On Network Buzzwords From Meme Theory—"Mind"

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In the era of network media, catchwords have become a discourse fact and cultural phenomenon with great influence in China in recent years. Language is in the sensitive dynamic change, common words develop into catchwords, and in addition to its own development, more important is often from the external cause of social events. This paper takes network buzzwords as the entry point to analyze the "Mind" of buzzwords. Although the word has always appeared in the public's vision, it has gained a lot of attention after developing into buzzwords driven by hot social events. This paper explains the reasons for its popularity with the help of relevant theories of memetics, aiming to prove the inevitability of "Mind" of buzzwords becoming a powerful language on the Internet.

Keywords: network buzzwords, mind, memetics, social pragmatics

Introduction

With the development and evolution of society, we can observe human life and ideas in different times through language, thus, reflecting the characteristics of different times. Network buzzwords are a special form of language. Generally speaking, buzzwords are related to social events, so they can not only reflect social phenomena, but also convey and release the emotions of netizens. Such buzzwords are easier for the public to accept and spread. Network buzzwords are no longer exclusive to netizens. They have come into the lives of ordinary people and attracted wide attention from all walks of life. It reflects the contemporary cultural ecology and its social and cultural psychology is worth our deep thinking (Wang, 2011). In addition, the authors believe that network catchwords have a particularly important significance because they carry the collective memory of the public in a certain period of time. Catchwords have gained social identity, and netizens spread them through network media, thus, forming a special social and cultural symbol (Chen, 2013).

Memetics, as a new theory, is gaining attention in various academic fields. This paper studies network buzzwords from the perspective of memetics, studies their development characteristics, and analyzes their transmission process. The continuous emergence of new network buzzwords is itself a cultural communication activity, which is closely related to linguistic memetics (Huang, 2014).

According to the 2021 network catchword chosen, the authors choose network hot word "Mind" on the popular reason analysis; the reason why we choose it is that "Mind" is not strange to us all and the word is common in the political field and life, so "Mind" can be from ordinary words into buzzwords and become the meaning of network catchword after changed. Therefore, the authors try to analyze the development of "Mind"

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of network buzzwords and analyze the reasons for their popularity from the perspective of social pragmatic memes by combining their popular events.

The Epidemic Events of "Mind" and Its Meaning Development

The Epidemic Events of "Mind"

People often derive multiple words from one word based on the psychological mechanism and combination rules formed by analogy of language symbols, inducement and metaphorical imitation words, which prominently reflects the inertial breakthrough power of catchwords (Huang, 2000). For example, "Mind open", "Mind too small", etc., are derived from the word "Mind". "Mind" refers to a person's cognitive range of something (or phenomenon), the space of attention. "The mind is too small" (meaning a person's vision is too small to see things in a comprehensive way), "the mind is open" (meaning a person's vision is too short to see things in a comprehensive way), etc.

The mind is open. "Mind" became popular because of an online incident. In 2021, a police officer surnamed Chen randomly "connected" various network anchors online, and also asked anchors to "assign homework" for fans to promote network security knowledge. The mind suddenly opened up! After watching the live broadcast, netizens commented that the live broadcast behavior is very "Mind", saying: friends, mind open!

The mind is too small. It comes from a skit of Jia Bing in the Spring Festival Gala. Jia Bing said in the skit that the Internet popularity later became a meme that everyone played. For example, in "Reality and Network" series of videos, the protagonist always says "smaller, smaller mind" when mocking social injustice.

Here's an example:

—"When can I have a holiday?"

—"Small, small mind, committed to the new media career struggle for life how can people want to have a holiday every day?"

The Development of the Buzzword "Mind"

In essence, buzzwords are a mirror reflecting social phenomena, values, and cultural mentality of specific target groups. The "Mind" of catchwords reflects the positive energy of Chinese society and reflects the great mind of China. In the age structure of Chinese netizens, young people account for the majority. It is obvious that the specific target group of network catchwords is young people, because young people are easy to produce a kind of imitation psychology and pursue popular values. Moreover, what is more important is that teenagers are easier and more willing to accept online pop culture. It is the unique curiosity of young people and their ability to accept and perceive new things that make them involuntarily transform existing words or boldly create new words to meet their needs of communication and expression when facing new things.

After searching the CCL corpus, the word "Mind" is found to be a relatively official word, as in the following example "格局" has multiple meanings. The first layer is "pattern" and the second layer is "mind".

> Example 1: For example, the choice of the relationship pattern between government and market, state and society, whether it is more markets or more governments, which is right or wrong, which is better or worse, has always been debated by people because this topic related to the social basic pattern reflects the value choice of the problem, rather than that empirical research can directly answer "what is" problem.
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> Example 2: They explored the theoretical framework of nationalism revealed by such countries, the methods used to fight for national independence, the methods used to govern the country after independence, and the impact on the original political pattern of the world.

Example 3: On the one hand, the international political environment, as the peripheral political space of a country, how to grasp the basic development direction and trend of the overall political structure of the world in today's unpredictable international situation? ....

Example 4: Happiness is as trivial as pain, and their arrival, like the other details of life, only adds complexity to the pattern of life.

Today, those uses still exist, but as a series of words have become buzzwords, the word has become more versatile. It's less official, it's more down to earth, and it's more personal. The author takes the following examples from the corpus of Sina Weibo:

Example 5: The mind is, when someone says you are not good, smile and say thank you back.

Example 6: If you open your mind, you will find that many things do not deserve to affect your mood.

Analyze the Reasons for the Popularity of "Mind" From the Perspective of Social Pragmatic Memes

Memes

Memetics theory explains the law of cultural evolution based on the new Darwinian theory of evolution. The core concept of memetics is meme, and the core of meme concept is imitation. The term "meme" was first introduced by Oxford University zoologist Dawkins in his book *The Gene*, published in 1976, which refers to a different kind of replication factor besides genes, the "cultural transmission unit". Blackmore believes that any information can be called a meme as long as the meme information can be "copied" through a process called "imitation" in a broad sense (Blackmore, 1999, p. 66). Therefore, memes are transmitted from one person's brain to others' brains through transmission. This process can only be completed after people imitate and then copy and spread. However, it should be noted that this copy is not a complete copy. Generally speaking, one information is copied into another information that is the same or similar in form or content. In the process of replication, the communicator's creation and improvement are indispensable, that is, memes make use of the means of communication to make themselves copied and spread.

Language Meme

Language is the means of transmission of meme, and language meme is a meme that takes language as the communication medium. Language memes can be divided into strong and weak categories according to the intensity of their transmission. Weak language memes generally only get few opportunities to be imitated, and will soon be forgotten, flash in the pan, or even disappear by themselves. Strong meme refers to that information is quickly accepted by the public and continuously applied within a specific time after super replication and wide dissemination, and then grows into a strong language meme. In addition, strong memes also need to have three characteristics: persistence, high fidelity, and fecundity.

Language memes are closely related to catchwords. Because of the spread of language information by Internet users and even some influential public figures, the language meme will be used by the public, and then the public will imitate and spread it. In addition to being popular in the transmission and becoming a popular word accepted by the public, it will immediately become a strong language meme. "Landscape" was originally the gala sketch actor mentioned in the program, which has been widely spread on the Internet, and in turn, imitate; we can find that in the process of the copy it is not completely "clone" and we can learn in the process of transmission it also appeared a series of words, such as "the mind is open", "the mind is small", and so on.

Network buzzwords adapt to the social pragmatic environment, constantly evolving, and reflect the social reality and needs, arousing the resonance of netizens. People have different understandings of buzzwords according to their own conditions, so as to derive different forms of expression. Finally, these information are copied and spread in large quantities.

Social Pragmatic Language Memes

Social pragmatic memes are the transformation and creation of language symbols by Internet users, the symbolic communication of social psychological representations of Internet users, and the assembly of public opinion symbols of Internet users. Their communication value lies in the coordination of interpersonal relations, social mobilization, and improvement of communication effects (Cao & Jin, 2016, pp. 37-56). Socio-pragmatic memes can be regarded as a tool for netizens to express their feelings. Young Internet users pay attention to their own living environment and living state. With the help of "we-media", they create more and more network buzzwords to express their mentality and views on reality. Strong social pragmatics is a kind of "language mass production" activity. Internet users generally pursue the maximization of "homogeneity" in order to gain recognition from their knowledge group, age group, or cognitive group.

The buzzword "Mind" has become a strong social pragmatic meme with its vitality expanding through network transmission. According to Baidu index search, "Mind" has been continuous since January 1, 2011, indicating that the word has longevity:
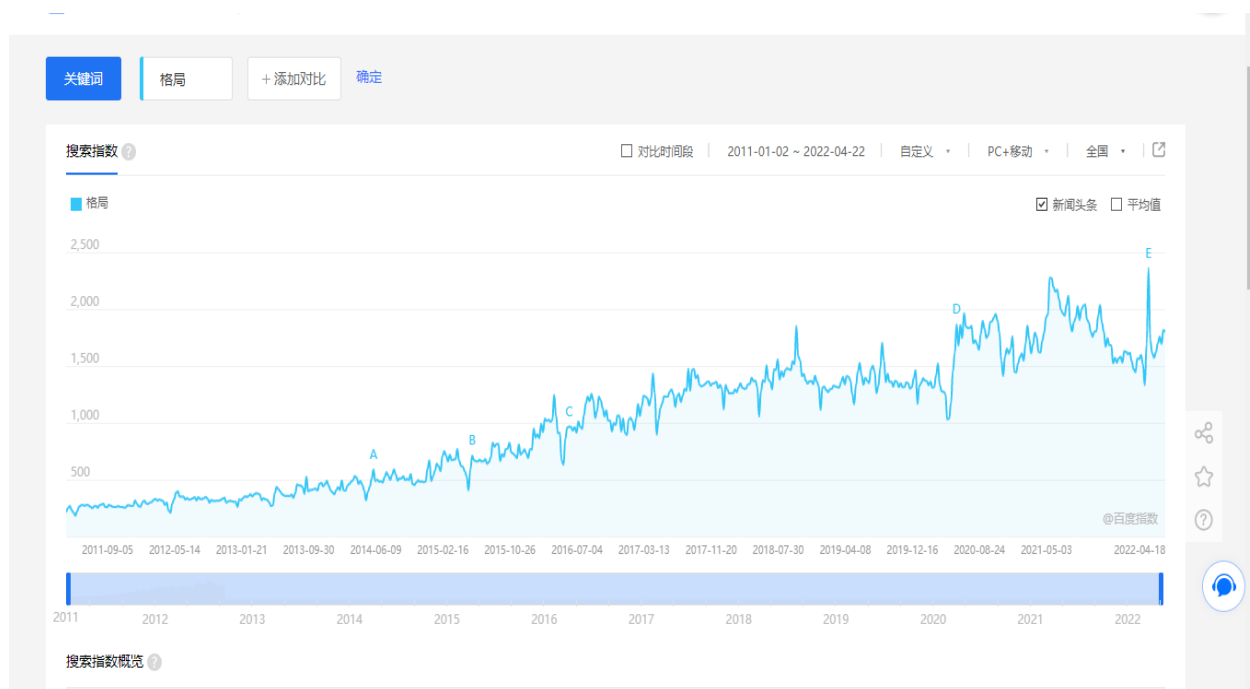

Figure 1. "Mind" of search index.

Point E in the figure is where the Baidu index is significantly higher than other periods after "Mind" has become a buzzword. The author finds the following themes after clicking on it:

(1) A man with a big mind doesn't care about every ounce.

(2) Farewell to the "closed-door construction", Great Wall Motor Wei Jianjun's vision of the mind?
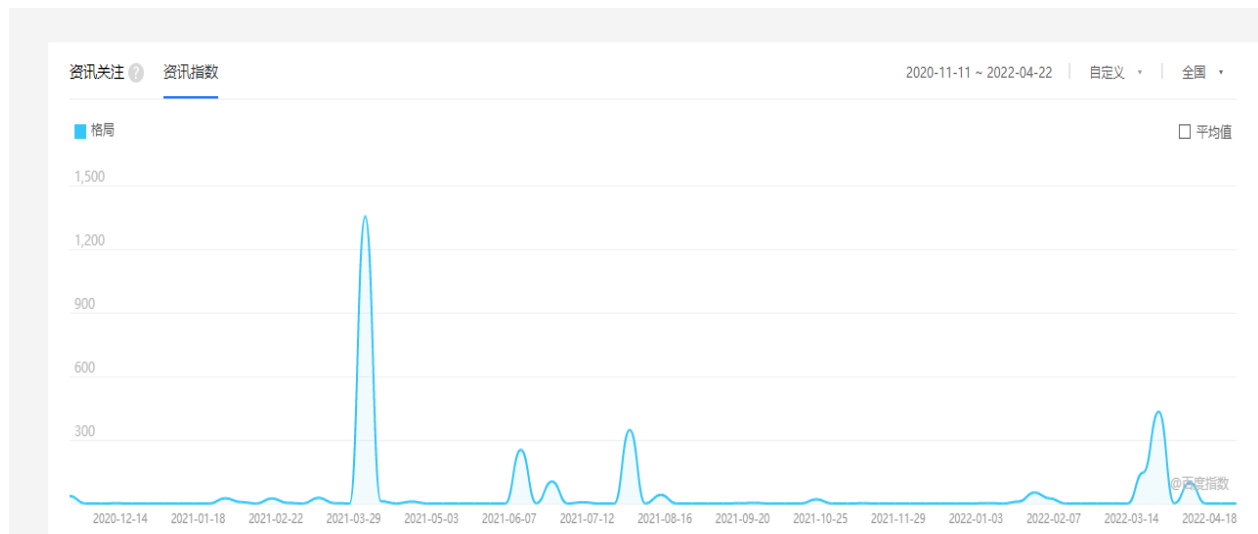
Figure 2. The peak of "Mind".

"Mind" is not only its own leap into the popular words, followed by also deriving a lot of popular words, such as "the mind is open", "the mind is small", and other popular words, which shows that pattern is productive. In addition, the "Mind" series had been used by everyone since it became a buzzword, which can reflect the fidelity of replication.

Conclusion

We must rationally analyze and understand the network buzzwords, which are produced and mainly used on the Internet, and they exist in large numbers and are produced year by year, because Internet users demand a particular social group, and get some social public's affection and recognition, so that by absorbing, inevitably has its rationality. There must be competition between buzzwords; network buzzword "Mind" was selected as the 2021 hot word, which has a certain degree of heat, coupled with media attention and official certification, so that its social recognition continues to improve. Because it has been widely copied and spread by the public, "Mind" has become a strong meme, and the characteristics of strong memes can prove that "Mind" has become a catchword which is not accidental, but inevitable.

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