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Investigation and Perspective on the Construction of Language Landscape in Scenic Spots of Ancient Cities: Take the Juguo Ancient City in China as an Example



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ABSTRACT: As China gradually enters the era of mass tourism, people's tourism consumption demand has changed from low-level and focusing on sightseeing to high-quality, diversified and leisure vacations, which puts forward more requirements for the deep, connotational and high-quality development of tourism. Given that the research on language landscape in tourism is still relatively insufficient, this study tries to investigate the construction of the language landscape in the Juguo ancient city in Shandong Province from the perspective of the tourism language landscape in China. The study found that the language signs in the scenic area are mainly monolingual signs, supplemented by bilingual and trilingual signs; There are three languages in the scenic spot, Chinese, English and Korean, among which Chinese is the priority code, while English and Korean are marginalized codes in the scenic spot language landscape. The management department of scenic spots plays a decisive role in constructing language landscapes, but the business operators have not yet realized the economic value of language landscapes. There are problems in constructing the tourism language landscape in scenic spots, such as insufficient construction of a diversified language landscape, non-standard translation of language signs, and lack of design sense and characteristics of signs. In the future, scenic spot management departments should pay attention to the value of language landscape construction, meet the multilingual needs of tourists, highlight the style and characteristics of language landscape, and regularly carry out language landscape investigation and updates.

KEYWORDS: Juguo ancient city, Scenic spot, Linguistic landscape, Language signage, Countermeasures and recommendations

I. INTRODUCTION

As China gradually enters the era of mass tourism, the people's tourism consumption demand has changed from low-level and focusing on sightseeing tourism to high-quality, diversified and leisure vacations, which puts forward more requirements for the deep-level, connotative and high-quality development of tourism. As an important type of integrated development of culture and tourism, ancient town tourism meets people's growing tourism consumption demand to a certain extent and is welcomed and recognized by everyone [1-3]. However, such tourist attractions are usually based on traditional sightseeing and dining, and although they can allow tourists to enjoy beautiful scenery, this kind of tourism is less attractive and competitive in the overall tourism industry. At present, in the face of the concentrated release of cultural tourism consumption demand accumulated by the epidemic, how to break through the limitations of their development and how to explore the resource value, intrinsic characteristics, and rich connotation of scenic spots at a deeper level should be an urgent concern and consideration of scenic spot management departments.

Given this background, this survey will take the Juguo ancient city located in Ju County, Shandong Province, China, as the investigation area from the perspective of the construction of the language landscape of the ancient towns in China. The purposes are the following: (1) to understand the overall appearance of the language landscape construction of the Juguo ancient city; (2) to sort out the problems in the construction of the language landscape in the Juguo ancient city; (3) to reveal the in-depth information hidden behind the language landscape, and put forward measures and suggestions for the optimization of the language landscape of the scenic spot in the future; (4) to enrich our understanding of the language landscape construction of ancient Chinese towns, and make up for the shortcomings of existing research. Through this work, the authors also hope to awaken the sense of responsibility of relevant scenic spot management departments, make them realize the value of language landscapes, and create language landscapes rich in regional characteristics and cultural images while improving the service capabilities of scenic spots, to contribute to the connotative development of domestic ancient town tourist attractions.

II. RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND METHOD

Research background

The concept of linguistic landscape was first proposed by Landry and Bourhis in 1997 and published in the Journal of Language and Social Psychology [4], a prestigious academic journal. In 2007, Backhaus published his first monograph in linguistic landscapes: A Comparative Study of Urban Multilingualism in Tokyo [5]. Since then, with the continuous excavation of the depth of language landscape research and the continuous expansion of research breadth by researchers at home and abroad, this field has gradually become one of the hot topics in interdisciplinary research, such as applied linguistics and sociolinguistics for more than 20 years [6]. Among them, a group of researchers also turned their attention to various language landscapes in scenic spots [7], and the relevant research results continue to enrich the connotation of language landscape research. As a language mark, scenic spot language landscapes could transmit information to tourists. It also shows the local cultural connotation of the scenic spot, reflects the local historical context, social culture and economic level and other information [7-9]. Moreover, it is an extremely important and exploitable tourism cultural resource [10].

After investigation and statistics, Chinese researchers have targeted the language landscapes of ancient towns, such as Lijiang Ancient City [11,12], Hangzhou Hefang Street [13], Kashgar Ancient City [14], Suzhou Ancient City [15], Datang Sleepless City and Luoyi Ancient City [3], Wuhan Hankou Old Concession [16], Hefei Sanhe Ancient Town [18]. Many research works from different perspectives and dimensions have been carried out. However, due to the relatively late start of China's tourism industry, the current attention to the language landscape of tourist attractions is relatively low. The research on the tourism language landscape of ancient towns is still in a relatively early stage, there are few relevant research examples, and there is no systematic and coherent research accumulation.

Research method

The primary purpose of this study is to find answers to the following questions: First, what are the overall characteristics of the language landscape of the Juguo ancient city? Second, what problems exist in constructing the language landscape in the Juguo ancient city? Third, in the future, what aspects should the construction of the language landscape in the Juguo ancient city be optimized and improved?

In the data collection, the following principles were followed. First, only fixed signages such as scenic spot information signages, shop signages and restaurant billboards are photographed, without considering the text signages inside the houses, nor the text, price tags or various texts existing on tourism commodities. Second, the data collection is mainly based on information boards, indicators, warning boards, warning boards or shop signages, and temporary language landscapes such as store promotion, epidemic prevention and control, and traffic control are not the focus of this research. Thirdly, random interviews were conducted with eight store operators and scenic spot staff in the Juguo ancient city to understand the subject, motivation and background of the setting of language signages in the scenic spot to avoid subjective assumptions in the subsequent statistical analysis. Per the above three principles, 720 qualified language signages were collected in the Juguo ancient city.

III. THE OVERALL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LANGUAGE LANDSCAPE

Types of language signage

According to the statistics of the language type, there are three types of language signages in the Juguo ancient city (Table 1). Among them, there were 516 monolingual signages, accounting for 71.67% of the statistical signages, which was the most numerous types of language signage in scenic spots; The number of bilingual signage ranked second, with a total of 123, accounting for 17.08%; Trilingual signages had the lowest number, with only 81, accounting for 11.25%. This shows that the management department of Juguo ancient city has paid attention to the needs of foreign tourists to obtain information through language landscape, and has realized the necessity of presenting multi-language types of language landscape in the scenic spot. At the same time, the monolingual signages in the scenic spot still account for more than 70%, and there are only three language types on the signage in the scenic spot. The language types are significantly less, which also shows that the scenic spot still does not consider the experience and feeling of foreign tourists when visiting, and the overall service quality of the scenic spot still has room for improvement. The high proportion of monolingual signs and the lack of language types of signs will also significantly limit the external display and dissemination of the scenic spot's long historical and cultural resources.

Table 1. Types of language signage in the Juguo ancient city

Sr. No.	classify	Quantity/block	Percentage/ %
1	Monolingual signage	516	71.67
2	Bilingual signage	123	17.08
3	Trilingual signage	81	11.25
total		720	100

Types of languages used

According to the survey statistics, the language signage of the Juguo ancient city used three languages: Chinese, English and Korean (Table 2). Compared with scenic spots that have carried out language landscape research in China [7-10], it is relatively rare to set up only three language types to construct language signage. Among the 720 language signages counted this time, 619 appeared in Chinese, accounting for 85.97% of the signages in the statistics. It can be seen that Chinese is in a dominant position in the language landscape of the Juguo ancient city, which is consistent with the situation of most domestic tourist attractions. There were 179 language signages using English, accounting for 24.86% of the number of signage statistics, indicating that the importance of English in the scenic area was second only to Chinese, highlighting the dominance of English as an international language and a global common language. Korean appears only 109 times in the Juguo ancient city, accounting for only 15.14% of the statistics. Regarding the rationale for adding the Korean language to language signage, the explanation given by the scenic spot management is that it is mainly related to the scenic spot creating an "international" tourism image and also considers the composition of overseas tourists in the location of the scenic spot.

As far as Chinese is concerned, the scenic spot uses simplified Chinese characters as the main language in all kinds of signage so that domestic tourists can feel convenient when visiting. Of all signages containing Chinese, 545 used simplified Chinese characters, accounting for 98.2 per cent of the total number of signages. The public service industry takes standardized Chinese characters as the basic service characters, which also conforms to the relevant provisions of the National Common Language Law. In addition, 109 language signs in the scenic spot use traditional Chinese characters, accounting for 15.14% of the total number of signs. Traditional Chinese characters appear on shop signs as historical and cultural symbols, creating a traditional cultural atmosphere which can remind tourists of the long history of the Juguo ancient city and create an actual situation for tourists to experience local culture.

Table 2. Language frequency of the Juguo ancient city

Sr. No.	Language category	Quantity/block	Frequency of occurrence/%
1	Chinese Simplified	545	75.69
2	Chinese Traditional	74	10.28
3	English	179	24.86
4	Korean	109	15.14

Functions of language landscapes

Geosemiotic theory holds that if more than two codes are used on language signages, one will be used as a priority code [18]. Based on this theory, if monolingual signage is excluded, signages in two and three languages in the scenic spot account for 28.33% of the total number of signages. The Chinese on these signages are usually on the middle and latter side of the signage, relatively close to the upper end, and the font is generally relatively large, which is a priority code in the scenic area, playing an information function and communication function, and at the same time to a large extent as a symbol of local culture. English is often arranged after Chinese, appears directly below or to the side of Chinese, and is written in a smaller font than Chinese, which is basically the same as English. English and Korean do not belong to the priority code in the scenic language landscape but belong to the marginalized language code. Although the marginalized language code conveys the same or similar information as the Chinese, it is more symbolic of making the scenic spot appear more "international" and "diverse".

Among the 710 language signage counted in this survey, 322 are arranged from left to right, 315 are arranged from right to left, and 83 are arranged from top to bottom, accounting for 44.73%, 43.75% and 11.53%, respectively (Table 3). Among them, the top-down and right-to-left arrangement is influenced by ancient writing methods and materials and contains the ancients' "right-respected" ideology [3]. Compared with other ancient towns and scenic spots in China, 16.19% and 21.29% of the signages in Xinzhou Ancient City and Hangzhou Hefang Street adopt the right-to-left writing order significantly higher than that of ordinary tourist attractions. It can be seen that the writing order from right to left is also one of the distinguishing characteristics that distinguish ancient towns and ordinary scenic spots.

Table 3. Writing order of language signage in the Juguo ancient city

Sr. No.	Design type	Quantity/block appears	Frequency of occurrence/%
1	from left to right	322	44.72
2	from right to left	315	43.75
3	from top to bottom	83	11.53

Differences between the two types of linguistic landscapes

In the study of language landscape, the different founders of the landscape divide language landscape into two categories: "top-down" language landscape and "bottom-up" language landscape. In the Juguo ancient city, the "top-down" language landscape is set up by the scenic area management department, and the merchants set up the "bottom-up" language landscape in the scenic spots [7, 18]. There are 427 "top-down" signages in the scenic spot, accounting for 59.31% of the total signages; 293 "bottom-up" signages, accounting for 40.69% of the total number of signage we counted. The number of the former is about 1.46 times that of the latter (Table 4). The signage set up by the scenic spot management department constitutes the main body of the scenic language landscape, which reflects that the management department of the Juguo ancient city has a very high degree of participation in the construction of the language landscape and a strong position.

The most significant difference between the signage set up by the two entities is the difference in language type. Statistics show that 119 of the 123 bilingual signages in the scenic spot are officially established, 81 trilingual signages are "top-down" official signages, and the "top-down" language landscape has a prominent multilingual code tendency. Of the 293 "bottom-up" commercial signages, only four are bilingual with Chinese+ English, and the others only use Chinese, showing an absolute monolingual tendency. The difference between the two language types reflects the high degree of unity in constructing the official language landscape of scenic spots. It is speculated that the management department tries to create a new image of "international" tourism for the need of scenic spots' grade evaluation and attaches importance to the use of multiple languages when setting language signs. However, the shop operators in the scenic spots have not recognized the economic attributes of the language landscape and ignored the tremendous economic value of multilingual signs in attracting consumers when setting up the language landscape.

Table 4. Statistics on two types of language landscapes in the Juguo ancient city

Sr. No.	classify	Quantity/block	Percentage/%
1	from top to bottom	427	59.31
2	from bottom to up	293	40.69
total		720	100

IV. PROBLEMS IN CONSTRUCTING LANGUAGE LANDSCAPE

Insufficient construction of multi-language landscape

The frequency of English in the language landscape of the Juguo ancient city is only 24.86% (Table 2), which is far lower than the average of domestic scenic spots, and even inferior to scenic spots in remote areas in central and western China (Guo et al., 2022). In addition to Chinese and English, Korean appears only 15.14% more frequently in the Juguo ancient city, and the service functions it provides should not be high. It is understood that the management department of Juguo Ancient City Scenic Area will open to the outside world in 2021 and has not yet carried out statistical work on information such as the country of origin of overseas tourists. However, according to the statistics released by Shandong Province from 2016 to 2019 (due to the impact of the global epidemic in 2020-2022, inbound tourism was restricted, and the data reference was weak), the main source countries of overseas tourists in Rizhao City, Shandong Province were South Korea, Russia, the United Kingdom, Germany, the Philippines and France (Table 5). The language signage of the scenic spot contains English and Korean, which can only meet the language needs of some overseas tourists, ignoring tourists who are native speakers of Russian, German, French and other languages, which is not conducive to the international dissemination and export of the history and culture of the Juguo ancient city to a certain extent. At present, the three languages appearing in the scenic area should not meet the diversified language needs of overseas tourists in the scenic spot.

Table 5. Main source countries and number of overseas tourists in Rizhao City, Shandong Province, China, from 2016 to 2019

Year	first	second	third	fourth	fifth	sixth
2019	Korea	Russia	United Kingdom	Germany	Philippines	France
	187941	11786	8869	7874	7166	6576
2018	Korea	Russia	United Kingdom	Germany	Philippines	France
	169375	12014	8635	7902	7193	6341
2017	Korea	Russia	United Kingdom	Germany	Philippines	France
	168036	11552	8265	7569	6435	6075
2016	Korea	Russia	United Kingdom	Germany	Philippines	United States
	177697	11250	8031	7281	6781	5782

The translation of language signage is not standardized

Language landscape is an important part of the cultural landscape in the scenic area, and irregular or even wrong language landscape will directly affect the overall image of the scenic spot, which will not only bring inconvenience to information transmission but also directly damage the overall landscape of the scenic spot [7]. There are also some typical Chinese English and typographical errors in the language signage of the Juguo ancient city, which affect the scenic spot's external image and visiting experience. For example, "floor area of 373,000 square meters" is translated as "with a construction area of 373.000 m2", which is typical of Chinese English because the floor area is generally used in English. In addition, there is a typical typographical error here, where "m2" is not displayed using the upper corner. Another example is the "Guide Map of the Juguo ancient city", translated as "GuidedMapofJuguoAncientCity", a typical typographical error, and the due space between the words is missing. Such low-level translation errors and irregular typography often cause improper information transmission, which makes foreign tourists have a bad impression, and then lose interest in this attraction and even the entire scenic spot indicated by the language signage.

Signage lacks a sense of design and characteristics

A total of nine different production materials are used in the language signage of Juguo ancient city, and the colour, material and texture of the signage are different, reflecting the difference in the design and production of the signage set up in different batches, which may also be intentional by the management department to create a layered visual atmosphere in the scenic spot. According to statistics, half of the signage in scenic spots is made of paper and cloth materials. Such signages have a weak ability to resist weathering, a small number of signages have appeared with text decolourization, blurred, and some show damage and decay, yellowing and ageing, to a certain extent affecting the overall external image of the scenic spot. About 40% of the signages are made of metal, concrete or other materials, poorly coordinated with the surrounding ecological environment, and appear more abrupt and disharmonious in the scenic area (Table 6).

The major problem is that most of the language signage in the scenic area is a simple stacking and combination of text, the font design lacks beauty, and in order to highlight the text information, black, red, dark blue, golden yellow, pure white and other colours are mainly used, and darker or lighter colours are selected as the background colour. The consequence is that the scenic spot does not present a sense of design and a particular distinctive language landscape style, which affects the construction of the overall image of the scenic spot. That also reflects that the management department of the Juguo ancient city has not paid sufficient attention to the design and production of language landscape, nor has it established a perfect update and replacement mechanism for language landscape signage. In addition, these signages do not incorporate elements that reflect the local nature and historical culture nor highlight the rich geological heritage characteristics of the Juguo ancient city.

Table	6 Decian	and pro	duction a	differences o	f language	cianaga	in the	Inana	ancient city	
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Sr. No.	Design type	Quantity/block appears	Frequency of occurrence/%
1	Metal Material	29	4.03
2	Wood material	127	17.64
3	Concrete material	12	1.67
4	Resin material	58	8.06
5	Cloth material	38	5.28
6	Paper material	322	44.72
7	Stone carving	70	9.72
8	Electronic screen	3	0.42
9	Others	61	8.47

V. COUNTERMEASURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After implementing the new crown virus infection, the backlog of cultural tourism consumption demand in China that the epidemic has accumulated will be released centrally. Breaking through the limitations of their development and exploring the resource value, intrinsic characteristics, and rich connotations of scenic spots at a deeper level should be an urgent concern and consideration of scenic spot management departments. In this context, the author combines the above statistical and analytical problems and puts forward the following measures and suggestions for the current situation of language landscape construction in the Juguo ancient city.

First, attach importance to the value of scenic language landscape construction. First of all, the scenic area management department must fully understand the importance of the language landscape, realize that the language landscape is an integral part of the entire scenic spot, and has the role of transmitting information to tourists, showing the local cultural connotation of the

scenic spot, reflecting the local historical context, social culture and economic level. Secondly, the scenic area management department establishes the official language landscape in the scenic spot, plays a decisive role in constructing the language landscape, and has a unshirkable responsibility to improve the tourism and cultural image of the scenic spot. In addition, the scenic spot management part should guide the store operator.

Second, fully consider the multilingual needs of tourists. The scenic area management department should increase the number of signages on important tourist information signages in languages other than Chinese, at least in Chinese and English. In addition, the actual language needs of overseas tourists should be closely integrated into the tourism language of scenic spots, and the two foreign languages of, English and Korean should not be symbolically included for the sake of scenic spot rating. Considering the limited space on signage, scenic spots can also print guidebooks and publicity materials in English, Korean, Russian, German, French and other languages to compensate for the lack of language services. The purpose of this move is not only to efficiently introduce the tourist information about the scenic spot to foreign tourists but also to maximize the iconic role of the language landscape so that tourists have a sense of popularity and value to produce an excellent visiting experience.

Third, highlight the style and characteristics of the language landscape. Fifty per cent of the existing signage in the Juguo ancient city is made of paper and cloth materials; although the colour is more brilliant than concrete, resin and other materials, the design looks simple and boring and lacks apparent characteristics. In future work, the scenic spot management department can strengthen various signage styles and highlight the regional culture and local characteristics. For specific design work, we can consider cooperation with professional institutions and social groups and use the concept of design aesthetics to integrate local historical and cultural elements into the design of scenic spot language signage to project the historical and cultural value of the scenic spot through the artistic appreciation value of the language landscape.

Fourth, conduct regular linguistic landscape surveys and updates. First of all, the scenic area management department should regularly investigate the language and scenery of the scenic spot to fully grasp the current situation of the use of language and writing on various signages. Secondly, the scenic spot management department should cooperate with local colleges and universities and scientific research units to timely, discover all kinds of translation errors, non-standardization, inconsistent names of scenic spots and other problems with language signage, and entrust experts and scholars engaged in related majors to review and compile the content. Finally, scenic spots should regularly replace language landscape identification mechanisms to ensure that the tourism language landscape continues effectively playing the communication and publicity functions.

CONCLUSIONS

From the perspective of the tourism language landscape of ancient towns in China, this study conducted a field investigation on the construction of language landscape in the Juguo ancient city in Ju County, Rizhao City, Shandong Province, China, and collected language landscape data for statistical analysis.

The results show that the language landscape in the Juguo ancient city presents four primary characteristics: first, the language signage is mainly monolingual signage, supplemented by bilingual and trilingual signage; Second, there are three languages in the scenic area, which are Chinese, English and Korean, and Chinese include traditional Chinese characters and simplified Chinese characters. Third, Chinese is the priority language code in the language landscape of the scenic spot, and English and Korean are marginal language codes; Fourth, the scenic area management department plays a decisive role in the construction of the language landscape, and shop operators have not yet recognized the economic value of language landscape.

Comprehensive analysis of the collected data, the language landscape of the Juguo ancient city can be found in the following problems: lack of multi-language landscape construction, irregular translation of language signage, and lack of design sense and signage characteristics. Based on the above findings, the author suggests that scenic spot management departments should pay attention to four aspects in the future: first, pay attention to the potential value of language landscape construction; Second, meet the multilingual needs of tourists in scenic spots; Third, highlight the style and characteristics of the language landscape; Fourth, regularly carry out language landscape surveys and updates.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan period of China, tourism as a strategic pillar industry of the national economy will be more consolidated. Suppose tourist attractions can build their own language landscape in a scientific and reasonable way to meet tourists' rigid demand for a better tourism experience. In that case, it will help the high-quality development of China's tourism industry and profoundly impact China's tourism and related industries.

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