

# On the Generation and Dissemination Mechanism of “Little Brother, Miss Sister” Catchwords

-- From linguistic level to social level

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**Abstract:** “Little Brother, Miss Sister” catchphrases are typically ABB-style. They have recently become popular in social media such as the Internet and once become popular among young people. From the linguistic level and the social level, this paper makes an analysis of its generation and dissemination, focusing on its structural characteristics and the use of appellations at the linguistic level. At the social level, it focuses on the psychological mechanism and cultural ecology, and discusses the reasons for its popularity from the aspects of mass media and meme theory. At the same time, it studies the asymmetry of Chinese small and medium scales, and provides for Chinese international education and teaching.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Research background

Wang Ying, School of Journalism and Communication, Nanjing University, pointed out that “Internet catchwords refer to the hot words that occur almost synchronously on the Internet and are popular both inside and outside the network with the occurrence of real social events.” Sometimes also known as ‘network thunder words’ or ‘network hot words’, subordinate to the network language [1].

For some time, “Little Brother, Miss and Sister” has been popular among young people and used in daily life as a popular network phrase. For its origin, there are two mainstream views, namely, dialect origin theory and animation origin theory.

We can find that the word “Miss” is not a new word, but first appeared in the secondary animation circle. As a sub-culture, “Miss Sister” is accepted by the mainstream culture and used in daily life after continuous evolution, just like many popular Internet words. “Miss Sister” was the name of idol for Japanese fans at the earliest time. Its combination members are excellent in reality. Most of them are in their early twenties. Because of the age limitation of their fans, other appellations are not suitable. Therefore, they are called “Miss Sister”, which not only expresses respect and love, but also appears cordial. Because the word “Miss Sister” conforms to the characteristics of “Meng Culture”, it has been widely recognized and spread quickly. Some of the anime characters that can be used can be called “Miss Sister”. Later, the scope of application expanded from virtual anime idols to realistic idols. Finally, it was applied to young women in life. At the same time of diffusion, the word “Miss Sister” gradually contained a little frivolous meaning from the meaning of the word of love. Of course, the rapid spread of communication is inseparable from the promotion of social platforms such as the Internet. We can't ignore it. The popular word “Miss Sister” reflects the current social psychology of selling, judging, and seeking differences.

### 1.2 Research purpose and significance

1) Enriching and developing the emerging discipline of cyberlinguistics. Cyberlinguistics was proposed by Professor Zhou Haizhong, a well-known Chinese scholar in 2000 [2] The study of network neologisms is conducive to enriching and developing the subject.

2) It is rich and comprehensive to establish links among different disciplines and analyze the generation and dissemination mechanism of network catchwords from the perspectives of

sociolinguistics, social psychology and Journalism and communication.

### 1.3 Innovations and Difficulties

1) Integrating multiple disciplines for research, the process is complex, the tasks are heavy, and the knowledge involved is very complex.

2) The innovation lies in the introduction of small scale and asymmetry into network buzzwords.

3) Fully discuss the disputes between doubled words and overlapping synthetic words, and put forward new ideas on the results of predecessors.

4) At present, there are many researches on vocabulary such as power, but there are few studies on newer online buzzwords such as “Miss Sister, Little Brother”.

## 2. A Language-level Study of “Miss Sister and Little Brother” Series of Network Catchwords Structural analysis

### 2.1 Internal Component Analysis

The ABB reduplication word-formation in modern Chinese can be roughly divided into the following four types:

(1) Nouns, such as Xiaoxing, Xiaodai, etc. The overlapping structure is the morpheme of the character + the reduplicated morpheme of the nominal object; the overlapping structure is the morpheme of the character + the reduplicated morpheme of the nominal object.

(2) Onomatopoeia, such as: rumbling, Zila, etc.

(3) Verbs, such as crossing the family, hitting the haha, etc. The overlapping structure is action morpheme + nominal morpheme.

(4) Adjectives, such as: vast white, gloomy and so on.

The network words of “Little Brother, Miss Sister” series studied in this paper belong to the first category of nouns, and there is no further elaboration on other categories.

According to Professor Zheng Houyao's point of view [3], according to Lu Shuxiang (2002:493) [4], the internal components of ABB words can be divided into four categories: words that can be used singly, words that are not used singly, affixes (adjectives and affixes), and roots. ABB is divided into four combinations: A, BB, AB and BA, which are not discussed here. According to its classification, we can clearly judge the word formation of ABB words such as “Miss sister, little brother”. Among them, “small” belongs to class A morpheme, generally constitutes a noun, “sister, brother” belongs to BB morpheme, Professor Zheng Houyi divides BB morpheme into three cases:

(1) B can be used alone, and combined with A is also a word, that is, BB is a kind of double sound. For example, “(cold) ice and ice, (fire) explosion”.

(2) B is not used alone, but is reduplicated after reduplication. For example, “Pure, Mom”.

(3) B is not only used but also affixed if it is not used after overlapping. For example, “Furry, quack”.

I don't agree with it here that it divides “mother” into a second type of overlapping words, but should be divided into overlapping composite words. For the division of overlapping words and overlapping compound words, the three major textbooks are not divided the same. After finishing, you can find out:

A. “Modern Chinese” (edited by Huang Borong and Liao Xudong) defines the double-syllable word as “a word composed of two identical sounds.” For example: orangutans, baboons; the overlap is defined as “consisting of two identical roots.” For example: sister, brother.

B. “Modern Chinese Knowledge” (published by the People's Education Publishing House) believes that the overlapping words are simple words. For example: stars, brothers, haste; and overlap is to overlap a morpheme, indicating some additional meaning. For example: family, households.

C. “Modern Chinese” (edited by Lin Xiangyu, published by the Language Education Press) in the double-sounding words: grandmother, wife, orangutan; overlapping is defined as “composite words composed of overlapping morphemes.” For example: uncle, younger brother, star.

The main reason for the different definitions of “brother” and “sister” in different textbook versions is that the definition of “brother” pays more attention to the additional meaning. Although “brother” can be used alone, it does not produce new additional meaning after overlapping, so it is classified into reduplicated words. I prefer the division of the Huang Liao version and the Chinese version for two reasons. One is that the division is more rigorous and can be divided more clearly and easily. Judging whether a word is a doubled word or an overlapping compound word only needs to judge overlapping. Whether the part can be used as a morpheme alone; the second is because in daily life we can find that using “sister, brother” is more cordial than using “sister, brother”, which can actually be regarded as an additional emotion. Meaning, and in the division of the PEP version, the words “communication” that can be singularly worded together with the words “hurried” that cannot be singularly worded together are called together, and only the meaning is attached. Not too strict.

## 2.2 Construction type

In the way of word formation, “Miss sister, little brother” is a typical ABB style. This is an important method of word formation in Chinese.

There are many differences in the way ABB-style words are formed. According to Professor Li Jinrong, there are mainly three types of views [5]:

(1) Overlapping. Zhao Yuanren [6], Lu Shuxiang [7], Ren Xueliang [8] and other scholars all classify ABB words into overlapping word formation, which is a vivid overlapping language.

(2) Derivatives. Zhu Dexi thinks that this is an adjective with a post-addition or suffix, and BB is an affix [9].

(3) Eclectic style. Ma Qingzhu scholars believe that in the ABB style, some BB is the root morpheme, and most BB is the affix morpheme [10].

But I prefer Professor Zheng Houyao's point of view. He divides ABB reduplication into two types and three levels, two of which are compound words and derivatives. Compound words can be classified into two categories: morphological compound words and word-forming compound words. The ABB reduplicated words of the configuration type first form AB by A+B, and then form AB+B structure by reduplication. There is not much difference between AB and ABB in semantics. The main function of reduplication is to produce grammatical meaning instead of lexical meaning. The structure of ABB reduplication is A + BB. Both A and B can be used singly, and A + BB can be combined into words. BB is usually formed by overlapping monosyllabic morphemes which are not very free or commonly used alone.

## 3. Structural meaning

According to the above analysis, we can conclude that there are two kinds of network catchwords of “Miss Sister and Little Brother”. One is AB + B, the other is A + BB. There are slightly differences in semantics and subjective emotions between the two combinations. At present, the use of “Miss Sister and Little Brother” has been generalized, so there are many inherent meanings. I will integrate them to get the following meanings:

- 1) Love name, mostly used to refer to idols.
- 2) Generally speaking, it refers to young and beautiful women.
- 3) with flirtation and other exaggerated, disrespectful elements.
- 4) Low-profile compliments and self-mockery.

Since it is impossible to verify the user's mentality in concrete use, I can only make bold assumptions on the basis of word meaning.

The word “Miss” also refers to women who use their youth and body to engage in pornography. It implies disrespect and flirtatious derogatory color. Therefore, the meaning of “Miss” of AB+B type is also ambiguous. Although there is no strong original meaning of “Miss”, there are more or less color meanings. The best example is the popular “Fengyou Essence Event” on the Internet some time ago. Is Miss Sister Going to Heaven? It contains a lot of teasing and frivolous meaning. The phenomenon that the word “Miss Sister” is used in recent society to get close to a strange

woman is also common.

#### **4. Contrastive Use of Address Terms and Their Supplementary Functions**

“Miss Sister and Little Brother” belongs to the category of appellation, which is a good supplement to the original appellation. First of all, I collated some common appellations and compared them. Because there are many meanings, only a few meanings are chosen here for comparison.

1) “Miss”: As mentioned earlier, as the female pronoun used to be engaged in the sex service industry, it has a derogatory color and is easy to cause misunderstanding and disgust.

2) “Beauty”: Nowadays, appellations are frequently used in society, but because of its original meaning for appearance requirements, it is easy to cause the opposite effect. Especially when used by men, it is easy to contain the meaning of disrespect or even provocation, which causes disgust.

3) “Sister”: a woman who has intimate meaning and is generally used for intimate relations. It's still not appropriate for unfamiliar women.

4) Girl: The term “young woman” is widely used at present. But compared with the “Miss” can not achieve low-profile compliments and budding meaning, more elderly use.

5) Sister: more suitable for relatives, not for strangers.

From the above appellations, we can see that the emergence of the word “Miss Sister” fills in the gaps in the appellation of young women, and can contain many emotional colors, so that the listener can accept at the same time also have a good psychological effect.

Compared with other appellations, “Little Brother” has the same effect. Because of the limited space, I will not repeat it here.

#### **5. Research on the Social Level of “Miss Sister and Little Brother” Series of Network Catchwords**

##### **5.1 Research on Psychological Mechanisms**

The emergence and popularity of online buzzwords such as “Miss Sister, Little Brother” are inextricably linked with psychological appeals. This article will briefly analyze the four psychology of sensational psychology, herd mentality, divorce psychology and juvenile psychology.

##### **5.1.1 Germination psychology**

There is an inseparable relationship between “budding mentality” and “budding culture”. “Meng Culture” originated from “Lovely Culture” and “Otaku Culture” in Japan. It is a kind of sub-culture. It has been popular in China's sub-culture circle this year. The popular subject is the younger generation, pursuing loveliness in order to obtain psychological satisfaction.

The use of “Miss Sister and Little Brother” reflects the selling mentality of young men and women in the current society. Place yourself in a low-profile position, hoping to be spoiled, and show loveliness, so as to close the gap, but also to meet the needs of the desire to show me.

##### **5.1.2 Group psychology**

The use of “Miss Sister, Little Brother” is related to herd mentality. In fact, behind the popularity of a network buzzword, it is the role of the public psychology. The herd effect, also known as the herding effect, was proposed by Banerjee (1992). Individual attitudes or behaviors tend to be consistent with the majority due to various pressures. “

The reason why “Little Brother, Miss Sister” can be popular in the network is related to the blindness of netizens' imitation and the herd mentality. Because the theme of using online buzzwords is young people, the group has strong ability to imitate and accept new things, and loves to follow suit. Therefore, the words “small brother, young lady” can be expressed. Widely popular.

##### **5.1.3 Seeking difference**

In fact, the emergence of “germination culture” is related to the psychology of seeking

differences. People also have the psychology of seeking differences in the process of using language. Because they are tired of traditional and ancient expressions, they are eager to use new words to lead the trend, which is also a manifestation of the pursuit of individuality.

Because of the frequent use of appellations such as “girl” and “young lady”, the emergence of new words such as “young lady” and “little brother” just satisfies people's psychology of seeking differences, so its popularity has certain rationality.

## **5.2 A Study on the Cultural Ecology of Generation**

### **5.2.1 Subculture**

Subculture was proposed by David Riesman in 1950. He believes that the public is “passively accepting the style and value given by commerce”, while the sub-culture is “actively seeking a minority style”.

In a sense. Subculture contains subversive meaning, which reflects the pursuit and ideology of a special group.

Subculture will gradually become the mainstream culture in the long-term evolution. As Professor Lei Haolin said, while consolidating the cognitive consensus of relatively independent groups, the extension of cultural attributes will continue to derive, further enriching and expanding the mainstream culture. The positive content of subculture will become an integral part of the mainstream culture, and its audience will become more and more “popular”.

### **5.2.2 Self mocking culture**

“Self-deprecating culture” is a new subculture phenomenon. By lowering one's identity, lowering one's mentality and enjoying it, a cultural phenomenon is formed.

“Miss sister, little brother” is the user to express their kindness and pleasing intention by lowering their posture, which is not unrelated to the self-deprecating culture.

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