimodality

‘Discourse’ is a language use in social interaction. “Of the various types of social interaction, each of which is most effective, has specific requirements for the spatial structure in which it takes place and the material mediation means available to the participants to carry out the activity, providing it with support” [Ron Scollon & Suzie Wong Scollon 2003: 3]. “Discourse includes various forms of meaningful human symbolic activity related to society, cultural and historical patterns and development of usage. Linguistic landscape research is closely related to discourse analysis research” [Blommaert 2006: 5]. “There is a dual relationship between the analysis, that is, discourse shapes the linguistic landscape and is also shaped by the linguistic landscape” [Seargeant & Giaxoglou 2020: 311].

Linguistic landscape is used as “linguistic objects that mark public space” [Gorter 2006: 3]. At the same time, linguistic landscape is also “language presentation in a language ecological environment, and language and words displayed in public space with images” [Shohamy & Gorter 2009: 1]. Therefore, the linguistic landscape can be regarded as a kind of text that also emphasizes the multimodal nature. “Linguistic landscape analysis that only considers linguistic aspects or a single-modal perspective can lead to distortions and partial distortions of the phenomenon” [Shohamy & Waksman 2009: 316]. Multimodal linguistic landscapes encompassing both visual imagery and written language are echoed. “Because meaning arises through various aspects of visual texts, it is difficult to analyze linguistic content separately from other features that contribute to the visual whole” [Huebner 2009: 76].

To sum up, linguistic landscape as a discourse or multimodal discourse, is mainly composed of one or two generative modalities of meaning, namely linguistic modality, linguistic and visual modalities (other modalities include color, font, spatial layout and context). For multimodal linguistic landscape research, we should not only analyze language mo-

dalities, but also explore non-linguistic modalities. Only in this way can we get the most information from it [Li Meixia & Song Erchun 2010: 7].

The Relationship between Urban Linguistic Landscape and Space

Urban linguistic landscape research mainly involves two dimensions of “language in spatial symbols” and “symbols in space” [Lu Deping 2022: 3], that is, language symbols in linguistic landscape research and non-linguistic symbols. Combined with the theme of this research review, this section will start from two aspects related to the analysis of language symbols and non-linguistic symbols in urban linguistic landscape and the research dimension of urban linguistic landscape and spatial relationship.

The Relationship between Linguistic Landscape and Space in Urban Cases

Regarding the research on the relationship between linguistic landscape and space in urban cases, to analyze it concretely, it is necessary to first explore the elements of language symbols in specific spaces. This study adopts the perspective of spatial distinction and representation to conduct linguistic landscape research. Specifically, a visual semiotics framework was proposed [Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 20]. For the study of multimodal linguistic landscapes, language modality and visual modality cannot be analyzed in isolation.

“Discourse in place” is also known as “geosemiotics” [Scollon & Scollon 2003: 10], mainly to study how linguistic landscapes, as discourses in places, express meaning in specific places. As a subsystem of geosemiotics, place semiotics is a set of frameworks for analyzing the language symbol system in the real environment. It consists of subsystems such as code preference, inscription, and emplacement.

Following theoretical study of place semiotics, linguistic landscape research can also refer to the SPEAKING model for linguistic analysis to sort out the multiple relationships between language means and social meaning [Huebner 2009: 77].

The above studies have paid attention to the “spatiality” of linguistic landscape from different research perspectives, research levels and research dimensions, that is, “(social) space” is one of the main elements of linguistic landscape composition. In order to further explore and analyze the relationship between linguistic landscape and space, the current linguistic landscape research should use the “representation of space”, that is, to regard language in a specific space as “independent of nature”. This research idea is obviously different from the idea of analyzing various modal elements of linguistic landscape from the micro level mentioned above. In

comparison, the “spatial representation idea” of linguistic landscape research should regard linguistic landscape objects as a whole to explore the relationship between the linguistic landscape and the social space in which it is located.

Shohamy & Waksman (2009) took note of this problem and, as such, they emphasized a multimodal view of linguistic landscape research. In dynamic social spaces, the representation of meaning in normal objects we see in everyday life has expanded from “mere use of language to images, colors, page layouts, music” and many other meaningfully designed symbolic resources” [Iedema 2003: 33]. As a social phenomenon, the visual linguistic landscape in the city not only includes language as a symbolic resource. It is obvious that when interpreting the meaning conveyed by the linguistic landscape, they both emphasize the necessity and importance of other modes of meaning generation other than language modes [Shohamy & Waksman 2009: 315]. This dimension is often referred to as the multimodal dimension, which applies to the multimodal linguistic landscape in this study.

Research on the Relationship between Linguistic Landscape and Space in Specific Urban Areas

Specific to the relevant research aspects of the linguistic landscape and spatial relationship in a specific urban area, the current research on the linguistic landscape and spatial relationship in a specific urban area by scholars in related fields at home and abroad mainly focuses on two research dimensions. The first research dimension is the multilingual dimension. The research on the relationship between the linguistic landscape and space in a specific urban area in the multilingual dimension is mainly based on quantitative auxiliary analysis, combined with qualitative research methods and analytical methods. Based on quantitative analysis, it explains the phenomenon of multilingualism, and further reveals the language policy and language management behind the multilingualism. For example, Ben-Rafael et al. contrasted single- and mixed-resident Israeli cities and the linguistic landscape of Jerusalem [Ben-Rafael et al. 2006: 23]. Hult explored and analyzed the relationship between linguistic landscape and language ecology. His hypothesis is that “linguistic landscape analysis can be used for multilingual ecological studies” [Hult 2009: 90].

In current research on the relationship between linguistic landscape and space in specific urban areas by scholars in related fields at home and abroad, the second main research dimension is the spatial perspective of linguistic landscape research. Pennycook mentioned the viewpoints of spatial production theory and spatial lexicon in metrolingualism [Pen-

nycook 2010: 21], that is, space is not pre-existing, but is constructed through people’s social events, urban language life. Blommaert believes that “in the visual public space, the information presented is basically non-neutral. Relatively speaking, they always highlight the corresponding social structure, power and hierarchy to a certain extent” [Blommaert 2013: 30].

The above studies, both the multilingual dimension of linguistic landscape research and the spatial perspective dimension of linguistic landscape research have paid attention to the relationship between linguistic landscape and space.

Research on Urban Street Linguistic Landscape

As far as the research on urban street linguistic landscape is concerned, some scholars in related fields at home and abroad have carried out relevant research on it, and these studies also have certain inspiration and references. Specifically, Backhaus conducted an empirical study of the multilingual linguistic landscape in the streets of Tokyo [Backhaus 2006: 56]. His research focuses on the differences between official multilingual signage and non-official multilingual signage. A lot of space is devoted to analyzing the frequency distribution of multiple languages in official and non-official signs. The findings showed that in the sample of official signage, 99 % of people placed Japanese in a more prominent position, while the situation was more balanced for unofficial signs, and in the sample of linguistic landscape analysis, almost 40 % showed that there is an inverse relationship between Japanese and other languages” [Backhaus 2008: 63]. This phenomenon suggests that the dominance of Japanese in the two different types of signage differs. It can be explained through the two dimensions of linguistic power and solidarity.

Xu Ming took the representative blocks along Beijing Metro Line 2 and 16 districts as the research objects, and analyzed 13,772 valid linguistic landscape samples collected [Xu Ming 2018: 60]. The research results show that in the presentation of the language code of Beijing’s linguistic landscape, Chinese occupies an absolute dominant position, and at the same time shows a relatively obvious multilingualism.

The above-mentioned scholars’ research on urban street linguistic landscape basically focuses on the specific analysis of various elements, mainly through the analysis of the language code level to reveal and explain the language behind the linguistic landscape, such as language policy and language construction. The similarity between this study and those of the above scholars is that the research objects are all urban street linguistic landscapes.

Conclusion

We live in the age where the highest density of linguistic landscapes can be found everywhere. Rapid developments in the fields of new media and information technology have made the linguistic landscape more diverse than ever. The emergence of the term “linguistic landscape” and its related research, on the one hand, has improved the understanding of the linguistic landscape of visual public space and indoor space, and provided scholars interested in understanding linguistic landscape with more information on the field of language research. Knowledge environment is necessary to conduct relevant research. As an emerging research field, although the linguistic landscape has attracted the attention of many disciplines, it still faces many problems and difficulties at the theoretical and methodological level, which need to be solved before going further.

Thus, the above observations on international and domestic linguistic landscape research show that this growing field of research has attracted the attention of foreign scholars as well as Chinese scholars. However, from the current situation of linguistic landscape research abroad, more fruitful research results have been obtained. To gain insight into the linguistic landscape, we use a different perspective. Foreign scholars mainly carry out linguistic landscape research from multilingual dimensions, sociolinguistics and sociology dimensions, linguistic landscape and spatial dimensions, and other dimensions. The sociolinguistic and sociological methods of linguistic landscape research are the main viewpoints of international linguistic landscape research in recent years. The linguistic landscape is inevitably linked with social factors. Since the beginning of linguistic landscape research, most of the studies have adopted the perspective of “social”, including the study of linguistic landscape from the perspectives of second language acquisition and spatiality. It is also often associated with a sociological perspective [Lou 2016: 26].

Taking a sociological perspective into linguistic landscape research does not necessarily mean taking the problem of code selection as the core of the research. For example, by citing the social perspective + second language acquisition perspective + spatial perspective, two related scholars discussed how to create a learning space for language learners in language learning, to adapt to the language use paradigm of the target language society to the greatest extent [Cenoz & Gorter 2008:72]. A social perspective should be a perspective that focuses on the relationship between people and society, not necessarily code selection or community issues. There is a blurred boundary between sociolinguistic and sociological perspectives and of multilingualism. There is

some overlap between the two views, but it is necessary to treat the polyglot view as a separate view, as the polyglot view places more emphasis on the presence or absence of one or more languages, its focus is mainly on the multilingual competitive aspects. The sociolinguistic and sociological perspective also looks at the different language codes presented on the linguistic landscape, but its focus is on one language or multiple languages in the linguistic landscape and social space, the potential power of language, and government language policy and social space. Therefore, it is necessary to consider multilingualism and sociolinguistic perspectives as two distinct disciplinary orientations.

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Аннотация. В последние годы исследование лингвистического ландшафта постепенно привлекает внимание ученых во многих смежных научных областях. Данная работа охватывает основные аспекты исследований в области изучения лингвистического ландшафта: определение лингвистического ландшафта и его функций, анализ родственных академических терминов и понятий, эмпирическое исследование лингвистического ландшафта в городских кварталах в Китае и за рубежом, теоретическое изучение лингвистического ландшафта и взаимосвязи между лингвистическим ландшафтом и пространственными измерениями. Рассматриваются пять уровней исследований, современное состояние отечественных и зарубежных работ по изучению городского лингвистического ландшафта и общие исследования. Установлено, что стилистические характеристики, структура и функции языковых ландшафтов в определенной степени отражают особенности области изучения. Исследование показало, что лингвистический ландшафт в определенной степени тесно связан с общественным и внутренним пространством. Особые характеристики и региональные функции пространства могут влиять на характеристики и функции языковых ландшафтов. В то же время существует связь между языковым ландшафтом и пространством. В целом настоящая работа формулирует основные вопросы изучения лингвистического ландшафта. Исследование лингвистического ландшафта сосредоточено на сочетании микро- и макроперспектив и направлено на выявление взаимосвязи между лингвистическим ландшафтом и пространством. Изучение лингвистического ландшафта сосредоточено главным образом на взаимодействии между языком, визуальной деятельностью, пространственной практикой и культурными измерениями, в частности на построении пространственного дискурса с помощью текста и использовании символических ресурсов.

Ключевые слова: лингвистический ландшафт; пространственные отношения; социолингвистика; языковая среда; многоязычие.