

# Cultural Characteristic Analysis of Chinese and English Loanwords from the Network Catchwords

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**Abstract:** It is stated that loanwords are the products of cultural communication and cultural infiltration. English is the global language, which is the important source of Loanwords in the Chinese network language. This paper aims to explore the cultural characteristics through contrasting the loanwords from the perspective of buzzwords. Chinese loanwords in English manifest more traditional culture and achieve long continuity. However, English loanwords in Chinese represent abbreviations and keep in a short period.

**Keywords:** Loanwords; Cultural characteristic; Network catchwords; Cultural infiltration

## 1. Introduction

Loanwords are called "Messengers of different cultures "(Shi Youwei,1991). There is a long history of cultural exchange between China and England, and borrowing is complicated and extensive. Due to the frequent trade and commercial communication between China and English-spoken countries, the two languages have generated many buzzwords to achieve inclusiveness.

However, as China carried out the Foreign Policy of Isolationism for many years and some historical factors, China's loanwords are relatively fewer, and most of them were introduced after the reform and opening-up in 1978, such as the food Pudding and Pizza. Concerning the network catchwords loaned from Chinese, like *guanxi*, *long time no see*, *you can you up*. (Contrastive analysis of English and Chinese loanwords). These words are borrowed from Chinese culture, and they are improving as time goes by and tend to be more localized, concerning the network catchwords loaned from English, like 色鹿(salute), 瑞思拜 (respect), nbcs (nobody cares) etc. Therefore, they also demonstrate the unparalleled creativity and flexibility of Chinese culture.

Recently, we have been surfing in the internet era, picking up the buzzwords means to grasp the speaking right. Hence, many new words have been coined to facilitate chatting. Moreover, the emergence of those words could be absorbed and accepted by the public for a long time. It is represented that the lexicon can be enriched. As to most buzzwords, their prevailing time lasts relatively short in the ever-changing network environment, for most users are youngers who pursue the change all the time, and the words could fall into disuse. This paper is categorized the two different loanwords from the perspective of buzzwords and analyzes its cultural origin and historical reasons.

## 2. Loanword

"Any language has defects, so loanword exists." (Yao Xiaoping). Cultural loanwords are called "loanwords" and "borrowed words," which are the expression of cross-cultural communication in the language. According to the most authoritative Oxford English Dictionary (the second edition in 1989), it has more than 1,300 English words with Chinese origins. The Global Language Monitor (GLM) claimed that Chinese accounts for 5-20 percent of all new words added to the English language since 1994. Therefore, with globalization and internalization, the loanwords can be used and introduced more extensively. Moreover, it is easy to find that these words mirror the different backgrounds. Furthermore, loanwords witnessed the progress of the era and the inter-flow and mutual learning of cultures.

### 2.1. Chinese loanwords in English

Based on the literature resources, English originates from 1500 years before but owns more than a

million vocabulary, among which loanwords account for 80%. Therefore, this point reflects that the English vocabulary possesses absolute openness.

Due to the influence of French, English vocabulary is to some extent roughly divided into Germanic and Latin sources. It has been reported that Germanic language accounts for 26%, Latin accounts for 29%, French accounts for 29%, and Greek language for 6%. English tends to be an open language, for it is willing to take in and accept the new vocabulary from other cultures. During the early 19<sup>th</sup>, the Opium War opened the Chinese closed door and mounted a series of wars. Simultaneously, Chinese and Western culture met and mixed at the first time, and a pile of representative words emerged like kowtow (叩头 1804), chop-suey (杂碎), etc. Hence, every stage is based on a different background, and the loanwords reflect different ages.

Communications started the trade between China and the West, followed by many Chinese loanwords, which are comprehensive and available daily. According to an American agency---the Global Language Monitor (GLM), Chinese has accounted for 5-20% of all new words added to the English language since 1994. In the past, most of the loanwords are connected with traditional culture and history like cheongsam (长衫), dudou (肚兜), Tao Te Ching (“道德经”), yinyang (阴阳). Recently, there has been a pile of catchwords translation, like ungelivable (不给力), which was coined by pear big (鸭梨很大, 即压力很大), and a series of Chinglish like no can do (不能做/干不了), long time no see (好久不见), good good study, day day up (好好学习, 天天向上). What deserves to be mentioned is the "guanxi" (关系). It means background concerning family or friends, which can get help and achieve the goals in Chinese. Language is a developing process to match the most appropriate translation associated with the original background and the local community.

## 2.2. English loanwords in Chinese

It is easy to find that the Chinese have maintained blocking for a long time. Compared with English and Japanese, Chinese tends to be more closed, and the loanwords are less in number. As the escalation of our global status, communication becomes more and more frequent and extensive. This part is expounded several periods and four ways in language exchange.

Based on ShiCunzhi (1989, distinguished linguistics, active advocate of Chinese reform movement), there are five high-tide periods. The first period is Xiongnu and Western Regions period. The second period is the Sanskrit period. The third period is from the Period of Mongolian and Manchu. The fourth and fifth are before and after the Opium War.

The forms of loanwords can be the following ways: 1) loanwords are usually transliterated words, this form does not pursue the meaning but keep the voice and writing, like 迪斯科(disco), 朋克(punk), 黑客(hacker), 克隆(clone), etc. 2) Semitone: This method is mainly used to compound foreign words, like 呼拉圈(hula-hoop), 冰淇淋(ice-cream), 因特网(internet), 唐宁街(Downing street). 3) Transliteration plus Chinese morpheme: 小巴(小+bus), 嘉年华会(carnival+会), 高尔夫球(golf+球). 4) Translation: A literal translation according to the morphological structure and word-formation principle of a loanword, such as 超人(superman)and 超级明星(superstar). Some words have been ingrained in people's daily lives and accepted by the people. In conclusion, based on social linguistics, as western scientific terms and concepts were introduced into China on a large scale, it is tricky to find a suitable expression in Chinese. Hence, many borrowed words emerged.

## 3. Comparison characteristics between Chinese and English loanwords

By exploring the historical background, the loanwords of both languages represent some differences. Chinese Loanwords in English possess a long period, and the English people took initiatives to establish cultural exchanges and introduced many loanwords like (sampan)舢板(1620) and tea (茶 1645-55). However, English Loanwords in Chinese were mainly introduced since reform and opening up, like BBL (Be back latter), CU (See you), and the influence of Chinese on English is limited because the total vocabulary is limited. Moreover, the influence of Chinese on English is assimilated. The former functions as the expression to contact others and always delivers an amused tone. The latter constantly explores the articulation of preliminary words to coin new Chinese words. In addition, the continuity of the Chinese loanwords would last longer wholly. For example, long time no see has been included in the English dictionary. However, such as 瑞思拜(respect) and book 思议 would come easy and go easy. Compared with the former, the latter has been accepted more extensively. It is found that people's climbing educational level can generate influence. Table 1 is summarized the different comparison characteristics

between Chinese and English loanwords

*Table 1: Different comparison characteristics between Chinese and English loanwords*

Loanword Type	Chinese Loanwords in English	English Loanwords in Chinese
Period	Long history	Since the reform and opening-up
Forms	The main form is the transliteration	The main form is abbreviation and translation
Functions	Most of the Express emotion and contact others	Make it easier for Chinese users to understand
Continuity	Long continuity for its the including	Shorter time
Incidence	High incidence	Low incidence

#### 4. Cultural characteristic analysis of the network Catchwords

Network Catchwords, compared with traditional loanwords, network catchwords are in vogue for a time but fade away quickly. It is tricky for them to be included in the dictionary because of the limitations. However, some of them are used in our spoken language due to easy pronunciation, such as blah-blah(反复), Slap(扇耳光), Gay(同性恋), etc. Just take Share(晒) as an example. Share in English means to have the same feelings, ideas, experiences, etc. In Chinese, especially for some netizens who often post some videos or photos on moments. Here "Shai" originally means take a sunshine shower, but now it means to present your feelings to others. The two made a fascinating combination. In English, the buzzwords influenced by Chinese are limited, and most of them are wrong in English grammar, like long time no see, no zuo no die. Just take the latter as an example. There is no "zuo" this word in English, which is the spell in Chinese meaning pretend. Chinese loanwords in English can not be accepted and used for a long time.

The above analysis also mirrored the Cultural infiltration. Even though the continuous climb of China's economy has narrowed down the gap between China and the West, the Western culture centered with English as the carrier is still a sort of advantageous culture and occupies a dominant position as the exporter of culture. In contrast, the Chinese culture is weaker and occupies a disadvantaged position as the importer of the culture.

#### 5. Conclusion

Due to language globalization, English loanwords are less than Chinese loanwords, for most of the English loanwords are related to Chinese culture but not the internet fashion. However, loanwords from English are more available. WeChat emojis and images are crammed with foreign elements in our daily lives. Based on social linguistics, English dominates the language and loanwords. Being a learner of both languages, the development of linguistics enables us to deepen the communications between Chinese and Western cultures and comprehend more language phenomena.

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