

Multi-perspectival Construal of English Borrowings in Chinese

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The English borrowings in Chinese are scrutinized from a multi-dimensional perspective, including their formation and activity in current existence, and then the predictions about their future trend are set forth hereby in the paper. Based on it, the comprehensive principle of cross-lingual borrowing is pointed out to satisfy the expectation of the long-time peace and stance of Chinese culture.

Keywords: English borrowings, translation, pragmatics, culture, construal

Original Intention and Criterion

When what is lack or a culture is destitute of has to be represented in its language, the most economical way of its realization is none other than the advent of borrowings. Hereby the English provides a good choice. Originated in smaller islands called England, it now grows into a common lingua franca shared by the rest of the world, from which many languages possess borrowings.

Habitual Translations of Borrowings

If there are too many discrepancies in terms of qualia cognition between the two kinds of culture in touch, or both belong to different types of language, the passing down issues involved by borrowings will be complicated enough to sort out. Borrowings in Chinese from English are no exception, either. Luo Changpei (2004, pp. 35-37) once divided them into onomatopoeic substitutes, newly born echoic rhyming ones, borrowed translations or descriptive words (sometimes called literal translations). In Chen Yuan's turn (2000, pp. 297-299) borrowings comprise five types such as phonological translations, phonological plus specific collectives, phonological plus literal translations, literally translated combinations (mimicry borrowings), idiomatically literal translations. The criteria on which the above classifications are based seem not to be identical, and very hard to be understood. Here we maintain that it is more convenient to the illustration of ideas displayed in the paper by adopting the following version or pattern, namely the translated absorptions of foreign words into Chinese altogether add up to the following five, phonological translations, literal translations, phono-liter translations, phono-plus ideographical, and transplanted ones. For more details, see the following analysis of samples.

Phonetic Translation

As the name suggests, it refers to convert the original sounds of the source language into those of the target language without any alterations. Due to the lack of their counterparts in Chinese, one has to borrow both the sounds and meanings of some specific terms such as denoting habits and customs, names of persons or animals and plants, geographical denominations, and technical terms. And in Wu Tieping's opinion (1993, pp. 237-240),

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they are the idiomatic borrowings in the strictest sense, instantiated by “yinggelan (England), niuyue (New York), linken (Lincoln)”, or the like. Of course there are more complicated ones everywhere, for example-*kelong* (clone), *mengtaiqi* (montage), or so. If literally translated, the language economy would be sacrificed.

Literal Translation

It is the most commonly used means of introducing borrowings into Chinese. Words obtained as such include the following two types: One is to make full use of Chinese formation processes and coin new words following the suit of original lexical meaning; the other is putting together all the literally translated components and forming new compounds in accordance with the Chinese tokens: the former: *jiguang* (lazer), *beiwanglu* (memorandum), *chonglang* (surf), *lianjie* (link); the latter: *feizaoju* (soap opera), *zaixian* (online), *jiweijiuhui* (cocktail party), *xinyongka* (credit card), *chaoren* (superman), *chaojimingxing* (superstar), *qiannianchong* (millenium bug), *rexian* (hotline), *lvka* (green card) ...

Phono-liter Translations

It is mainly employed to translate some rare words which are hard to translate simply by transliteration, and whose essence of meaning is hard to grasp in a short period of time, for instance, *baleiwu* (ballet), *makesizhuyi* (Marxism), *yintewang* (interweb), *kabinqiang* (carbine). Parts of geographical or personal names are also involved, such as *xinxilan* (New Zealand), *dabuliedian* (Great Britain), and so on.

Phonological Plus Ideographical

This method is particular and sensitive to Chinese, yet it is suspected of getting involved in the highest state of lexical translation which combines the sounds and meaning in a perfect way. It demands not only the similarities in sounds when translated, and what is more important is to what extent the translated products might reflect the true meaning of the original terms. To be in pursuit of sales volume, one prefers to adopt this method in the translation of trademarks. Typical examples of this kind are ubiquitous at present, such as *kekoukele*, *benchi*, *manguo*; likewise, to be easy to pronounce and convenient to follow the web vocabulary often encounters such practice when translated, as in *heike*, *boke*, and so on.

Transplanted

Owing to the advantages of lexical coinage brought about by Pinyin, it is very difficult to clearly convey what some abbreviations are with brief Chinese expressions, or accurate lexical expressions commonly found, so one might as well directly cite them as reference. Examples include VCD, MV, CEO, WTO, MBA, or the like which most frequently appear in recent years.

Multi-dimensional Explanations of Its Status Quo

Translational Fusion

Foreignization and domestication can be subsumed under the extension or expansion of literal translation and free translation. What is so called domestication is that it requires the interpreters to have better access to the target language by means of the translated products, adopting the expressions obeyed in it out of the readers' habits to convey the semantic contents of the original text. In foreignization's turn, it requires the interpreters to make full use of the equivalent expressions to those in the source language meaning the same. When dealing with borrowings from English, the mutual organic conciliation and benefits can be easily captured in our eyes.

The most secure practice of borrowing foreign words is complete copy, which was for the most part admired by modern Japanese and westerners, yet in modern Chinese it is still prevalent to make foreign local. Chinese characters get their users into the habit of attaching meanings to every word or syllable. Coming across more than one syllable, they are more likely to form compounds or extend their meaning in accordance with what they are literally. And compared with phonetic translation, ideographical has the advantage of condensation, generalization, and economy being more suitable to the thinking trend or pattern of the popular mass. In view of this, many phonetic translations now grow into ideological ones, for example, “pannixilin” into “qingmeisu”, “delvfeng” into “dianhua”, ... The method of phonological plus ideographical mentioned above also shows that there is lack of permeation when Chinese fused with other languages. Apart from compounding affixation is sometimes available. In phonetic translations, certain elements of higher frequency often serve as affixes joining the Chinese word formation series, instantiated by “bar” phonologically translated as “ba”, thus forming “jiuba (pub), yangba (oxygen bar), wangba (internet bar), shuiba (water bar)”, ... From “di” in taxi extensions like “dadi (call a taxi), dige (male tazxi driver), dijie (female taxi driver)” start to enter the sequence of linguistic symbols. As for originally freely translated elements of this kind, they now become more active, extensive in range when used, or more deeply grammaticalized, such as derived from “gundong xinwen (rolling news), gundong bochu (rolling broadcast) and gundong chuban (rolling publications)”; after “shuimen shijian (water-gate event), yanzhaomen (pornographic photos gate), naifenmen (milk powder gate)” come to be in Chinese, and various gates spring up. In the long run, even the fully reserved phonetic translations can also Chinesized by means of certain latent form. The cause of phonological + literal translation lies with this, for example, taifei tang (taffy), xuepin (shopping), fensi (fans), ... Especially the latter two become widely used in all corners of daily life nowadays in modern Chinese.

All the above reveal their function of strong influence brought about by domestication, yet the foreignized loan words from English still occupy a certain rate in Chinese, displaying the tendency of entrenchment. For example,

丽丽穿上今年最in的迷你裙和同学一起去血拼，走得累了，两人去麦当劳买了一杯可乐和一支冰激凌，又去网吧玩了会电游，网上聊天认识了一个GG，发了一个伊妹儿，拜拜之后各自回家。

The italics in the text are commonly used colloquialism often quoted by the young in the country. The employment of loan words of this kind narrows the distance of interlocuters and reinforces their sense of identification with one another. They not only add some liveliness and attractivity to Chinese, but aid it in following the time's pace. Seen from this, the phonologically translated loans in Chinese, including parts involving phonological, serve to beneficially supplement free translation means whenever it alone is not able to reach the fixed purpose.

Pragmatic Fusion

Apart from the domestication and foreignization embodied in entity expression, the Chinesization of English words is represented as well in the principle of imitative word formation, transplantation, code combination, meme inheritance, or other similar pragmatic aspects.

As mentioned above, the second kind of literal translation, in which the new terms are coined by means of the original word formation stuff and rules in Chinese, to be more exact, is deemed to be a kind of calque in essence, namely the literal translation of the English words phone by phone (Hu, 2001, pp. 101-103). More examples like zuqiu, heiban, mali, miyue, dianhua, boshi, ruan yinliao, regou, dongzuo pian, beijing yinyue,

qingrenjie, daigou, chaoji shichang, yinyue dianshi, gudong, hulianwang, diannaobingdu, zhuye, dianzi youjian, and so on, all belong to the deepening or strengthening of Chinese compounds in use.

The great majority of English abbreviations display themselves in their original forms in Chinese, for sometimes their literal translation seems to be redundant or very strange, while their phonetic seems to betray their primary intention of Chinese wordage patterns. Such trends are becoming more and more prevalent, even inundate in internet web at home, for example, IC (I see), B4 (before), BF (boy friend). In this aspect, Chinese owe some to it.

Numeric homophones refer to Chinese long sentences or phrases, such as 02825 (ni ai bu ai wo), 0451392 (ni shi wo yi sheng zui ai), 08376 (ni bie sheng qi le), 1372 (yi xiang qing yuan), 5871 (wo bu jie yi). Other web words with similar characteristics of obvious Chinese articulation are produced based on this, as in 886 (baibaile) or more.

New explanations of old terms or borrowed homophones are at present two major trends of creations among youngsters; their motivation is lying with the English compounding (including initialisms, acronyms, or blending). Examples include keai (kelian, meirenai), ruhuasiyu (ru huyajiao, si yutou), xianhui (xianxiande shenme dou buhui), baigujing (bailing + yewuguan + jingying), danbaizhi (hundun + baichi + shenjingzhi), or the like.

Borrowings of inherited meme are the choice of the English original words as substitutes for Chinese limitations to maintain its pragmatic meme, for example, unitary rhyme found in 本人今年刚twenty, 有幸进入university, 考试只要能sixty, 没钱只管求daddy, 生活本来就dry, 何必整天去busy, 大学生活不happy, 不如赶快找lady, 将来生个胖baby (Wen & Li, 2008).

Cultural Fusion

Absorption of positive cultural factors. The popularity of Cocacola, Macdonards, Kentucky, Disney, CNN (Cable News Network), MTV has expanded globally, and the charm of Hollywood films has sprung up. In such cases, the widespread use of English borrowings enriches a lot the modern Chinese vocabulary, filling in the semantic gap of traditional Chinese and pushing up its development. Such borrowings as cultural carriers entail the distinctive characteristics of the western culture too, thus enabling the natives in China to cognize more and more novel things or concepts in an easier manner. So far, a lot of English borrowings have fallen in the circle of Chinese vocabulary's component parts. The cultural implication carried by them is deeply implanted in the cultural soil of China.

Beneficial circulation of cultural communication. In Sino-English communications, more and more English lexical items are being absorbed into Chinese, and further digested, showing the daring and bosom it has to embrace the largeness. The English often brings about some novel things in Chinese. For lack of the equivalent terms to denote them, finally the Chinese has to borrow them in some way or another. Coming across *AIDS*, shortly after close examination, we soon realize it is the term that flew into Chinese in the 1980s of the 20th century. Referring to *Olympics*, we trace back to the intercultural communication in the early 17th century. The English borrowings display the intercultural communication of that period; research on them makes us better understand the communicational encounters between their cultures. On the other we may pave the more solid way for their further communications in the days ahead. Without these previous borrowings and fusion, it would be too abrupt to take in a whole new phenomenon coming from foreign and be too hard to achieve success one way or another, not even to mention the instant effect acquired.

Passive or watchful side. More often than not, it is quite easy to capture its negative influence. The typical example is that the cultural hegemony in American networks often exerts such influence on the Chinese youths. In the internet nowadays, the dominant language is English occupying nearly 90% of its speech, while Chinese, less than 1%. More than 90% of information is operated in English, together with more websites in the western developed countries providing more information contents; their sites become places most net surfers pay frequent visits to. English becomes a universal standard language of fashion, and it is very hard to get yourself across in the internet without its knowledge, which stirs the Chinese youths' enthusiasm and motivates them to learn it very hard often resulting in their ignorance of the importance of Chinese and lowering down their capacity to take good command of it. It affects the continuation of Chinese traditional and superb culture somewhat, putting modern Chinese in danger of contraction and extinction.

The negative effects on Chinese borrowings could not be held ignorable, too. Esp. when we adulterate some nonstandard leading indicators in the process of phonetical translation, for example, the name of "Xipishi" cannot express exactly its original implication, while causing inappropriate misunderstandings; the translated "Youtai" is deeply felt as unpleasant, for it is strange that the name of a people has equal share with that of a dog.

Conclusions

In the matter of English borrowings, we should not take actions simply on the principle of welcoming all that are new, but obey the Chinese habits and unwritten conventions as well as pay enough attention to the factors of its cultural image. For example, "modeng (modern)" stands for the cultural inheritance, "Anqier (Angel)" suggests the subtleties of imitation; otherwise, they could possibly fall into disuse soon. The period of "Zhina equals China" is no longer there, so such serious disagreement between culture and facts in phonetic translation even forms disobedience with its translatability thoroughly destroyed. Therefore, dealing with English borrowings in Chinese, we are supposed to take the comprehensive factors into account including sides of the born texts, pragmatics, and cultural burdens and to be guided retaining the true while eliminating the false to finally attain to the situation of being favorable to the longtime development of Chinese and the harmonious combination of both cultures.

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