Beliefs of EFL learners Towards Pedagogical Values of Linguistic

Landscape in China: A Case Study Carried out in Three Schools

Abstract: Numerous research in linguistic landscape (LL) have shown that the languages exhibited on signage in city space can offer an abundant resource enabling language learning in "real-life" situations. However, there are rare studies investigate the pedagogical value from the perspective of the learners. Taking English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in China as research subjects, a qualitative and quantitative combined method was adopted in this study to survey three groups of students' beliefs about pedagogical value of LL (classified as senior high school students, undergraduate students and postgraduate students). The findings show that almost students hold a positive attitude toward English in LL, but with different knowledge base, learning methods and ideology of "standard" English usage, the learners show different perceptions towards the specific issues on to what extent the English in LL can help them to learn English.

1. Introduction

Over the past decade Linguistic Landscape (LL) emerged as a dynamic and active field of research. Conferences on diverse themes of LL are held annually in various places in the world; edited collections reporting new research are being published; symposia on LL at major sociolinguistic and applied linguistics conferences are presented regularly and courses on LL are now being offered in a growing number of higher education institutions. As a burgeoning field in socilinguistics and applied linguistics, LL research is concerned with the language displayed on "public roads, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings" (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). Landry and Bourhis (1997) also discuss the functions of linguistic landscape, holding that linguistic landscape has two major roles to play. One is the informational function, and the other is the symbolic function. They noted the information function as "the linguistic landscape serves to inform in-group and out-group members of the linguistic characteristics, territorial limits, and language boundaries of the region they have entered" (1997: 25). Beyond the informational function, the symbolic function is also of paramount importance. It is true that the absence or presence of certain languages on public signs has an effect on how people in a community feel about the languages. "Having one's own language enshrined on most private and government signs should contribute to the feeling that the in-group language has value and status relative to other languages within the sociolinguistic setting" (Landry & Bourhis, 1997: 27). According to Gorter (2006) and Shohamy and Gorter

35 (2009), the early LL studies endeavored mostly about the publications by Landry and Bourhis

36 (1997) anchored in social psychology and serving as the fundamental definition of the field. And

37 then much developments have been taking place which at the same time yielding some new

38 findings. All these research studies made a sound and solid foundation for LL field as a discipline

39 in its own right. Over the years it has reached different domains in research areas, the topics and

40 themes widely included multilingualism and translingual mixing, language policy, language

41 attitude and language ideology, minority languages and identity construction and scaled mobility

42 (Gorter, Marten & Mensel 2012; Van Mensel, Vandenbroucke, and Blackwood 2016).

43   The representative researcher who treated LL research from the perspective of multilingualism

44 is Gorter (2006). He also uses the alternative concept of what he calls multilingual cityscape,

45 which is reflective of the interest of most researchers in more than one language displayed in

46 public signs in urban areas. Cenoz and Gorter (2006) investigate linguistic landscape of two street

47 in two multilingual cities in Friesland (Netherlands) and the Basque Country (Spain), examining

48 the use of minority language (Basque and Frisian), the state language (Spanish and Dutch) and

49 English as an international language on signs. The research results show that compared with

50 other language the majority language of Dutch and Spanish respectively in the two street is more

51 prominently found in the multilingual signs. For the different emphasis and effort towards

52 language policy put in the two cities, the use of minority languages in the signs is different with

53 each other. In addition, the choice of English usage in the signs has both the informational and

54 symbolic functions. Backhaus, another very influential author, conducted empirical research on

55 the multilingual signs in the streets of Tokyo. In his research, special attention is given to the

56 distinction between official (top-down) and nonofficial (bottom-up) multilingual signs. Besides

57 the perspective which dealt with LL research from multilingual dimension, scholars also carried

58 out their studies from the sociolinguistic view as mentioned-above. For example, Huebner (2009)

59 examines linguistic landscape within the SPEAKING model proposed by Hymes who is famous in

60 interactional sociolinguistic field. The mnemonic SPEAKING (S = setting or scene; P = participants;

61 E =ends or goals; A = act sequences; K = key; I = instrumentalities; N = norms; G = genre)

62 represents a sociolinguistic theory for interaction between language and social life. Huebner

63 believes there is an inextricable relationship between the language means nand social meaning

64 just as he mentioned that there is "a barometer of relationship between language and society"

65 (Huebner 2009:84). In his case study of LL change in Bloemfontein, South Africa, Plessis (2010: 74)

66 proposes that "A change in regime can bring about a change in the linguistic landscape". The LL

67 then becomes one of the most vocal and concrete indicators of consequential language regime

68 change. Shang and Zhao (2014) provides a comprehensive overview of the background,

69 methodology, theoretical approaches, prospects and challenges in linguistic landscape studies,

70 which is a holistic picture of the area of linguistic inquires. In 2015, Shang and Zhao continued the

71 linguistic landscape study and examined the analytical dimensions and theoretical construction.

72 Analyzing the studies conducted by foreign scholars, Shang and Zhao conclude that there are at

73 least 5 analytical dimensions: linguistic landscape and language power, linguistic landscape and
74 the implementation of language policy, features of language on public signs, the international
75 spread of English and the historical dimension of linguistic landscape study.

76   Apart from the social and ethnolinguistic inquiries, there are also academic endeavors towards
77 the investigation of the influences of LL on second/foreign language learning. The pedagogical
78 perspective of LL studies is the very outcome of this endeavor. Cenoz and Gorter (2008), for
79 instance, focused on the relation between inguistic landscape and second language acquisition
80 (SLA) and the role of LL in second language acquisition. They argued that the texts on signage, as
81 an additional source of input for SLA, are always authentic and contextualized, thus can be
82 utilized to enhance learners' pragmatic competence, develop literacy skills as well as raise their
83 language awareness. As Cenoz and Gorter have noted, "linguistic landscape provides an
84 additional opportunity to experience non-linear multimodal texts in the public space" (2008: 297).
85 Moreover, for Cenoz and Gorter, the linguistic landscape also playing an important role in
86 affecting the language learning attitudes and hence conducive to the SLA process. Therefore, it
87 can be concluded that the second/foreign language learning should consider the symbolic and
88 affective factors of linguistic landscape. Rowland (2013) has reviewed six generalized pedagogical
89 thoughts of LL, that is developing students' critical literacy skills, improving students' pragmatic
90 competence, increasing the possibility of incidental language learning, facilitating the acquisition
91 of multimodal literacy skills, stimulating students' multicompetence, and enhancing students'
92 sensitivity to the connotational aspects of language. Shohamy and Waksman (2009) also touched
93 upon the pedagogical perspective of linguistic landscape studies in their paper Linguistic
94 Landscape as an Ecological Arena. They insist the point of view that LL can be used as a
95 meaningful and powerful tool for meaningful language learning and developing language
96 awareness. When mentioned to raise language awareness, it comes to the pedagogical
97 application of language signs through LL projects. Inspired by the educational potentials of LL,
98 numerous student-led projects have been implemented aiming at enhancing learners' language
99 awareness and foster language skills and competencies, especially in English as a Foreign
100 Language (EFL) contexts (Dagenais, Moore, Sabatier, Lamarre & Armand 2009, Clemente,
101 Andrade, & Martins, 2012). For example, in Sayer's (2010) Mexico LL project, his EFL students
102 were acted as investigators and he intent to explore the social meanings of English on signs. The
103 final conclusion comes at that the project enabled the learners to think creatively and critically
104 about language issues, which shows the advantages of LL in learning foreign language as well as
105 fostering their literacy skills. The similar research made by Rowland in 2013 also revealed that the
106 language practice to explore the LL turned out to be helpful for them to comprehend the social
107 orders underlying language choice and develop symbolic competence and literacy skills.

108   When the research aimed at the functions of LL in specific domains, like in educational settings.
109 The schoolscape comes into the view. Firstly, certain studies focus on either demonstrating the

110   educational function of LL in language acquisition (Malinowski, 2015; Rowland, 2013) or
111   examining the utility of LL in promoting awareness and teaching cultural and linguistic diversity
112   (Hancock, 2012; Sayer, 2010). Secondly, Brown (2005, 2012) approaches schoolscapes from an
113   anthropological and ethnographic perspective, combining interviews and observation. Thirdly,
114   Dressler (2015), Hanauer (2009, 2010), Laihonen and Tódor (2017), Linkola (2014) and Szabó
115   (2015) combine digital photography, field notes, interviews, questionnaires and group discussions.
116   Fourthly, only Garvin and Eisenhower (2016) and Gorter and Cenoz (2015) represent the fairly
117   established approach utilizing photography.

118   Although ample studies have proved that there are some relationship between LL and foreign
119   language learning as well as the benefits language teaching can gain from the schoolscape, rarely
120   research have talked about the perceptions and thoughts of the foreign language learners.
121   Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a study to investigate how the foreign language learners
122   perceive the LL, whether they are willing to actively get involved in such immersing learning
123   materials. The inquiry of the students' belief towards LL can help us to figure out the pedagogical
124   function of LL more clearly, and offer some insight on the formation of language education policy.

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126   **2. The Study**

127   In mainland China (or the People's Republic of China, henceforth China), the institutionalized
128   language is Putonghua or Standard Mandarin, which has long been the predominant language
129   variety in the society. Most LL signs in China's city space are Chinese, sometimes along with
130   minority languages. English, as the most important foreign language in China, is also widely used
131   on some private and official signs in cities due to its symbolic marking of cosmopolitanism, high
132   technology, modernity, fashion, internationalism, and sophistication (Li, 2016). In some
133   economically developed areas in China, English is quiet prevalent. According to Zhao's (2012)
134   study, the foreign language usages in the central districts of Shanghai, nearly 70% of the public
135   and commercial signs include English which has proved that English has become a pervasive
136   trend in the city space. Zhang and Lv (2019) also referred that with the rapid development of the
137   urbanization process in China, English has become easily to be seen even in medium and
138   small-sized towns. The percentage of English is much more than that of minority languages in
139   scenic spots for ethnic minorities, which on the other hand reveals the fact that the Chinese
140   national features are less underscored in reality.

141   Since English is that highly sought-after in China's city space, and there has been inadequate
142   empirical research regarding the EFL (English as a foreign language) learners' perceptions towards
143   the English in LL and how they use such sources. These issues will be the focus of our study.

144

2.1 Research questions

In order to carried out a comprehensive study to explore the EFL learners' perception and practice towards English in LL. The following related questions will be addressed in the current study.

1). How the EFL learners perceive English in LL?

2). What are the learners' attitudes towards the pedagogical values of English in LL?

3). What are the learners' attitudes towards the schoolscape construction?

1.1 Research participants

The participants surveyed in this study are students in three different schools in downtown Beijing with the characteristics of international and metropolitan, and the students in this region are easily to get access to English in the city space. The total number of the participants is 205 including three groups with 100 senior high school students, 63 undergraduate students and 42 postgraduate students. The detail information about the participants is listed in table 1. It should be noted that the senior high school students have to take the University Entrance Exam in China which includes the subject of English. Therefore, the senior high school student are also worthy of consideration.

2.2 Methods and instruments

To address the research questions clearly, a combined research design with quantitative and qualitative methods was used in this study. Firstly, A five-point Likert scale questionnaire, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" with assigning values from 1-5, were sent out in classroom to elicit needed information. The questionnaire contains 2 part, the first part gathered some basic personal details like gender, grade level, school etc. The second part of the questionnaire composed 27 statements, which can be categorized into three basic themes: perceptions towards English in LL in China's city context (Q1-Q10), attitudes towards pedagogical values of English in LL (Q11-Q20), attitudes towards the schoolscape construction (Q21-Q27) Secondly, a semi-structured interview was conducted among the students to investigate the behind reasons for the choices of the questionnaire.

2.3 Data collection

The questionnaire was disseminated with the aid of the teachers in classroom, in this study, 205 questionnaires were distributed, finally 203 valid ones were collected. The profile of the

177 participating EFL learners is shown in Table 1. After the questionnaires were gathered, the data
178 were extracted for data analysis. And the interview was carried out via Wechat, an instant
179 communication tool popular in China, and the voiced message were transcribed by the
180 researcher.

181 **Table 1** Basic information of the participants

	Male	Female	Total
Senior high school students	63	35	98
Undergraduate students	23	40	63
Postgraduate students	6	36	42
Total	92	111	203

182

3. Results and discussion

184 This section reports the results of the survey and interview to reply the three questions raised
185 in this study.

186

3.1 Students' perceptions towards English in LL

188 To investigate the students' perceptions towards English on signage, ten questions were
189 designed in order to know to what extent they take notice of English in LL (Q1: I often take notice
190 of English on signs in city space), for what purpose (Q2-Q4: I take notice of the English on signage
191 just for fun; I take notice of the English on signage for information purpose; I take notice of the
192 English on signage for finding errors or inappropriateness), the symbolic function of English in LL
193 (Q5-Q6: English on signs can signify the modernization and internalization of a city; The density of
194 English signs can show the economic conditions of a city), their evaluations on status of English
195 and Mandarin (Q7-Q9: The fact that English is a supplementary language on signs prove its low
196 importance in Chinese people's life; English used on public can imply that it is an important
197 English; Hnayu Pinyin rather than English should be used in signs), and to what degree they come
198 across "errors" or "mistranslations" of English on signage (Q10: I have come across English errors
199 or mistranslation). The specific data were listed in Table 2.

200   **Table 2** Three groups' mean score from Q1 to Q10

Question number	Senior high school students		Undergraduate students		Postgraduate students	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	2.2	0.76	2.1	0.88	1.9	0.85
2	4.2	0.84	4.8	1.68	4.7	0.77
3	**1.8**	**0.87**	**2.5**	**0.63**	**3.8**	**0.79**
4	**4.8**	**0.78**	**3.0**	**0.71**	**2.9**	**0.67**
5	1.9	1.57	2.2	0.65	2.1	1.62
6	2.0	0.72	2.1	1.77	2.2	0.75
7	4.6	0.81	4.8	1.61	4.7	0.83
8	2.0	1.64	2.2	0.81	2.0	0.87
9	**4.3**	**0.69**	**4.1**	**0.90**	**2.7**	**0.75**
10	**3.9**	**0.79**	**2.4**	**0.86**	**1.8**	**0.66**

216   In table 2 we can see that all the students are aware of the English in LL the mean values of
217   the three groups are around 2, which claims that the students though in different grade level of
218   English, they hold a relatively high degree of noticing the English on signs. Moreover, the data of
219   Q2 of the three groups also illustrate that they don't for funny purpose to see the English on signs
220   (their mean values are all above 4.0). From the results of Q5 and Q6, it is known that all the
221   students accept the symbolic function of English which means modern, international and wealthy
222   of a city. For Q7, it is clear that most students are not for the statement that English is
223   unimportant in people's social life. On the contrast, they agree that English is an important
224   language (see the data of Q8).

225   From the results of the data analysis , it shows no matter which group they are in, most
226   students accept the importance of English. However, the postgraduate students support Hnayu
227   Pinyin to replace English on signs in Q9, the mean value is 2.7 (SD=0.75), which is relatively lower
228   than senior high school students and undergraduate students with mean value of 4.1 (SD=0.90)

229 and 4.3 (SD=0.69) respectively. According to the interview with different students in these groups,
230 the senior high school students most hold the opinion that English is a symbol of
231 internationalization which indicates the well-development of China, so they agree to keep English
232 rather Hanyu Pinyin on signs. Although some undergraduate students hold similar views with the
233 senior high school students saying that China now has developed well at home and abroad, in
234 contrast to that, some other undergraduate students consider China's development, at present, is
235 not in an all-rounded way and it's still leaving much room to improve from various aspects. They
236 think English as a world language can attract and enhance the communication with foreigners
237 even influence the city and country's image construction in the world, which in brief are
238 necessary for China or a city to make process. It is interesting that many undergraduate students
239 support to replace English on signs with Hanyu Pinyu. For them, they treat this issue from the
240 perspective of keeping and disseminating traditional Chinese culture. In their view, Hnayu Pinyin
241 as an international standard is also an essential part of Chinese culture and Chinese
242 characteristics , and to use Hanyu Pinyin in LL is conducive to build and show the country's image
243 in the world.

244 For the data of question Q4, the mean value of senior high students (M=4.8, SD=0.78) are
245 much higher than undergraduate students' (M=3.0, SD=0.71) and postgraduate students' (M=2.9,
246 SD=0.67), which shows that senior high school students are rarely to find errors of English on
247 signs, while the undergraduate and postgraduate students are inclined to seek for faults of
248 English in LL. For such condition, on one hand, it is the different English ability within the
249 different groups that makes the students can/cannot find errors of English in LL. For example, the
250 senior high school students may in the stage of learning and accumulating English knowledge.
251 While the undergraduate and postgraduate students learn English much longer and deeper than
252 the senior high school students thus they hold abundant knowledge reserves of English which are
253 contribute to recognize the impalpable incorrect usage of English in LL. The interview also
254 reaffirm this because the undergraduate and postgraduate students both mentioned the misuse
255 of the affective meaning of some English words in LL. On the other hand, it also proves the fact
256 that the level of English development in China has been improved and promoted with China
257 communicating and trading with the international world more and more frequently. The data of
258 Q10 shows similar findings with Q4, the senior high school students are the least ones who have
259 experienced "errors" in English on signs, the postgraduate students are the most ones who
260 frequently find "errors" in English in LL, and the undergraduate students stand in the middle of
261 the other two groups.

262 Now it comes to the data of Q3, the mean value of the three groups are gradually increased,
263 that is, the tendency that the students take notice of English on signs for information is
264 decreased with the mean value of 1.8 (SD=0.87), 2.5 (SD=0.63), 3.8 (SD=0.79). Among them, the
265 postgraduate students are less likely to look for information in English in LL. Combined the

266   analysis of Q4, the postgraduate students might not trust or appreciate the English in LL for the
267   errors that occurred. And the senior high school students are most likely to read English on signs
268   for information purpose. The reason may be that they have faith on the correctness of English on
269   signage and make most of it with less fault-searching. The degree of finding information in
270   English of signs, undergraduate students is between the other two.

271

272   **3.2 The students' attitudes towards the pedagogical value of English in LL**

273   In the second part of the questionnaire, Q11-Q20 are designed to gather the students
274   attitudes towards the pedagogical value of English in LL including their acceptance of English on
275   signs as a learning source (Q11) and making authentic learning atmosphere (Q12), the effects of
276   English on signs to help students learn vocabulary, improve literacy skills, promote critical
277   thinking ability (Q13-Q15) and impact on them to raise their interest in English (Q16),
278   experiences of reviewing English knowledge when come across English on signs (Q17) and
279   experiences of using English on signs in English-learning process (Q18), support for gathering
280   materials of English on signs by themselves for learning purpose (Q19) and support for gathering
281   materials of English on signs by their English teachers for learning purpose (Q20). The specific
282   information of the data analysis result is placed in Table 3.

283   **Table 3** Three groups' mean score from Q11 to Q20

Question number	Senior high school students		Undergraduate students		Postgraduate students	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
11	1.9	1.67	2.1	0.83	2.5	0.74
12	1.8	0.84	2.1	1.74	2.0	1.68
13	1.6	0.87	2.7	1.16	4.2	0.68
14	**3.4**	**1.68**	**2.5**	**0.81**	**3.8**	**1.59**
15	**4.1**	**1.27**	**2.6**	**0.65**	**4.0**	**0.94**
16	2.2	1.02	2.1	0.85	2.2	0.76
17	2.6	0.75	3.0	1.31	4.6	0.81
18	2.2	0.69	2.8	1.41	3.8	0.79

| 19 | 2.1 | 0.92 | 2.6 | 1.04 | 4.7 | 0.63 |
| 20 | 2.0 | 0.89 | 2.2 | 0.76 | 2.1 | 1.00 |

Based on the data of Q11, it is welcomed for the students' to accept English on signs as a resource for English learning. Although the postgraduate students maintain a little higher mean value (M=2.5, SD=0.74), they still expect to make good use of the English on signs; and the interview showed it is the "nonstandard" application of English in city space that causes their anxiety, therefore they call for more attention being paid to improve the "standard usage and dissemination of English in city space". At the same time, the students of different groups all agree that English on signs create an authentic environment for learning English. The reason most frequently be cited in the three groups is that the public English provide more information on practical and social usage of English which is more causal and usual in real context than the classroom English materials. Q13 aiming at investigating to what extent English in city space can help students to learn English vocabulary, the finding shows that with the grade level increased, the students can get less and less assistance to learn vocabulary from English on signs. And such situation may also be related with their knowledge accumulation in different English levels. For example, the English used in LL is, more often than not, common words which are not obstacles for postgraduates to recognize.

However, as for their attitudes to the extent that English can help improve their literacy skills and critical thinking ability (see the data of Q14 and Q15), there is a different story. For these two aspects, it is the undergraduate students who believe they can get benefits from English in LL in promoting literacy skills and critical thinking, but the senior high school students and postgraduate students are both keep an opposed attitude. In the interview part, the students speak out their reasons for such attitudes. The representative answers of the three groups are listed below:

   I think, to improve English literacy skills needs knowledge of vocabulary, grammar and text organization, and so on. In addition, the guidance and help from professional English teacher in also essential for us to advance our literacy skill. I don't think the English on signs

are powerful enough to get my literacy skills promoted. As for the critical thinking, it seems much more complicated which needs more means and contents in different fields of knowledge, I cannot even connect English in city space with critical thinking together.

--Coming from a senior high school student

It is useful and interesting to learn the text of public English, which has different writing styles with different stories. From different vocabulary and sentences I can feel different writing purposes and emotions, and that can help me to select appropriate word to describe something or express my emotion. I can also by comparing the frequency of occurrence between Chinese and English to consider the social-historical and economical differences in different areas which, I think, is a kind of critical thinking way. So, we can know lots of covert information via English on public signs.

--Coming from an undergraduate student

I don't think that English in China's city space are standard enough to be able to shoulder the tasks of improving my literacy skills. On the other side, the English on signs are not academic enough to foster my literacy skills. As for critical thinking, I think it is a kind of thinking model which is a long-term construction and influenced by many factors, so it is not simply English on signs that can influence my thinking model.

--Coming from a post graduate student

From Table 3 we can also see that all students agree English on signs can help them review the knowledge they have learned (see the data of Q16), the mean value are all around 2.0. With the grade level increased, their English-learning interests raised by English on public are decreased (see the data of Q17), and it is similar to their experience of using English on signs (see the data of Q18). The data of Q19 show that the senior high school students and undergraduate students are more likely to collect English on signs as learning materials, but the postgraduate are unwilling to gathering English as learning materials. However, all of the students support the teacher to use the English in city space as a teaching material (see the data of Q20).

3.3 The learners attitudes towards English schoolscape construction

In the third part of the questionnaire, Q21-Q28 was designed to test how the students think about English schoolscape construction. The related issues include the existence of English signs

349 in school (Q21: My school has English signs) and the condition of English signs in school (Q22: The
350 English landscape in my school is well constructed), the students perception towards the function
351 of English signs in school (Q23: English signs in school are placed in order to improve students'
352 English; Q24: English signs in school are placed in order to show its international vision), their
353 attitudes to the benefits of English signs for English-learning in school (Q25: English signs in
354 school is helpful for English-learning), who should manage and designed the English signs in
355 school (Q26: English signs inside the school should be managed by school authorities;
356 Q27:English in schools should be designed by teachers and students). The questionnaire results
357 of this part is showed in Table 4.

358 **Table 4** Three groups' mean score from Q21 to Q27

Question number	Senior high school students		Undergraduate students		Postgraduate students	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
21	1.7	0.88	1.6	0.94	1.6	0.83
22	3.7	0.74	3.5	1.24	3.6	0.79
23	4.2	1.35	4.0	0.89	4.1	1.75
24	2.0	1.17	2.1	0.65	1.9	1.21
25	**2.1**	**0.85**	**2.8**	**0.73**	**4.0**	**0.84**
26	4.2	0.75	4.3	0.96	4.2	0.76
27	1.8	0.81	1.8	0.64	1.7	0.82

372 With regard to the learners' attitudes towards the English signs in school, the students in
373 different groups show similar attitudes in most of the issues. For instance, all of them express
374 there are English signs in their schools (see the data of Q21), but they are not so satisfied with
375 their schoolscape construction condition (see the data of Q22) which also entails that English
376 schoolscape construction has not been well attended to in most schools. They all hold the idea
377 that the English signs in school are mainly to show its international vision rather than improve the
378 students' English (see the data of Q22 and Q23). The results also indicate that the students in

379   different groups hope the English signs in schools should be designed by the teachers and
380   students (see the data of Q27), opposed to the idea that English signs in school should be
381   managed by authorities (see the data of Q26), meanwhile It also suggest that students are willing
382   to take initiative and play active role in English schoolscape construction with teachers in order to
383   facilitate English learning. With regard to the benefits to English learning of English signs in school
384   (see the data of Q25), the senior high school students deem it helpful to their English-learning
385   process (M=2.1, SD=0.85), and the undergraduate students also keep a positive attitudes towards
386   English schoolscape for improving students' English (M=2.8, SD=0.73). However, the postgraduate
387   students refuse the opinion that English in school signs is helpful for their English study (M=4.0,
388   SD=0.84). The reason can also be inferred from their ideology of "nonstandard" use of English.

389

390   4. Conclusion

391   China has the largest number of EFL learners in the world, totaling around 400 million or over
392   one third of its population (Boldon & Graddol 2012), thus English in China has far reaching
393   impacts and has garnered substantial scholarship. Given the longstanding conundrum of
394   separation of didactic learning and actual uses, the English in LL is supposed to provide a new
395   promising solution for the connection of classroom-based English learning to the authentic
396   learning environment in the city space as well as the school space. However, the reality is that the
397   EFL learners in different levels are not keep a similar perception towards the English in LL.

398   For the first question of this study, the learners in different groups are all aware of the English
399   in LL and they agree that the English in LL is related with the city's economical development. And
400   the undergraduate students also referred that English in LL can enhance the city's development,
401   therefor it is feasible and useful to keep the English popular in LL rather than Hanyu Pinyin.
402   Students in senior high school also refute the idea of replacing English with Hnayu Pinyin for
403   learning English knowledge and gain information. Postgraduate students are willing to see Hanyu
404   Pinyin in LL rather than English, and they express their confidence and faith towards China's
405   well-development condition and it is time for Chinese culture to walk out. It should be noted
406   here, that the postgraduate students don't think the English on signs are "standard" enough,
407   which also influences their attitudes towards the pedagogical value in the second part of
408   questionnaire. In spite of all the agreement on the symbolic function of internationalization and
409   modernization, the senior high school students use English on signs for information and rarely
410   find "errors" in English in LL. Conversely, the undergraduate and postgraduate students are more
411   inclined to find "inappropriateness" in English on signs.

412   The results also reveal that the senior high school students, undergraduate students and
413   postgraduate students hold different attitudes towards the pedagogical value of English in LL.
414   First they all admit English on signs is an authentic resource for English learning and support the

teachers to collect English on signs as a type of English teaching materials. But the three groups are not in line with issues that English on signs can improve vocabulary, English literacy and critical thinking. Generally speaking, the research shows that the extent of promotion on such abilities are related with the students' knowledge background, English learning methods and perceptions of English on signs. The postgraduate students' "standard" ideology towards English make them feel negative on pedagogical values of English in China's city space, though they deem the English in LL precious and meaningful for English learning.

Although the students of senior high school, undergraduate students and postgraduate students share similar attitudes in most issues, for the advantages of helping students improve English, the postgraduate students still have a negative evaluation of the "correctness" of English in school; the senior high school students insist that English in school is helpful for improving their English, and the undergraduate students are with a neutral attitude.

All in all, the findings in this study show that the EFL learners in different levels all admit that the English in LL has play an important role in its symbolic function which is emblematic of internationalization, modernization and well economic development. They also agree that the English in LL is a valuable resource for English learning, and they hope the English schoolscape construction can be improved. For another the extent to the utilization of English in LL, it is determined by multiple factors, for example, the learners English knowledge base, English learning method and ideology of "standard" English. For the senior students, they are the most ones who are very interested and efficient in learning English in LL. Because the postgraduate students keep a strict standard requirement of English application in LL, they are more likely to seek "errors" or "inappropriateness" rather than absorb some knowledge or skills from English in LL. The undergraduate student are in the middle position, on one side, they use English in LL to learn new vocabulary, improve English literacy and enlighten their critical thinking ability, on the other side, they are also able to realize the "inappropriateness" of English in LL. However, they hold a different ideology towards "standard" English, that is, they are more likely to treat such "inappropriateness" as a kind of Chinese way of expression or "Chinglish" of which they are in favor.

According to the findings, some suggestions can be proposed for English education planning. Firstly, since the importance of English in LL are approved by all the students, it is feasible for the English teacher to use the English in city space as a resource for English teaching. Secondly, the contents and quantity of such resource should be carefully selected and controlled base on the different learners with different English levels. Last but not the least, the English schoolscape are supposed to be constructed well with the efforts of professional English teachers.

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