

# On the Substitution of English and Repetition of Chinese

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**Abstract:** *English tends to avoid repetition unless it is intended for emphasis or for rhetorical reasons. English speakers are often bored by the random repetition of the same syllables, words, or sentence structures. The overlapping of Chinese characters, the repetition of words, the repetition of meanings, and the duplication of patterns are also common in a large number of idioms. The Han people attach great importance to image-thinking and like to use image-language to express their thoughts and emotions in order to attract the audiences.*

**Keywords:** *English, Substitution, Chinese, repetition*

## 1. Introduction

In general, English tends to avoid repetition unless it is intended for emphasis or for rhetorical reasons. English speakers are often bored by the random repetition of the same syllables, words, or sentence structures. The overlap of Chinese characters, the repetition of words, the repetition of meanings, and the duplication of patterns are also common in a large number of idioms. The Han people attach great importance to image-thinking and like to use image-language to express their thoughts and emotions in order to attract readers and listeners. Therefore, they are especially fond of colorful and lively idioms.

## 2. Substitution of English

Many English composition teachers even admonish students “Never use the same word or write the same thing twice in a sentence unless you are repeating intentionally for emphasis or for clarity.” Of course this statement is excessive, but the purpose is to remind students not to forget that there are alternatives to avoid unnecessary repetition. Fowler also said in their book:

Even when the repetition is a part of the writer’s original plan, consideration is necessary before it can be allowed to pass: it is implied in the terms “rhetorical” or significant repetition that the words repeated would ordinarily be either varied or left out; the repetition, that is to say, is more or less abnormal and whatever is abnormal may be objectionable in a single instance, and is likely to become so if it occurs frequently.

Under the premise of being able to express the meaning clearly, we should try our best to avoid inadvertence repetition by means of substitution, omission or transformation. This can not only make the article concise, powerful, and more in line with the English language psychological habits. The use of pro-forms to replace shared words and content in the sentence or above is an important principle of speaking and writing English. These forms of substitution mainly include nominal substitution, verbal substitution and clause substitution. In general, English uses epigrams to avoid repetition; Chinese uses less nominal and more real terms, so it is often repeated. The use of pronouns in Chinese is far less extensive than in English. The gender division of personal pronouns is only around 1917, obviously influenced by English. For example:

1) Flattery is more dangerous than hatred because it covers the stain which the other causes to be wiped out.

2) Gathering facts, confirming them, suggesting theories, testing them and organizing findings—this is all the work of science.

Ellipsis, like substitution, is also a common way to avoid repetition. The two are often used interchangeably, and some linguists even call the ellipsis’ zero-substitution. There are many types of

ellipsis in English, such as nominal ellipsis, verbal ellipsis and clause ellipsis. There are syntactic omissions as well as situational omissions. In juxtaposition, English often omits the words that have appeared before, while Chinese often repeats them. English often omits the same predicate verb or part of the predicate verb group; In Chinese, it is more common to omit the same subject and repeat the same verb. Chinese is accustomed to repeating words, sometimes in order to keep the grammar correct, sometimes in order to promote the regularity and symmetry of the structure; Sometimes it is the need of grammar as well as rhetoric. For example:

The sun's heat evaporates water, forms cloud; if cloud is blown to a cooler place, rain falls; if to a warmer place, it disappears.

The substitution and omission mentioned above are also means of transformation. In addition, English also commonly uses synonym substitution, synonym repetition and sentence pattern change to avoid repetition. Chinese also pays attention to the variety of words and sentences to avoid monotony, but English and Chinese are not the same in the way of expression. The phenomenon of synonym substitution in English is often seen in the use of different names to represent the same person or thing, that is, the so-called "homonymic heteronym". Generally speaking, repetition is taboo in English, so substitution, ellipsis and transformation are commonly used.

### 3. Repetition of Chinese

In contrast, Chinese is more accustomed to repetition, so it often uses the expressions of real, reductive and paraphrase. In addition, the tendency of repetition in Chinese is also widely manifested in word deployment, sentence arrangement and discourse structure. The repetition tendency of Chinese is closely related to its phonetic characters. Chinese characters belong to syllabic characters, one Chinese character represents one syllable, and the syllable structure is composed of sound, rhyme and tone. Vowels play a major role in the syllable, and with the rise and fall of different tones, Chinese has sonorous and beautiful musical beauty. Monosyllabic ancient Chinese is dominant, while disyllabic modern Chinese is dominant. Dissyllable is a common rhetorical phenomenon in Chinese.

The harmony, harmony and symmetry of syllables and meanings often lead to the pairing of words and sentences. For example, couplets and couplets are the language forms that Chinese people have been fond of since ancient times. The balanced beauty of the Chinese language reflects the aesthetic psychology of the Chinese people, so it is also a principle to use words and construct sentences. Any violation of this principle will often make expression awkward. He speaks truth from facts, not empty talk... Always give credit to others, carry their own burdens. "He suffered first and enjoyed after others." Always credit to others, the burden on their own. "He suffered before others and enjoyed after others." This comes in a balanced and natural way. The emphasis on balanced beauty in Chinese often leads to the tendency of repetition in words and sentences. Repeat, in a broad sense, including two categories: one kind is to use the same, similar or relative words or sentences, to highlight and emphasize to express meaning, add gift, make each other have a deep impression, this is a positive rhetoric way, sometimes is also the necessary means of grammar, such as overlapping, repetition, duality, parallelism, etc.; The other is to make the language verbose, redundant overlapping phenomenon, which is the use of language taboo, should be avoided to the utmost. Both English and Chinese have overlapping, repetition, duality and parallel forms of expression, but in contrast, Chinese repetition is far more than English in terms of scope of use, frequency of occurrence and diversity of expression.

The characteristics of Chinese monosyllabic characters facilitate the overlap of characters and words. Overlap formation not only makes the syllables of words symmetrical and orderly, but also endows words with new meanings and emotional colors. Many nouns, quantifiers, verbs, and adjectives have overlapping forms. One of the characteristics of Chinese is the extensive use of duplicated characters to express various meanings. In the English-Chinese translation, the appropriate use of Chinese overlapping forms can enhance the expression of the translation and make it more in line with Chinese habits. Many words come from child language, which is usually used in oral language, slang or informal style. Their ability of word formation and range of use are greatly limited. Chinese reduplication is not only the overlapping of syllables, but also has lexical and syntactic factors. In Chinese, overlapping is an important method of word formation, and also a common grammatical and rhetorical device.

The intentional use of the same words, phrases and even sentences and paragraphs to emphasize the meaning of the authors, strengthen the tone and emotion, and achieve better expression effect,

which is called “repetitiveness” or repetitiveness in rhetoric. Repetition can be divided into continuous repetition and interval repetition, and English is further divided into anaphora and epiphora. In terms of words, repetition, anadiplosis, chiasmus, antithesis, partial duality and parallelism all have the phenomenon of repetition. The repetition of these aspects is basically the same in Chinese and English. Repetition can be divided into two broad categories: repetition of words and repetition of meaning.

Generally speaking, Chinese emphasizes symmetry in expression and tends to repeat words, which is related to the characteristics of Chinese phonetic writing system, as well as the thinking mode and aesthetic psychology of the Han people. Since ancient times, the Han people have been pursuing balance and paying attention to symmetry. Traditional Chinese philosophy holds that Yin and Yang are the two opposites in everything.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The syllables of English words are uneven, the length of the sentence structure is different, and the repetition is taboo, so it is difficult to obtain Chinese duality and parallelism. Chinese pays attention to the regularity and symmetry of syllabic characters, and is accustomed to the repetition of word, word, language and sentence, so the structure of antithesis and parallelism is very common. In many cases, English uses substitution, ellipsis, transformation, fusion, induction, extension and other flexible methods to avoid the dual, parallelism and repetition like Chinese.

#### **References**

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