

Linguistic Landscapes of Multilingual Campuses in China and Japan : From the Perspective of Language Policy, Construction of Signs and Students' Attitudes

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ABSTRACT

This research project examines university campus signs in China and Japan, which is a new attempt to expand the scope of linguistic landscape research. It is also one of the earliest studies focusing on multilingual linguistic landscape of China. Multilingual linguistic landscapes are productive sources of sociolinguistic information, but previous studies have mostly analyzed urban areas. Based on the three dimensions put forward by Trumper-Hecht (2010), who developed Lefebvre's (1991) notion of "Space" and saw linguistic landscape as a sociolinguistic-spatial phenomenon, this study brings linguistic landscape research into the context of multilingual campuses stimulated by internationalization and intends to explore: first, how languages used in signs are regulated or planned in both countries ("Conceived Space" - "Political" Dimension"); second, how the campus linguistic landscape is constructed ("Spatial Space" - "Physical" Dimension); third, how the sign readers (students) view the multilingual campus where they are living ("Lived Space" - "Experiential" Dimension).

From a sociolinguistic perspective, I first examine campus linguistic landscapes by utilizing the framework of Hymes' "Speaking Model" (1972). I explore the language policies and regulations regarding language use ("Norms") in public spheres at various levels in both countries. Then, I analyze "Genres" that characterizes the linguistic landscape within a given "Setting and Scene" on campus, where their "Ends" are specified and "Participants" are illuminated. Making use of Scollon and Scollon's (2003) work on Geosemiotics and Kress and Van Leeuwen's (1998) work on the grammar of design, I investigate the

construction of campus linguistic landscape, which also contributes to the sociolinguistic analysis. Gottlieb (2008, p. 59) notes, "...Language policy, far from being merely a collection of documents supplemented by government practice, is informed by and encapsulates the entire linguistic culture of a society, that is, its specific beliefs about language." The multilingual university's linguistic landscape also reflects the views of the multilingual and multi-ethnic community on campus. Therefore, I conduct questionnaire and interview surveys to explore the students' attitudes towards the multilingual campus.

The multilingual signboards displayed on campus are "precipitates" motivated by the progress of globalization (Appadurai, 2000). As the pace of internationalization speeds up, English in particular has grown in importance in the campus linguistic landscape. Based on the sociolinguistic examination of the language policies and regulations of both countries ("Norms"), this study finds that the Chinese government gives a "silent consent" towards the adoption of foreign languages in signs in public places. In Japan, it is local governments that make more practical efforts in the promotion of foreign languages used in signs.

Next, I identify "Genres" in the campus linguistic landscape with descriptive analysis. These "Genres" further divide campus into different functional areas, which depict "Settings". Inspired by Hymes' illustration of "Ends", I modify Lü's (2005) classification of the function of signs into a new format for analyzing campus signs. Based on Landry and Bourhis' (1997) focus on the "symbolic" function of signs, I explore the indexicality of signs (Scollon & Scollon, 2003), which accounts for the impact of internationalization on the formation of multilingual campuses. In addition, I explicate three participants in the campus linguistic landscape: agents, audience and bystanders, which revises

the “top-down” vs. “bottom-up”, or “official” vs. “non-official” classification of actors in previous linguistic landscape studies.

The case studies on the languages used in signs on two campuses presents the features of the construction of campus linguistic landscape. On Kyushu University’s Ito Campus in Japan, bilingual Japanese-English signs compose the majority of campus signs, with Japanese language used as the dominant language. On Beijing Language and Culture University campus in China, unilingual Chinese signs are the largest group, followed by Chinese-English bilingual signs. A total of four and five foreign languages are used on campus signs respectively. Although university campuses do not show as rich a construction of linguistic landscape as the urban areas, they reflect the internationalization trend occurring on both campuses. Linguistic landscape research has been criticized for a lack of theoretical background. A geosemiotic (Scollon and Scollon, 2003) interpretation of campus linguistic landscapes in Chapter Six substantiates the descriptive analysis in Chapter Five. The survey finds that at least half of the campus signs adopted visual data into text, and both campuses put national languages in a preferred position in most cases to show their salience. More than half of the multilingual campus signs duplicate the exact information from the source languages. Also, more complex “Act Sequence”, which is an under-explored area in linguistic landscape study (Huebner, 2009), is considered, they are found most often in the unilingual Japanese or Chinese signs. Those findings also account for the “Key” and “Instrumentalities” of the campus linguistic landscape, thereby covering all eight components of Hymes’ “Speaking Model”.

The questionnaire surveys students' perceptions about the use of languages on campus, their choices on language use and order in the campus signboards, and their opinions on the importance of languages used on campus. The opinions of sign readers are regarded as "A Third Dimension" (Trumper-Hecht, 2010), which derives from Lefebvre's (1991) idea of "Lived Space"--the space of inhabitants. The results indicate that there is a difference in students' impression of the most often used language on campus and the actual construction of the campus linguistic landscape. For their academic life, students from both campuses value bilingual ability; in their daily life, students maintain multilingual contact to a certain degree. The first four languages chosen by the students are in conformity with the language usage in reality despite a difference in order.

This study is a synchronic record of the construction of the campus linguistic landscape, thus it provides a basis for comparative and diachronic studies in the future. The exploration of language policy concerning signs substantiates our understanding of the formation of campus linguistic landscape, which differs from previous studies, which often focus on conflicts between different language groups. The interdisciplinary nature of linguistic landscape research could inspire Chinese scholars to address the gap in studying signs between China and other countries. Moreover, this study, adding geosemiotic interpretation to sociolinguistic analysis, further substantiates the linguistic landscape research. Since the signboards on campus provide authentic native language input for second language learners, as indicated by Genoz & Gorter (2008), linguistic landscape is also a useful site for conducting second language acquisition research.