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Attitudes Toward Linguistic Landscape at Hoan Kiem Lake and Hanoi Old Quarter

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Abstract: Studies in the field of linguistic landscape started in the 1990s have mainly focused on public signs, public signs and private shop signs. Major cities around the world have served as sites for various studies. This article examines the language attitudes toward the linguistic landscape of the Hoan Kiem tourist area and the Old Quarter of Hanoi. The results show both positive and negative attitudes of people visiting living here. There is a clear difference between the elderly and the young on the use of Vietnamese or foreign languages on the signs.

Key words: linguistic landscape, attitude, signs, language, multilinguistic

I. Introduction

The term "linguistic landscape" was officially introduced into linguistic research in the 1990s by pioneering scholars such as Backhaus, Landry, and Bourhis. Landry and Bourhis (1997) defined linguistic landscape as including public road signs, advertisements, street names, place names, and store names, all of which contribute to shaping the linguistic landscape of a specific area or city. However, in practice, the concept of linguistic landscape has been understood in various ways. It may refer to the description or analysis of the linguistic situation in a specific country (Sciriha & Vassallo, 2001) or the use of multiple languages in a broader geographical area (Kreslins, 2003). Today, most researchers adopt Landry and Bourhis' definition, which considers linguistic landscape as the use of written language in public spaces, encompassing all visible textual elements within a given area.

In Vietnam, research on linguistic landscapes remains limited. Meanwhile, the linguistic landscape at tourist destinations in Vietnam still faces numerous issues, and attitudes toward these linguistic landscapes vary. Understanding language attitudes toward linguistic landscapes at tourist sites is essential for gauging the collaborators regarding linguistic landscapes in different locations.

II. Theoretical Basis

Language attitudes are typically studied from two perspectives: mentalist and behaviorist approaches. The mentalist approach states that attitudes are "internal states triggered by certain stimuli, which mediate subsequent behavioral responses." The behaviorist approach, on the other hand, argues that "attitudes are simply observed through human reactions to social situations; thus, individual attitudes are reflected in their behaviors, meaning attitudes can be inferred through behavior" (Fasold). This study adopts the behaviorist approach.

The study focuses on examining the attitudes of collaborators toward the linguistic landscape of the Hoan Kiem Lake area and Hanoi's Old Quarter because these areas are parts of Hoan Kiem District, an ancient and central district of Hanoi. This area preserves both traditional cultural elements and modern commercial urban features, making its linguistic landscape uniquely historic yet contemporary. This study aims to answer the following questions:

a. What are the general language attitudes toward the linguistic landscape at Hoan Kiem Lake and Hanoi's Old Quarter tourist areas?
b. Are there differences in language attitudes between locals and tourists regarding the linguistic landscape in these areas?

c. How do social characteristics of locals and tourists influence their attitudes?

III. Research Materials and Methods

The study was conducted using 342 survey questionnaires distributed directly to collaborators. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: demographic information and language attitude information. The demographic section collected essential social characteristics such as gender, age, education, and place of residence.

Categories	Content	Amount	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	83	34.3
	Female	159	65.7
	Total	342	100.0
Age	15-25	67	27.7
	25-40	112	46.3
	41-55	48	19.8
	56+	15	6.2
	Total	342	100.0
Academic level	Primary	47	19.4
	College	46	19.0
	Higher education	119	49.1
	Post - graduation	30	12.4
	Total	342	100.0
Vietnamese or Foreigners	Foreigners	252	73.7
	Vietnamese	90	26.3
	Total	342	100.0

The language attitude section explored collaborator opinions on the following aspects:

1. Language usage on signs: preference for entirely Vietnamese signs, entirely foreign-language signs, bilingual signs, or foreign-language signs with Vietnamese annotations.
2. Sign layout: preference for signs where Vietnamese appears above or below foreign text, signs with only abbreviations, etc.
3. Use of local dialects: attitudes toward signs using local dialects such as "Cơm Tấm" (a type of rice dish).
4. Spelling issues: whether misspellings on signs are noticeable, cause negative reactions, provoke amusement, or are seen as unique.
5. Use of striking words: preference for signs using unique or attention-grabbing phrases.
6. Syntactic structure of signs: preference for fully Vietnamese syntax or a mix of Vietnamese and other languages.
7. Visual aspects of signs: attitudes toward signs based on aesthetic harmony, innovation, or traditional appeal.
8. Perspectives on linguistic phenomena in public signage: attention to language use on public signs and whether these signs provide clear information or cause confusion for tourists.

Collaborators' responses were recorded on a five-point scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." The final results were averaged based on responses from 342 participants. The correlation between language attitudes and social characteristics was analyzed using quantitative methods in SPSS 16.0, with statistical significance tested at $p = 0.05$.

IV. Research Findings

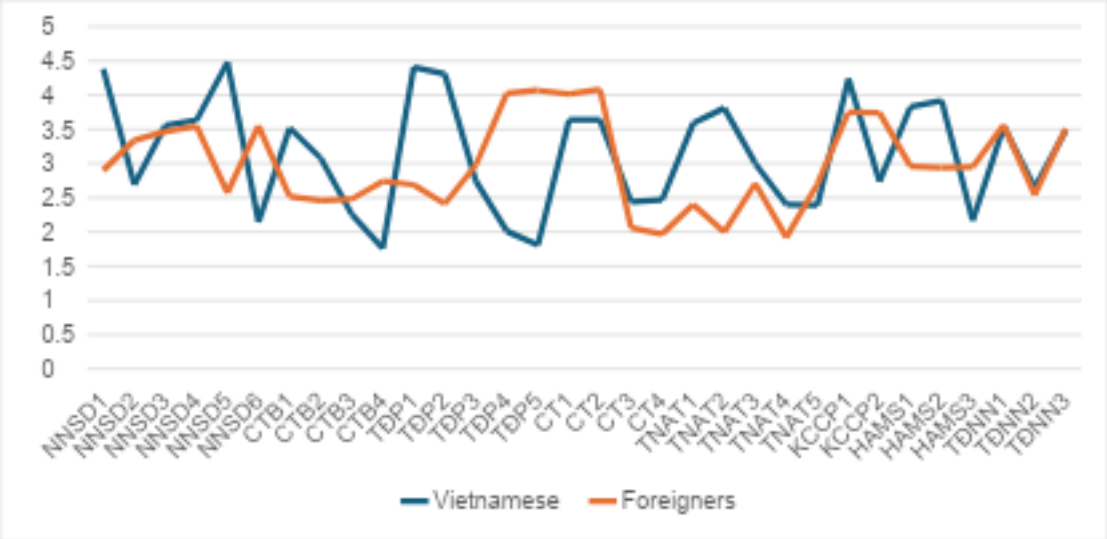
4.1. Collaborators Attitudes Toward the Linguistic Landscape at Hoan Kiem Lake and Hanoi Old Quarter Survey results showed that the standard deviation remained below 1, indicating high consistency in responses.

The following statistics summarize attitudes toward different aspects of the linguistic landscape:

- The most positively rated elements included the use of entirely Vietnamese signs, bilingual signs, and signs using local dialects (average scores of 4.10, 3.94, and 3.91, respectively).
- Negatively rated elements included excessive use of abbreviations, unconventional word choices, and certain visual designs (average scores of 2.05, 2.26, and 2.30, respectively).

4.2. Language Attitudes by Demographic Group

The study compared the attitudes of Vietnamese locals and foreign tourists:



- Both groups expressed positive attitudes toward the appropriate use of language, local dialects, and correct spelling on signs.
- Both groups were less positive about attention-grabbing words and certain sign layouts.
- Differences emerged regarding fully Vietnamese signs: Vietnamese participants strongly preferred them (4.38), while foreign tourists rated them lower (2.90), likely due to language barriers.
- Conversely, foreign tourists were more receptive to English-only signs (3.55) compared to Vietnamese participants (2.15).
- Signs incorporating local dialects were highly favored by Vietnamese participants (4.41) but received only moderate approval from foreign tourists (2.69).

4.3. Language Attitudes and Social Differences

The study analyzed correlations between language attitudes and social characteristics such as gender, education, and residence. Using the Chi-Square Test with a statistical significance threshold of 95% (p = 0.05), results showed significant correlations between certain social factors and language attitudes.

1/ Correlation Between Language Attitudes and Age Survey results indicate significant differences in language attitudes across age groups, particularly in language use, sign layout, and local dialect usage:

With the language used on the signs:

Age	**Average value**			
	NNSD1	**NNSD2**	**NNSD3**	**NNSD4**
15-25	3.43	3.06	3.61	3.86
26-40	4.03	2.84	3.51	3.60
41-55	3.79	2.71	3.43	3.44
56+	4.24	2.89	3.68	3.21

- Older respondents (56+) showed the most positive attitude toward fully Vietnamese signs (mean score: 4.24), while the youngest group (15-25) had the least positive attitude (3.43).
- Younger respondents (15-25) preferred signs with entirely foreign languages (mean: 3.06), whereas the 41-55 age group showed the lowest preference (2.71).
- Older individuals also preferred traditional sign layouts, while younger groups were more receptive to modern and innovative designs.
- Attitudes toward local dialects also varied, with the 26-40 age group showing the highest support (4.18), whereas the 41-55 age group showed the lowest support (3.34).

With the sign layout:

Age	**Average value**			
	CTB1	**CTB2**	**CTB3**	**CTB4**
15-25	2.43	2.96	2.51	2.37
26-40	3.61	3.11	2.38	1.85

41-55	3.44	2.63	1.93	1.71
56+	3.68	2.46	2.54	2.82

- Attitudes toward local dialects also varied, with the 26-40 age group showing the highest support (4.18), whereas the 41-55 age group showed the lowest support (3.34).
- For CTB1, respondents aged 56+ were most positive (3.68), while those aged 15-25 were least positive (2.43).
- For CTB2, the most positive attitudes were found in the 26-40 age group (3.11), whereas the 41-55 age group had the least positive attitudes (2.63).

With the local dialect:

Age	**Average value**				
	TNĐP 1	**TNĐP 2**	**TNĐP 3**	**TNĐP 4**	**TNĐP 5**
15-25	4.03	3.85	3.43	2.50	2.32
26-40	4.18	4.02	2.58	2.23	2.08
41-55	3.34	3.29	2.17	3.17	3.12
56+	3.86	3.54	3.50	3.04	3.00

- Older respondents (56+) showed the most positive attitude toward fully Vietnamese signs (mean score: 4.24), while the youngest group (15-25) had the least positive attitude (3.43).
- Younger respondents (15-25) preferred signs with entirely foreign languages (mean: 3.06), whereas the 41-55 age group showed the lowest preference (2.71).
- Attitudes toward local dialects also varied, with the 26-40 age group showing the highest support (4.18), whereas the 41-55 age group showed the lowest support (3.34).
- For TNĐP2, results were similar: the 26-40 age group had the highest positive attitude (4.02), while the 41-55 age group had the lowest (3.29).
- Regarding TNĐP4 and TNĐP5, older individuals were more supportive, while younger individuals had a less positive perspective

2/ The Correlation Between Language Attitude and Educational Level

The correlation between language attitude and educational level is most clearly reflected in the following aspects: the language used, presentation style, use of local vocabulary, and spelling issues. Specifically:

a. Language Used on Signs:

The correlation between language attitude and educational level regarding the language used on signs is presented in the table below.

Academic levels	**Average value**			
	NNSD1	**NNSD2**	**NNSD3**	**NNSD4**
Primary	3.64	2.99	3.34	3.47
College	4.68	2.47	3.30	3.55
Higher education	3.84	2.97	3.68	3.75
Post - graduation	4.08	2.81	3.66	3.49

- The survey results indicate differences in educational levels concerning the types of language used on store signs.
- For NNSD1, the group with the most positive attitude is the postgraduate group, with an average score of 4.08, while the group with the least positive attitude is the high school group, with an average score of 3.64.
- For NNSD2, the group with the most positive attitude is the high school group, with an average score of 2.99, whereas the group with the least positive attitude is the vocational/college group, with an average score of 2.47.

b. Use of Local Vocabulary:

- The correlation between language attitude and educational level regarding the use of local vocabulary on

Academic levels	**Average value**				
	TNDP 1	TNDP 2	TNDP 3	TNDP 4	TNDP 5
Primary	4.03	3.85	3.43	2.50	2.32
College	4.18	4.02	2.58	2.23	2.08
Higher education	3.34	3.29	2.17	3.17	3.12
Post - graduation	3.86	3.54	3.50	3.04	3.00

signs is presented in the table below.

- The survey results indicate differences in educational levels concerning the use of local vocabulary on signs.
- For TNĐP2, the group with the most positive attitude is the vocational/college group, with an average score of 4.02, while the group with the least positive attitude is the university group, with an average score of 3.29.
- The results for TNĐP1, TNĐP3, TNĐP4, and TNĐP5 suggest that individuals with higher educational levels tend to have a more positive perception, whereas those with lower educational levels show a less positive perception.

c. Spelling Issues:

- The correlation between language attitude and educational level regarding spelling on signs is presented in the table below.

Academic levels	Average value			
	CT1	CT2	CT3	CT4
Primary	3.80	3.81	2.27	2.58
College	3.77	3.83	2.60	2.56
Higher education	3.66	3.66	1.98	1.82
Post - graduation	3.75	3.68	2.29	1.71

- The survey results indicate differences in educational levels concerning spelling on store signs.
- There is no significant difference among educational levels regarding CT1 and CT2. However, for CT3 and CT4, a high percentage of respondents disagreed, especially those aged 56 and above, with average scores of 2.29 and 1.71, respectively.
- This suggests that respondents, particularly older individuals, tend to disagree with the notions that "misspelled signs are humorous" and "misspelled signs add uniqueness."

IV. Summary

Through the study of language attitudes toward the linguistic landscape in the Hoàn Kiếm Lake and Hanoi Old Quarter tourist areas, this paper draws the following conclusions:

1. General Attitudes Toward Store Signs

Respondents (CTV) had a positive attitude toward the language used on signs, with signs entirely in Vietnamese receiving the highest positive evaluation. Signs featuring foreign languages with Vietnamese annotations were also viewed more favorably compared to other types of signs. Local vocabulary on signs was well-received, as respondents believed it reflected cultural diversity. However, they did not support the notion that local vocabulary makes signs confusing or inappropriate for the city. Misspelled signs were perceived negatively, as respondents found them confusing, inappropriate, and unpleasant. Signs with a pure Vietnamese sentence structure were rated more favorably than those with a Sino-Vietnamese structure. Color schemes and visual elements on signs were generally positively received, especially when they were harmonious, creative, and unique. Respondents were less positive about signs that used abbreviations or placed foreign text above and larger than Vietnamese text, showing a preference for signs that prioritize Vietnamese language. Many respondents felt that public signs, store signs, and directional signs did not provide sufficient information for the public.

2. Comparison Between Vietnamese and Foreign Respondents

While there were differences between Vietnamese and foreigners in their attitudes toward signs in Hoàn Kiếm and the Old Quarter, the general trend in their evaluations was similar. Both groups had positive attitudes toward word usage, local vocabulary, and spelling on signs, but were less positive about impressionistic language and sign layout. However, there were notable differences in preferences:

Vietnamese respondents preferred signs entirely in Vietnamese, whereas foreigners favored signs entirely in English. Vietnamese preferred signs where Vietnamese text was on top and larger, while foreigners preferred the opposite (English text on top and larger). Vietnamese respondents liked local vocabulary on signs, whereas foreigners were neutral toward such signs.

3. Correlation Between Language Attitude and Age/Education Level

Gender and place of residence did not influence attitudes toward store signs in the Hoàn Kiếm and Old Quarter tourist areas. Age and education level were the key influencing factors: Older individuals had a more positive view of store signs in Vietnamese and were neutral toward foreign language signs. Their positive attitude

toward sign presentation increased with age. However, older respondents were more critical of misspelled signs and disagreed with the idea that such signs were humorous or unique. Similarly, individuals with higher education levels (university and postgraduate) shared this disapproval of misspelled signs, considering them annoying rather than creative or amusing. Postgraduate respondents also had more neutral views on other aspects compared to respondents with lower education levels.

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