

A Research on the Translation Strategies of Chinese Internet Buzzwords Culture in Foreign Context for International Students in Universities in Jiangxi

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Abstract: With the advent of the information age, the internet plays an increasingly pivotal role in our lives, functioning not only as a platform for communication but also as a crucial conduit for cultural dissemination. Consequently, Internet buzzwords have emerged as a novel cultural form, gaining favor from a diverse audience both domestically and internationally. Simultaneously, a growing number of international students have begun to engage with Chinese "Internet buzzwords" culture, demonstrating a profound interest. This study employs a combined qualitative and quantitative approach to analyze the understanding and level of interest among international students in universities in Jiangxi towards Internet buzzword culture. Furthermore, it delves into the roots of this culture, exploring viable English translation pathways tailored to the audience of international students. This research aims to facilitate a deeper comprehension of Chinese Internet buzzword culture among international students, holding significance in promoting Chinese cultural dissemination.

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, we find ourselves in an era marked by rapid developments in information. Concurrently, Internet buzzwords, born out of the internet, have become distinctive cultural artifacts of this age. This form of language is intricately linked to culture and closely intertwined. Across diverse cultural backgrounds, internet language exhibits variability, gradually permeating our lives and extending globally. Thus, due to the consequential cultural diversities, researching Chinese internet buzzwords becomes paramount. This endeavor not only aids in fostering communication with people worldwide but also enables us to keep pace with the trends of our time. Through the research, we can gain a deeper understanding of the differences between Chinese and English cultures, as well as the distinctive characteristics of their respective languages. In the global context, the increasing frequency of interactions, exchanges, and collaborations between China and other nations highlights the crucial role of English translation in facilitating cross-cultural communication and cooperation. English translation serves as a significant and influential medium for the cross-cultural dissemination of Chinese exemplary culture to the world^[1]. Achieving effective and accurate communication between different cultures and languages necessarily relies on the judicious selection and application of suitable translation methods. Influenced by the cultural diversities between the East and the West, not only does it elevate the difficulty of English-Chinese translation, but with the deepening exchanges between Eastern and Western cultures and the economic globalization, it also imposes higher requirements on the choice of translation methods and strategies^[2].

"Internet buzzwords" refer to expressions widely adopted by social groups within a specific period, characterized by high frequency of use, thereby being classified as popular phrases. These internet buzzwords propagate through various software platforms, often carrying unique cultural connotations within the group, presenting themselves in concise forms. These lexemes and phrases reflect the evolving societal communication needs, fulfilling the requirements to accurately express personal emotions and psychological states. Beyond their origin in communication, internet buzzwords may also crystallize specific societal changes and the collective psyche within the

context of hot topics. Therefore, internet buzzwords represent extensively utilized expressions that, in specific and concrete contexts, amalgamate societal, political, economic, cultural, and environmental backgrounds, comprehensively embodying the psychological activities of individuals^[3]. Building upon this, she rooted in cognitive linguistics theory, explores the challenges and metaphorical issues in translating internet buzzwords, aiming to address linguistic challenges in the metaphorical translation from Chinese to English, thereby enhancing translation accuracy and expressive effectiveness. Focusing on selected internet buzzwords from 2022, the research employs a cognitive linguistics perspective to analyze their metaphorical meanings and proposes a translation method combining dynamic context analysis and consideration of societal environment.

Xu Ruifang (2023), integrating the concept of intercultural communication, further investigates the domestication and foreignization in translation. The study elucidates the translation strategies and application paths of both, advocating for the establishment of a proper intercultural awareness and suggesting translation strategies in English-Chinese translation based on cross-cultural communication principles, taking into account the text and audience. The aim is to improve translation accuracy while actively promoting in-depth cultural exchange between the East and the West, thereby effectively conveying Chinese outstanding traditional culture in cross-cultural communication^[4].

However, Zhang Wei's (2015) research points out three major characteristics in China's translation studies and analyzes four key problems in translation: the disconnection between theory and practice, a lack of innovation in theoretical research, a scarcity of socially applicable and policy-oriented research, insufficient research on Chinese to foreign languages translation, and a monotonous research pattern. Zhang Wei's study does not specifically address translator subjectivity and identity construction^[5]. While some researchers acknowledge the translator's factors, the focus lacks a perspective from cultural foreignization. For instance, Yao Junwei suggests that the choice of source text, creativity in the translation, and writing of prefaces and postscripts in translations are effective ways for translators to construct their cultural identity^[6]. In light of this, this research adopts a cultural foreignization perspective, exploring how translators, from the standpoint of foreignization recipients, can better utilize and leverage their cultural identity for effective translation.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research questions

This study aims at answering the following three questions:

- 1) What is the necessity for the translation of Chinese internet buzzwords, and to what extent do international students express a desire to comprehend the nuances of Chinese internet buzzword culture?
- 2) In what manner do international students prefer the translation approach when seeking understanding of Chinese internet buzzwords?
- 3) What strategies can be employed to enhance the translation of Chinese internet buzzword culture effectively?

2.2 Participants

This study involved a total of 90 international students from six universities in Jiangxi, China (57 males and 33 females). All participants were enrolled anonymously in the survey, and one student was randomly selected to participate in an interview. The researcher provided an overview of the study to the chosen participant, ensuring confidentiality principles were upheld. The participant was assigned the identifier "A," and any potentially sensitive personal information was redacted to safeguard privacy.

2.3 Data collection and analysis

A questionnaire was designed for the research which includes the following three sections: the

first section assesses the extent of international students' understanding of the internet buzzword, consisting of three questions; the second section explores international students' preferences for translation methods of internet buzzwords and their evaluation of the importance of such translations, involving six questions; the third section investigates the avenues through which international students acquire knowledge of internet buzzwords, encompassing one question. The questionnaire utilizes the Likert five-level scale to gauge the degree of agreement, with ascending numerical values representing increasing levels of conformity (1. Completely Disagree, 2. Disagree, 3. Neutral, 4. Agree, 5. Completely Agree). The survey was distributed to 90 participants via the online platform "Questionnaire Star", with an expected return of 90 valid responses.

This study employs SPSS 27.0 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software to conduct an exploratory factor analysis on the questionnaire results. The analysis categorizes international students based on their inclination to understand internet buzzword culture, exploring their levels of interest in this cultural phenomenon. Furthermore, to delve into effective pathways for externalizing internet buzzword culture, the study conducts an interview with Participant A, securing consent for full audio recording. Subsequently, the recorded interview undergoes transcription, hierarchical coding, thematic extraction, and summary to distill effective pathways.

3. Results

3.1 The Necessity of Translating Buzzwords and International Students' Desire to Know about Them

Table 1 shows all the data collected:

Table 1 Selections Made of the Five Choices in the Questionnaire

Q	Questions	Mean
Q1	I often come across these Internet buzzwords (like "special ops travel" and "contrarian") online.	3.3400
Q2	When I see these expressions, they usually make me puzzled.	3.3600
Q3	When I come across these Internet buzzwords, I'm usually quite interested and want to dig deeper to understand them.	3.2300
Q4	When I see translations of these Internet buzzwords, knowing their meanings is usually good enough for me.	3.2800
Q5	When it comes to translating these internet buzzwords, I want to understand them but also prefer to keep their unique features intact.	3.0000
Q6	When I see translations of these terms, I hope to find equivalents in my own country's culture.	3.4800
Q7	When I see translations of these terms, I usually understand them just by looking at their phonetic transcription.	3.2600
Q8	When I see translations of these terms, I hope they can achieve the same communicative effect as the original Chinese.	3.2000
Q9	I believe the translation of these internet buzzwords is very important.	3.1200
Q10	Apart from seeing these words online, I also come across them in other places.	3.3600

It should be noted that the number represents the level of conformity(1. Completely Disagree, 2. Disagree, 3. Neutral, 4. Agree, 5. Completely Agree).

Table 2 shows clearly the means of each descriptors:

Table 2 Means of the Descriptors

	1	2	3	4	5
Q1	12	13	17	28	20
Q2	12	11	21	25	21
Q3	9	20	22	19	20
Q4	14	10	25	19	22
Q5	9	16	23	23	19
Q6	12	8	20	25	25
Q7	11	19	17	22	21
Q8	17	7	23	27	16
Q9	15	12	24	25	14
Q10	10	16	19	22	23

In terms of the questionnaire, excluding the options "1. Completely Disagree" and "2. Disagree," with "3. Agree" and above considered as meeting the criteria, approximately the majority (72.2%) of international students, through exposure to Chinese internet buzzwords (Q1), are aware of the existence of this cultural phenomenon. This finding aligns closely with the results of Wu Jiahao's study^[7](2021), thereby further validating the reliability of the questionnaire data. Moreover, a significant proportion (74.4%) of international students express a limited understanding of Chinese internet buzzwords, often experiencing confusion when encountering these expressions (Q2). The majority (70%) of the students deem the translation of internet buzzwords as highly important (Q9) and express a desire to comprehend these linguistic phenomena. This observation resonates with the more moderate findings of Sun Haiyang's study^[8] (2022), providing additional confirmation of the questionnaire's reliability.

3.2 International Students' Preferred Translation Strategies for Internet Buzzwords

Table 3 shows the KMO and Bartlett's Test statistics which are important indicators of the feasibility of exploratory factor analysis. Also, the P values also help to determine the suitability for data analysis. Table 4 shows that the data collected by the questionnaire in this study is effective and suitable for factor analysis (KMO=0.905 , $p < 0.05$). Additionally, the scree plot serves to corroborate the number of factors. As illustrated in Figure 1, the curve descends gradually and levels off after approximately one factor. In summary, the factor analysis results indicate that international students currently possess one discernible translation strategy for understanding Chinese internet buzzwords.

Table 3 KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.905
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	402.631
	df	45
	Sig.	.000

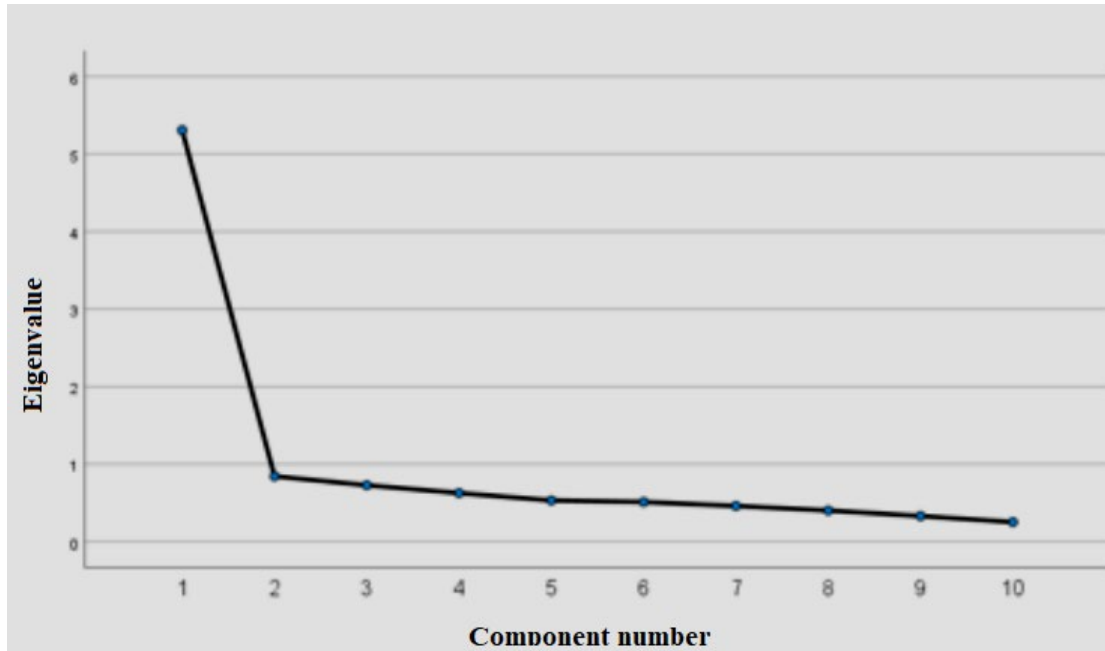


Figure 1 Scree Plot of Components

The aforementioned classification pertains to a data-oriented categorization. However, based on Xu Ruifang's (2023) classification of translation strategies and the definition of domestication and foreignization by American scholar Venuti^[9](2008), Q4 can be classified as a translation strategy of literal translation, Q5 as a strategy of domestication, Q6 as a strategy of foreignization, Q7 as a strategy of transliteration, and Q8 as a strategy of substitution.

Table 4 presents the total variance explained. Excluding Q1, Q2, Q3, Q9, and Q10 (pertaining to the degree and method through which international students desire to understand internet buzzwords), the remaining five items (Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8) represent specific translation strategies. Notably, Q4 has the highest proportion, indicating that international students are more inclined to comprehend Chinese internet buzzwords through a literal translation approach. Following this is Q5 and Q6, representing domestication and foreignization translation strategies, respectively. Q7 and Q8 are ranked lowest, suggesting that international students are less receptive to transliteration and substitution translation strategies. Overall, given the minor discrepancies in the data, it can be inferred that, compared to transliteration and substitution strategies, international students are more willing to accept literal translation, domestication, and foreignization translation strategies, which is similar to Xu Mingwu's^[10] (2015) research result, thus providing additional confirmation of the questionnaire's reliability.

Table 4 Total Variance Explained

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.308	53.078	53.078	5.308	53.078	53.078
2	.844	8.442	61.520			
3	.728	7.284	68.804			
4	.627	6.271	75.075			
5	.532	5.325	80.400			
6	.512	5.121	85.521			
7	.461	4.610	90.131			
8	.403	4.026	94.157			
9	.331	3.311	97.467			
10	.253	2.533	100.000			

3.3 Effective ways for Chinese Buzzwords Translation

Chen Xiaowei (2013) points out in their research that a full affirmation of one's own cultural values does not necessarily guarantee acceptance by audiences in other countries. The unilateral promotion approach may not always yield the expected reactions and responses, while excessive accommodation and catering to Western audiences might not serve the promotional purpose and could even be detrimental to national interests^[11]. Specifically in the context of translating and disseminating Chinese culture, it is inappropriate to assume that Western audiences will naturally comprehend, accept, and appreciate Chinese culture, its conveyed way of life, and spiritual concepts. It is equally inappropriate to assume that promoting Chinese culture internationally merely involves translating the thoughts of Chinese philosophers like Confucius, Laozi, and Zhuangzi, along with relevant literature, into foreign languages according to Western standards^[12]. The translation and dissemination of Chinese internet buzzwords follow a similar principle. Translators and readers, as essential participants in the translation of internet buzzwords, play a decisive role in the translation process. The choice of an appropriate translation strategy is a collaborative decision between translators and readers. In this process, the translator, as the agent of translation, plays an influential role in the output. Therefore, the translator's cultural literacy, language proficiency, and other factors directly impact the content and quality of the translation. The translator's qualifications are thus a prerequisite for achieving effective external translation. Translation is an intercultural communicative activity, requiring translators to consider the content of translation in the context of the target culture.

4. Discussion

4.1 The Significance of Translating Internet Buzzwords and International Students' Interest in Understanding Them

From the perspective of cultural export, firstly, Chinese internet buzzwords, as a crucial component of modern culture, hold unique value in international communication. Translation aids in showcasing the diversity and creativity of Chinese culture, allowing it to be more profoundly understood and appreciated by audiences worldwide. This contributes significantly to enhancing cultural interaction on the international stage, facilitating the better integration of Chinese culture into the global cultural framework. This positive impact should not be overlooked. Secondly, translation helps bridge the gap between language and culture, providing a smoother communication channel for global audiences. Through precise and skillful translation, the authenticity of internet buzzwords can be preserved during dissemination without distortion, catering to different cultural environments and making them more readily accepted and loved by international audiences. Considering the audience's perspective, it is precisely due to cultural differences that cultural translation becomes inevitable. The differences in cultural backgrounds lead to variations in thought processes and understanding among people from different cultural backgrounds.

When discussing Chinese internet buzzwords, international student A expressed the following:

When I first came to China, I could only understand some basic daily phrases like "hello" and "have you eaten?" Other than that, I didn't really grasp much, especially when it came to some internet buzzwords. Every time I chatted with my classmates or went online, I would come across these terms, and I would feel quite puzzled. For instance, what does "Neijuan" or "Gangjin" mean? While my classmates were chatting and laughing, I was sitting there not understanding why. I didn't like that feeling, but I didn't have a choice. Only when they explained it to me did I understand what these words meant. It turned out they were completely different from what I had imagined, and I found it quite interesting. Now, I'm eager to share these with my friends.

Therefore, the translation of internet buzzwords contributes to helping international students better understand Chinese culture and assimilate into China. In a narrow sense, cultural translation activities involve disseminating one's own cultural forms and products to the target country through

the medium of the target language. In a broad sense, given the inseparability of language and culture, all translation activities are fundamentally a form of social-cultural exchange. Thus, all translation activities can be regarded as cultural translation activities^[13]. Therefore, the translation of internet buzzwords is also an essential component of the translation of Chinese culture.

4.2 Preferred Translation Strategies of International Students for Internet Buzzwords

Based on the findings of this research, concerning translation strategies, it can be summarized that, compared to transliteration and substitution strategies, international students show a preference for literal translation, domestication, and foreignization strategies. The reasons for this phenomenon may stem from several aspects:

First and foremost, the primary purpose of translation is to enable the audience to comprehend and, subsequently, enhance their understanding. When presented with a translated text, international student A expressed, "Understandability" is the foremost condition.

When I come across the translation of an internet buzzword, my first thought is always about how I should understand these words. The initial thing I want to grasp is its meaning because only when I know what it means can I understand it. After that, I can think about what it specifically refers to, and within the context of my own cultural background, find the corresponding terms. So, in my view, understanding it first is the most crucial aspect.

The purpose of translation is to ensure accurate understanding of the information conveyed in the translated text. Therefore, in the translation process, translators should strive to resolve differences in style, logic, and culture between different languages, with the target language as the destination, so that the audience encounters no obstacles in digesting the information"^[14]. In other words, when translating internet buzzwords, the paramount goal is to make the audience "understand," and this aligns with the conclusions drawn in this study. Hence, in the choice of translation strategies, international students lean towards strategies that align most with their understanding.

Additionally, differences in cultural backgrounds lead to variations in thought processes, reflecting disparities in cognitive approaches among different ethnic groups. According to Lian Shuneng (2002: 40), "Thinking is the deep-seated mechanism of language generation and development... Differences in cognitive approaches are a crucial factor contributing to language differences."^[15] "Although traditional Chinese thinking contains rationalist elements, it emphasizes intuition, experience, and insight, making it fundamentally intuitive... Western philosophical thinking is essentially rationalist" ^[16]. Western nations are deeply influenced by rationalism, forming a thinking pattern that emphasizes essence. On the other hand, the Han ethnic group's thinking is characterized by intuitive thinking. One of the characteristics of intuitive thinking is a focus on intuition^[17].

When encountering internet buzzwords, according to the intuitive thinking of the Han ethnic group, it is possible to gradually comprehend the implied meanings within the cultural context. Influenced by rationalism, when international students see translations of internet buzzwords, their thinking pattern is primarily oriented towards understanding the literal meaning of the words before exploring their extended meanings. For example:

The term "tangping" refers to the self-mockery and helplessness of some young people in the face of current societal pressures. Faced with wealth disparities and class ceilings, young people choose to "lie flat," expressing a silent shout: tired, don't care anymore. According to the Chinese way of thinking, the meaning of "TangPing" exists between the lines, and the implied feelings of helplessness and fatigue need to be "intuited." Therefore, when translating this term, it is not appropriate to simply translate it as "lie flat," as the underlying meaning may not be conveyed. Instead, in translating this internet buzzword, it can be rendered as "lying down" with an explanation added: "because of weariness."

4.3 Effective ways for Chinese Buzzwords Translation

Translation is not merely a process of linguistic conversion but a form of cultural exchange and dialogue. In the context of globalization, language barriers have significantly diminished, yet cultural differences remain a challenge. Thus, as the subjects of translation are human, those

engaged in the dissemination of Chinese culture through translation must not only possess basic qualifications for cultural translation but also assume various specific roles throughout the entire translation process — selectors and recommenders of translated content, integrators and coordinators of source and target cultures, and decision-makers and practitioners of specific translation strategies. When translating internet buzzwords, what we need to consider first is the accurate conveyance of information. Only by making the audience "understand" can there be a subsequent "clear comprehension," leading to further cultural exchange. This necessitates the translator, as the primary subject, to have a strong sense of cross-cultural awareness, extensive knowledge of Chinese culture, profound insights into the target language, and a thorough understanding of cultural differences, all while taking audience factors fully into account for effective translation.

Certainly, with the deepening globalization of information, an increasing number of foreigners have gained a deeper understanding of Chinese culture. This requires translators to judiciously choose translation strategies for effective dissemination. For instance:

The term "Xuegaocike" is synonymous with expensive ice cream. It refers to those unassuming ice creams hidden in the freezer, whose prices "stab" you when you go to pay. The ice cream packaging doesn't display the price, and consumers often don't inquire about it until they find themselves targeted by the "Ice Cream Killer" at the checkout. For such terms, an explanatory translation can be effective, rendering it as "Ice Cream Killer (expensive ice cream)." However, in English, there is the term "Ambush," defined as "the act of hiding and waiting for somebody and then making a surprise attack on them" (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 9th edition). This meaning aligns with the essence of "Xuegaocike" in Chinese. Therefore, translators must rationally choose an external translation strategy for effective dissemination.

5. Conclusion

In the context of the new era, it is imperative, within the framework of translation studies, to respect, consider, and adapt to the unique laws of cross-cultural communication or the dissemination and reception of literary culture. The focus should be on contemplating and effectively addressing how to translate Chinese outstanding culture .

This study employs a combined qualitative and quantitative approach, aiming to analyze, from various perspectives, the understanding and interest of international students at universities in Jiangxi province in the cultural phenomenon of internet buzzwords. Furthermore, it delves into the English translation pathways for internet buzzwords culture tailored for international students. The research findings are as follows:

- 1) The translation of internet buzzwords is highly necessary, and international students express a keen interest in understanding this aspect of Chinese culture.
- 2) International students prefer literal translation, domestication, and foreignization translation strategies over transliteration and substitution.
- 3) Translators, as the primary subjects, can only achieve more effective translation of internet buzzwords by continually enhancing their cultural literacy, language proficiency, considering the audience thoroughly, and judiciously selecting translation strategies.

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