

# C-J Translation Strategies of Network New Words Under the Communicative Translation

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In recent years, network new words have entered the public's field of vision and been widely used in daily life, becoming an important part of social life, and their significance and influence are expanding. Japanese translation of network new words cannot only introduce China's network culture to Japanese readers, but also make Japanese readers know more about China. Therefore, the translation of network new words is an extremely important part in today's translation work. At the communicative level, it also has distinctive features, that is, metaphor and pun. Network new words have a high degree of difficulty in translation. It is necessary not only to deal with the original words, sentence information, and cultural background information accurately at the communicative level, but also to make the readers of the target language understand the hidden meanings. The author introduces Newmark's communicative translation theory, which is the most widely used in semantic translation and communicative translation, into the C-J translation of network new words, and takes the column "New Words and Internet Language" in *People's China*, the only original Japanese monthly published in Beijing, as an example to explore the application of communicative translation theory in the C-J translation of network new words and the translation strategies of network new words.

**Keywords:** network new words, communicative translation theory, translation strategies, C-J translation

## Introduction

With the advent of Internet era, social development is changing with each passing day. With the rapid development of science and technology, language and culture, new words appear and become popular in social life. Based on the network corpus, this paper selects the popular network neologisms in the column of "New Words and Network Words" in *People's China* magazine in recent years, and on this basis, selects several representative examples to analyze and discuss the problems existing in the translation process, aiming at exploring how to choose appropriate translation strategies from the perspective of communicative translation, so as to achieve the goal of correctly and faithfully conveying the information of the original text.

## Previous Research

The concept of Chinese neologisms was first put forward by Wu Kan. In 1990, the *Dictionary of Chinese New Words* edited by Wu Kan was published in Japan, which included all kinds of Chinese new words collected

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from major newspapers and magazines in China. This book was the only dictionary in Japan that introduced Chinese neologisms at that time. It was widely used by Japanese scholars and had been updated to the fifth edition. Although the editor of this book counted the newly added Chinese neologisms in time and reprinted the dictionary, the latest edition is still in November 2008, which is far behind the speed of the emergence of Chinese neologisms in the network society.

Miao Qian (2004) studied the word-formation rules of Chinese and Japanese buzzwords and compared them. Liang Lijuan (2010) analyzed the translation strategies such as literal translation, liberal translation, and English interpretation from the definition and characteristics of neologisms and buzzwords. Wang Guoyan, Zheng Jin, and Liu Panpan (2012) classified Chinese new words and studied the translation methods of different categories of new words. Peng Jiali (2017) studied the Chinese-Japanese translation strategies of new words and buzzwords from the perspective of Skopos theory. There are many research precedents focusing on Chinese-English translation of Internet neologisms, but few have applied Western translation theories, especially communicative translation theory, to Chinese-Japanese translation of network new words. Therefore, this paper will start from the communicative translation theory proposed by Newmark, explore its role in the Japanese translation of network new words, and cite appropriate translation examples to explore the Japanese translation method of Chinese network new words, which is of great significance.

### **Overview of Communicative Translation Theory**

Communicative translation theory is a translation theory put forward by Peter Newmark, a British translation theorist. In 1981, Newmark put forward the important concepts of semantic translation and communicative translation in his book *Approaches to Translation*. He believes that the focus of communicative translation theory is to convey the information of the original text, emphasizing that meaning takes precedence over the form.

Communicative translation focuses on the target readers and the main meaning of information and text, emphasizing that the communicative effect conveyed by the translation should be as close as possible to the original effect. The translation level of communicative translation may not be enough, and the writing is simple and clear, usually expressed in a natural and informative way. The key to communicative translation is to convey information, arouse the thinking of the target readers, and arouse their “resonance”, thus giving play to the communicative function of the language. This requires the translator to faithfully convey the meaning of the original text, but not too mechanical and rigid. On the one hand, the translator should truly and accurately reproduce the meaning expressed in the original text; on the other hand, he should also consider the understanding and acceptance ability of the target readers. Communicative translation emphasizes the expressiveness of the original information, not the content of the information. Therefore, in communicative translation, the translator has full freedom to be creative, and has the right to reorganize the syntax and eliminate the difficult or repetitive parts of the original text.

On the basis of cognitive translation, communicative translation theory conveys the original information in a more flexible, accurate, and closer way according to the language and culture of the target language. On the one hand, the translation based on this is more fluent and conforms to the expression habits of the target language; on the other hand, it is easier to be accepted and understood by the target language readers. Communicative translation requires that meaning takes precedence over form, so it has certain guiding significance for the translation of network new words with rich cultural background.

## The Concept and Characteristics of Network New Words

### The Concept of Network New Words

Network new words refer to new words that appear on the Internet and social media platforms. These words are usually originated from network culture and are widely used because of their popularity on the Internet. Network new words may come from online games, movies, TV dramas, animations, and other media, and may also come from buzzwords, emoticon, and so on. Different network new words will appear in different times, which is determined by the background of the times, social and cultural background, and scientific and technological development. Chen Yuan said: “When new things appear in social life, new words corresponding to them quickly appear in the language” (2000). Xing Fuyi (2007) pointed out: “New words include both words that use new expressions and words that add new meanings” (pp. 1-4). It can be seen that new words can be divided into two categories: One is to give new meanings to existing words; second, the forms of expression and vocabulary are brand-new. Therefore, the most important thing about new words is the novelty of content.

### The Characteristics of Network New Words

**Spread quickly.** The rapid popularization of Chinese network neologisms is mainly due to the development of science and technology, and now people have access to more and more network tools. With the emergence of various social media, especially due to its timeliness, popularity, and universality, new words are spreading faster than before. Because of their uniqueness and easy-to-read pronunciation, some network new words have millions of hits in a short time and become popular overnight. For example, in recent years, with the active efforts of more and more people in society, the word “Juan” has been widely used in a short time. Before this, “Juan” was the general name of books or the meaning of examination papers. Today’s Internet gives the word a new connotation, which is mostly used to express “involution”, that is, peers need to make greater efforts than before to compete for limited resources, and it can also be regarded as “inflation” of efforts. According to the Baidu index data analysis platform, the highest average daily search peak of the word “involution” is 88,736 times. It can be seen that in the Internet age, the spread speed of network new words is rapid.

**Flexibility in word formation.** The morphemes that make up network vocabulary are mostly inherent in the language, while network neologisms are randomly combined by compounding and derivation, which is often quite different from traditional linguistics. For example, on the occasion of the Year of the Rabbit in 2023, many people use “羊眉兔气 (yang mei tu qi) (goat’s eyebrows and rabbit’s spirits)” to represent “扬眉吐气 (yang mei tu qi) (a feeling of exaltation upon fulfillment)” and express their wishes in the new year in a homophonic way.

**Concise and comprehensive.** Network new words are widely used by most people in real life, largely because they are concise and have rich connotations. People often want to convey more information in less languages, so many new words on the Internet are abbreviations, and sometimes they are directly replaced by English, for example, YYDS (eternal god), O2O (Online to Offline), Yeqing Hui (my youth is back), 3Q (thank you), and OOTD (Outfit of the Day). Without exception, these words are concise and clear, which is convenient for people to convey information and daily use.

## Translation Strategies of Network New Words Under the Communicative Translation

### Literal Translation

Literal translation is a very common way of translation. The definition of literal translation in *A Dictionary of Translation Studies in China* is: “The form and content of the translation are consistent with the original, which

is called literal translation; that is, taking the original form as the standard, imitating the form and content of the original". Thus, literal translation refers to a translation method that keeps the ideological content of the original unchanged and does not change the expression form of the original, that is, it is translated directly into the target language literally. Its meaning can be found in the target language, so it only needs to be translated literally with the corresponding words in the target language.

For example, one of the new words listed in *People's China* in 2022 is “自动驾驶 (automatic driving)”. The word was put forward as early as last century, but it was not used because of the limited technology at that time. In recent years, with the continuous development of artificial intelligence, many car companies, including those in China, regard “自动驾驶 (automatic driving)” as the selling point of new cars. Because Chinese and Japanese belong to the cultural circle of Chinese characters, they have characters that can communicate with each other, so literal translation of Chinese characters can be used when there are corresponding words in Japanese. When translating “自动驾驶 (automatic driving)” into Japanese, the literal translation of Chinese characters is adopted, which is translated into “自動運転”. The process of translating Chinese neologisms into Japanese has a direct translation in the form of kanji + Japanese kana, for example, “新エネルギー自動車” (新能源车 new energy vehicle), “消費者トラブル” (消费纠纷 consumer dispute), “規則品目リスト” (管制物项清单 list of controlled items), “衛星測位システム” (卫星探测系统 Satellite Detection System), “宇宙ステーション” (空间站 Space Station), and “文化アイデンティティ” (文化认同). There are also direct translations of Japanese kana, which are also directly translated from English, such as “ブラックリスト” (黑名单 blacklist), “カウントダウン” (倒计时 count down countdown), “フリースタイルスキー” (自由式滑雪 freestyle skiing), “マスコット” (吉祥物 mascot). Whatever the direct translation, it maintains the same structure as the original text and conveys the meaning of the original text.

### Transliteration

Transliteration refers to the method of expressing the characters in one language with the same or similar pronunciation in another language, which is one of the important translation methods of “Foreignizing Translation”. It can not only convey the meaning of the original text, but also reflect the style of the original text, so that foreign readers can better know and understand China culture.

The mascot of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games “福娃 (Fuwa)” was transliterated into “フーワ (Fuwa)” when it was introduced to Japan. If literal translation is adopted, there is no corresponding Chinese character in Japanese, and if liberal translation is adopted, the meaning of the original word in Chinese will be lost. Transliteration not only imitates the Chinese vocabulary form, but also keeps the pronunciation similarity between Chinese and Japanese, so that readers from different cultures can directly integrate into China culture, and China culture can also be known to more foreigners, similarly, the mascot of the Shanghai World Expo, “海宝” (ハイボオ), and the mascot of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, “冰墩墩” (ピン・ドゥンドゥン). With the further development of globalization, the cultures of different countries are absorbing and colliding with each other. In terms of food, China's “麻婆豆腐” entered Japan and became a favorite dish of many Japanese people. In the process of translating it into Japanese, it was transliterated as “マーボー豆腐”.

### Liberal Translation

Liberal translation is the translation of one language into another according to the true meaning of the original text, which is the main form of domestication. *A Dictionary of Translation Studies in China* states: “Liberal translation is one of the main translation methods alongside literal translation. The content of the

translation is consistent but the form is different, that is, taking the original form as the standard, the expression form of the translation is different". Liberal translation is not limited to the form of the original sentence, its structure can be greatly changed or adjusted, and it pays attention to the translation of the content and the communication of the original ideological style, which makes people feel natural and smooth to read.

In view of the function of liberal translation, people often adopt this strategy in the process of translating Chinese neologisms into Japanese. In fact, this also conforms to the inherent characteristics of network neologisms to some extent. On the surface, the new Chinese word “撞车” published in the column of “Network Language” in *People's China* in October, 2022 means “vehicle collision”, but now it is compared to “time conflict” or “things are the same in content or form”. *People's China* translated it as “かぶる”, because nowadays “撞车” has another meaning, and the literal translation of “衝突” will make Japanese readers confused. In this way, there are many phenomena that old words are given new meanings and become new words. At this time, literal translation will make the target language readers not understand the meaning. Translators need to grasp the meaning behind the vocabulary and adopt the strategy of liberal translation to accurately convey the meaning of the vocabulary to the target language readers.

Liberal translation is the translation strategy that is most consistent with communicative translation theory. Guided free translation from the perspective of communicative translation emphasizes more on the consideration of the target readers, regardless of the form, and accurately translating the original meaning. Because there are many differences between different languages before, when there are contradictions between the ideological content and the information conveyed by the original text and the expression form of the translated text, the method of meaning is usually adopted. Many Chinese network new words often make readers understand mistakes if they are translated literally and transliterated, but for the target language readers, liberal translation is easier to understand.

### **The Communicative Component in the Translation of Network New Words**

Chinese network new words are highly metaphorical and pun-like. At the same time, they are also rich in China traditional culture, contemporary culture, and network cultural background, which also determines that a large number of communicative elements are inevitably involved in the translation process. In the process of translation, people often imply the meaning of new words literally and are unwilling to face the readers directly, which requires translators to give full play to their communicative competence. Therefore, how to effectively translate Chinese network new words into the communicative elements contained in the original form without violating Japanese thinking habits is a problem that translators need to focus on. For example, in the process of Japanese translation of the new network new word “绝绝子 (juejuezi)” recently, the communicative function of translation is considered, and it is translated into “超すごい”, that is to say, a thing or a person is better or worse than the average.

### **Conclusion**

As the product of the times, network new words are also born from the crystallization of human wisdom. By combing a large number of corpus, guided by communicative translation theory, taking network new words as the main research object, and analyzing their concepts and characteristics, this paper explores how to discuss Chinese-Japanese translation under the communicative translation. This paper explores the strategies in the

process of translating network new words from two aspects: translators and target readers. Communicative translation theory is not omnipotent, but it is quite beneficial in guiding the translation of most words.

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