

Research on Governance Strategy of Public Signs in Qianjiang Tourist Attractions

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Abstract: *This study investigates the public signs within the scenic areas of Qianjiang District, Chongqing Municipality. Through the application of photography, questionnaire surveys, and random interviews, the existing state of public signage is statistically evaluated, considering linguistic diversity, coding orientation, and establishment functionality. Issues are pinpointed in three aspects: the language used, the planning of the linguistic landscape, and the management of the linguistic landscape. The study analyzes the governance components and challenges of the tourist area, and suggests strategies for enhancing the management of public signs in Tourist Scenic Area in Qianjiang District. These strategies concentrate on clarifying the overarching design, optimizing management models, and refining laws and regulations.*

Keywords: *Tourist Scenic Area, Public Signs, Governance Strategies*

1. Introduction

In the realm of sociolinguistics, the term "language landscape" refers to the observable texts within the public domain or public spaces, conveyed through linguistic signs. The concept of "language landscape" was initially introduced by Landry & Bourhis in 1997. They posited that the languages signs displayed on public roads, billboards, shops, and government buildings collectively form the language landscape of a territory.^[1] In recent times, scholars in and abroad, including Jaworski, Shang Guowen, Zhang Baicheng and others, have concentrated their studies on tourist attractions.^{[2][3]} They have highlighted that the language landscape serves as a symbolic resource for visual consumption by tourists and plays a crucial role in the tourism experience, being closely related with tourism activities and services. Nevertheless, research findings imply a considerable disparity between public signs and their intended positioning in tourist attractions, thus calling for scientific and systematic management and transformation. Consequently, this study selected tourist attractions in Qianjiang District—specifically Zhuoshui ancient town, Xiaonanhai Earthquake Memorial Park, and Urban Canyon Park—as its investigation subjects. It aims to explore governance concepts and strategies for public signs on tourist sites, drawing from the theoretical framework of language landscape.

2. Research Design on the Governance of Public Signage in Qianjiang District Scenic Areas

2.1. Research Questions

- a) Characteristics of public signs in Qianjiang scenic areas;
- b) Non-standard phenomena of public signs in Qianjiang scenic areas;
- c) Elements and challenges of governance for public signs in Qianjiang scenic areas.

2.2. Overview of Scenic Areas

2.2.1. Zhuoshui Ancient Town

A national 5A scenic area, known as one of the ten major landmarks of Chongqing. It is located by the important branch of the Wujiang River—Apeng River, situated in the southeast of Qianjiang District, predominantly inhabited by the Tujia and Miao ethnic groups. Surrounded by towering mountains, the ancient town is one of the few Tujia towns in the Wuling Mountain region, with a

history of several thousands years as a commercial Tujia Village with transportation port.

2.2.2. Xiaonanhai Earthquake Memorial Park

A national 4A scenic area and the best-preserved ancient earthquake site in China, integrating mountains, lakes, islands, and gorges into a scenic highland.

2.2.3. Urban Canyon Park

Natural steep valleys with width of 80-100 meters and a maximum high of 500 meters. Most of the cliffs are vertical, showing the typical Karst landform of Southwest of China.

2.3. Research Objectives and Methods

The research conducted a survey of three tourist attractions in Qianjiang District. It focused observable static signs in the language landscape, using methods of taking photos, recording, interviews, and questionnaires. In selecting language landscapes, we fully considered the relative integrity, function, and physical boundaries of the language landscape, and chose distinctive and representative locations as the research subjects.

The survey included 222 language signs, which were classified according to factors such as language type, combination, and dominant codes. Language signs were classified and coded. Questionnaires were used to conduct surveys within scenic areas, resulting in a total of 57 valid questionnaires. And 17 visitors, shop keepers and servers at the tourist attractions were interviewed.

3. Research Results and Analysis

3.1. Overview of Public Signs

3.1.1. Language Types and Combinations

After investigation and research, we found that the main public signs in the three major tourist attractions include four types: single-language signs, bilingual signs, trilingual signs, and quadrilingual signs. As shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Language Types and Combinations of Public Signs in Three Tourist Attractions

Language Sign	Language combination	Frequency	Percentage
Monolingual	Chinese	110	49.55%
Bilingual	Chinese+English	53	23.87%
Trilingual	Chinese+English+Korean	40	18.01%
quadrilingual	Chinese+English+Japanese+French	19	8.56%
Total		222	100%

Monolingual signs have the largest proportion in tourist attractions, accounting for 49.55%; the second largest is bilingual signs, with the combined total of Chinese and English accounting for 23.87%; trilingual signs with Chinese, English, and Korean combined account for 18.01%; and quadrilingual signs have the smallest proportion at 8.56%. Overall, the public signs in the three tourist attractions demonstrate a trend of linguistic diversity.

3.1.2. Code Orientation

The text signs in the three tourist attractions feature five languages: Chinese, English, Korean, Japanese, and French. The frequency of appearance is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Frequency of language frequency at three tourist attractions

Language	Chinese	English	Korean	Japanese	French
times	222	112	40	19	19
frequency	100%	50.45%	18.01%	8.56%	8.56%

Chinese appears on 222 language signs, with a frequency of 100%, indicating that Chinese is dominant in public signs. Tourist attractions use simplified Chinese as the primary language, which not only brings convenience to visitors but also complies with the "National Common Language and Script Law" stipulating that service industries should use standardized Chinese characters as the basic service script. English appears on 112 language signs, with a frequency of 50.45%, ranking second only next to Chinese, highlighting the status of English as an international language. Korean appears on 40 public

signs, with a frequency of 18.01%; Japanese appears on 19 public signs, with a frequency of 8.56%, and French appears on 19 language signs, also with a frequency of 8.56%.

Overall, in the public signs of tourist attractions, Chinese is dominant with the highest proportion. Signs in English, Korean, Japanese, and French meet the diverse needs of foreign tourists.

3.1.3. Public signs set up by different initiators

Language landscapes are divided into top-down and bottom-up types. The former, also known as official signs, refers to signs set up by the government to represent its stance and actions, such as road signs, street names, and building names; the latter, also known as unofficial signs, refers to signs set up by individuals or businesses for the purpose of introducing commercial information, such as posters, slogans, shop names, banners, etc.^[1]

In three tourist attractions, there are 193 official signs, accounting for 86.94%; while there are 29 unofficial language signs, accounting for 13.06%. The differences are reflected as follows: Firstly official public signs dominate in quantity. Second, in language types. Official language signs include five languages namely Chinese, English, Korean, Japanese, and French, while unofficial signs are relatively uniform only with Chinese. Thirdly, in sign types. Official signs include: advertisements, road indicators, scenic spot introductions, visitor warnings, public promotions, and service facilities and equipment introductions. Nevertheless, all unofficial signs are commercial promotions. Through interviews with shopkeepers in tourist attractions, it was found that most shopkeepers had not studied foreign languages and pay no attention to the language types and combinations on signs. Due to the generally low literacy of shopkeepers in the scenic area, there is a lack of understanding of the economic attributes of language, and they neglect the significant economic appeal of multilingual signs to customers. Differences in language landscapes set up by different founders are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Differences in language landscapes set up by different founders

Establisher	Number	Chinese	English	Korean	Japanese	French
Official	193	193	112	40	19	19
Non-official	29	29	0	0	0	0

3.2. Types of Functions of Scenic Area Public Signs

Through investigation and analysis, based on visual and auditory language landscapes in static and dynamic, the public signs of three scenic areas can be classified into guiding, cognitive, promotional, and aesthetic functions.

3.2.1. Guiding Function

Static visual language landscapes such as "directional signs" and "visitor reminders" primarily serve the guiding function. Examples include scenic area maps and directional signs like those found on scenic area roads. These language landscapes guide visitors by indicating paths or guiding their behavior, serving an orienting and directing role.

"Directional signs" and "visitor reminders" are types of static, visual identifiers. For instance, scenic area maps and road signs are examples of "directional identifiers." This language environment serves a guiding and directing function for tourists.

3.2.2. Cognitive Function

Static visual language landscapes such as "introductions to physical features" and "introductions to service facilities and equipment" mainly serve the cognitive function. These landscapes can convey thoughts and intentions of the creators of the landscape, providing visitors with understanding of the physical features and service facilities.

3.2.3. Promotional Function

Static visual language landscapes generally exhibit promotional functions as scenic area promotions, public promotions and commercial promotions. "Public promotions" mainly advertise the management regulations of the scenic area, while "commercial promotions" are primarily through shop signs for the publicity. Privately established auditory language landscapes, focusing on recommending local specialties and handicrafts, enhancing interaction with visitors and serve a promotional function.

3.2.4. Aesthetic Function

Static visual language landscapes such as "calligraphy art" and "scenic area promotions" best employ the aesthetic function. Through engraving, plaques, gate couplets, and other carriers, they present different artistic features, fully considering the aesthetic needs of visitors and providing an aesthetic enjoyment.

3.3. Phenomena of Anomalous Language Landscapes

Based on the collected linguistic materials, an analysis of the public signs in tourist attractions was conducted from the perspectives of linguistic ontology (Chinese and foreign languages), overall planning of the language landscape, and language landscape management. The following issues were identified.

3.3.1. Linguistic ontology issues

Specific problems include: a) Anomalous punctuation. For example, "Chongqing Qianjiang Xiaonanhai Earthquake Site" should be followed by a comma, but a period was used instead. b) Misuse of English punctuation. For instance, "Children need to enter the scenic area accompanied by an adult," should end with a Chinese full stop, but an English period was used. c) Formatting anomalies. The English format and layout, using a vertical arrangement, are entirely not convenient for tourists to read and thus prevent them from understanding the intended meaning. d) Textual anomalies. "As if falling into a bottomless abyss," the Chinese character "You" was mistakenly written to another similar word with same pronunciation yet different radicals. e) Mixed sentence structure. "Presenting dynamic effects such as fragmentation, fragmentation, and flowers blooming step by step with sound effects," it is suggested to change to "Presenting dynamic effects such as fragmentation and flowers blooming step by step."

3.3.2. Foreign language style issues

a) Spelling errors in foreign language words. The English translation for the north gate of the scenic area, "scenic sdot," should be changed to "scenic spot." b) Translation anomalies. "Please take good care of your personal belongings," was translated as "with your personal effects," and it is suggested to change this sentence to "with your personal belongs in case of losing." Fo Yin Ping is directly replaced with the pinyin, and it is recommended to change it to "Buddha Chant Terrace."

3.3.3. Issues with overall landscape planning

a) Types of languages and scripts are not unified. The languages and the number of languages vary among the three scenic areas. The setting of language varieties is quite random and does not establish a comprehensive public language signs system considering the nationalities of tourists. b) Confusing use of fonts. Chinese and English fonts on public signs are not unified, and the design and production lack a comprehensive and harmonious effect.

3.3.4. Problems in scenic area management of language landscape

The placement of the language landscape is inappropriate. It is mainly reflected in the relatively hidden placement of signs, which makes it inconvenient for tourists to view, limiting the functionality of the language landscape.

3.4. The governance elements and challenges of public signs in Qianjiang tourist attractions

3.4.1. Governance elements

Language landscapes are both the product of official language policy management and the result of non-official language awareness participating in design.

a) The social environment is the basic objective condition. For tourist attractions, the higher the proportion of public signs placement, the higher the evaluation of the local language landscape by tourists. However, due to the complexity of the real environment, the difficulty of evaluating the rationality of public sign placement increases exponentially.

b) Meeting the common interests of participants is fundamental. The formation of public signs is a long-term and dynamic process, the result of the joint action of a region's "authors" and "readers". The complex needs of participants increase the complexity of public signs. The governance policies for public signs should meet the common demands of the area's merchants, residents, and government

departments.

c) Language content and design standards are the core.

The language and design of public signs are mainly influenced by the language policies and ideologies of the country and local governments. However, at the operational level of language landscape governance, the absence of specific rules leads to confusion in use, translation errors, and design styles that do not match the positioning of the attraction.

3.4.2. Challenges in Governance

a) Changes in the social environment increase governance difficulties.

With the rapid development of the economy, the positioning of tourist attractions changes within a relatively short period. For example, Zhuoshui Ancient Town has rapidly transformed from an indigenous area to a commercial center for tourism. The new commercial culture have strongly impacted traditional culture, as local Tujia and Miao ethnic group area, making the social environment more complex than before. In the context of multiculturalism, it is difficult to form a consensus on the governance of the linguistic landscape, thus enhancing governance effects requires further integration with the local culture.

b) Conflicting demands among participants in public signs.

The producers of the linguistic landscape in tourist attractions are not entirely engaged in industries and not highly related to the tourism economy. There are also industries such as daily necessities, clothing that are less related to the tourism economy. The public signage related to these industries generally differs significantly in style from the linguistic landscape which aimed at developing the tourism economy. At the same time, competition between shops has also intensified the issue of commercial public signs standards to some extent.

c) Public signs design standards involve multiple disciplines and professions.

From the perspective of tourism attraction governance, public signs design is only a part of it. However, guiding the development of the linguistic landscape in the region with scientific design standards requires comprehensive application of sociological, linguistic, historical, and design knowledge. Therefore, whether there are sufficient human resources, and whether various talents can participate in the entire process of linguistic landscape governance, is related to the final governance effect of public signs.

4. Main Countermeasures and Suggestions

4.1. Clarify the Top-Level Design

Documents such as the "Qianjiang District Cultural Tourism and Sports Development '14th Five-Year Plan'" and the "Construction Action Plan for the Wuling Mountain Area in Southeast Chongqing" clearly propose to accelerate the construction of a national-level cultural industry and tourism industry integration development demonstration area in Southeast Chongqing, creating a new benchmark for the integration of culture and tourism, and making the cultural tourism industry a regional pillar industry. Therefore, in line with the tourism development concept of "one city leading, one river driving, one point triggering, and comprehensive development," Qianjiang District is committed to building a major tourist area. It is essential to further improve the planning of public signage in tourist attractions at the macro level. At the same time, relevant departments should actively guide local residents and businesses, making the public aware that a good tourism environment aligns with the interests of the majority, ensuring the smooth implementation of relevant rules and regulations. For example, government can set up a service platform related to public signs, encouraging various professional institutions or individuals to participate in the design of public signs. They can also use existing official feedback channels to widely collect public opinions and promptly modify any problems in signs. In addition, the design of official signs should be incorporated into the local language landscape governance system, strengthening the humanistic aspect of signs ensured its basic functionality.

4.2. Optimize Management Models

The supervision of public signs in tourist attractions usually involves multiple departments, such as

civil affairs, transportation, culture and tourism, and quality and technical supervision. The content supervision of advertising signs is mostly managed by the commerce department; the placement of traffic signs, public services, promotional slogans, and other public signs are usually the responsibility of the relevant departments, even some needing engagement of culture and tourism department. A extensive management model in the governance of the language landscape in scenic area often leads to unclear division of responsibilities and insufficient management, thus requiring relevant departments to further clarify improve each responsibility.

The relevant departments of tourist attractions should fully focus on the construction and upgrading of public signs, strengthening communication and cooperation with experts and scholars who study linguistics. They should regularly organize public signs inspections to promptly identify problems, formulate rectification plans, and truly promote the upgrading and transformation of public signs in tourist attractions.

4.3. Refine Regulations and Systems

The relevant management departments of tourist attractions in Qianjiang District should fully consider the opinions of experts, local residents, and merchants to form regulations and systems that align with the development direction of the local language landscape. The key is to improve relevant laws and regulations to standard dynamic public signs . In recent years, national and local government have increasingly engaged in practices related to language landscape governance, and regulations and systems are also constantly being improved. However, the standards for public signs involve a wide range of content, such as language sorting, word formation, font selection, size ratio, color materials, etc., and regulations at the detailed level still need to be explored by the relevant departments.

It is essential to fully consider the cultural implications behind different designs, incorporating individuality into a unified cultural context. At the same time, it is also necessary to continuously strengthen the language and text standardization, by training staff in tourist attractions in various forms to enhance their basic theoretical literacy and improve their ability to apply written language.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the governance of public signs in tourist attractions of Qianjiang District requires the active participation of government and designers throughout the entire process of language landscape design and management. It is not only necessary to have a macro-management approach but also to propose detailed norms at the micro-level. Moreover, strategies for the use of different languages in various contexts should be developed based on the objective conditions and development strategies of the Qianjiang ethnic area, along with a framework for the artistic design style of characters and symbols, in order to truly propose effective governance strategies.

Acknowledgement

In this paper, the research was sponsored by: Ministry of Education Teaching Guidance Committee General Project(No.:2024JGYB034); Ministry of Education Employment Service Department, Supply and Demand Connect Employment Education Project (No.: 2023122985025); Chongqing Qianjiang District Science and Technology Bureau 2024 Science and Technology Plan Project (No.:2024228); the Scientific Research Innovation Team Construction Project and Teaching Reform Research Project(No.YJJG2023003)of Chongqing Vocational College of Tourism.

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