A Study on the Construction of National Image by the Variation of Network Buzzwords from the Perspective of Sociolinguistics

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Abstract: As a social phenomenon, the development and change of language reflect the dynamic development of society. As a special language, network buzzwords vividly reflect the development and change trend of the current society and provide a special cognitive way for people to understand the society and the world. With the development of globalization, the publicity of national image has increasingly become the focus of people's attention, and scholars in the field of linguistics have conducted research on the construction of national image from different perspectives. Therefore, in order to explore the relationship between the variation of network buzzwords and the construction of national image, this paper studies the buzzwords in recent five years based on sociolinguistics theory. The study shows that: 1) The variation of network buzzwords mainly includes semantic variation, part of speech variation, lexical variation and phonetic variation; 2) The variation of network buzzwords is mainly influenced by social, cultural, register and personal factors; 3) The variation of network buzzwords is closely related to the construction of national image, which should not be underestimated.

Keywords: Sociolinguistics; Network Buzzword; Variation Characteristics; Corpus; National Image

1. Introduction

Sociolinguistics is a marginal discipline that arose in the United States in the 1960s. Its birth provides more powerful evidence for exploring the law of social development and makes up for the shortcomings of traditional linguistics [1]. Sociolinguistics mainly uses sociology and linguistics theories to analyze the nature, differences and changes of languages from the perspective of social science. Through sociolinguistics interpretation, people can understand more thoroughly and clearly the influence of social development on language change. As a great product in the process of human development, language plays an irreplaceable role in the communication and progress of human society [2].

In any era, if you want to achieve rapid development, language must play an important leading role, there must be some new words in the society, so as to update people's traditional impression of a certain thing. Renewal and reform are the driving force for the development of The Times and the constant vitality of things. Network buzzword is a special form of language variation derived from the rapid development of computer and Internet technology. Due to the development of The Times, nowadays, network buzzwords are no longer limited to the use of network space. In the real communication process, such as work and study, people inevitably use network buzzwords frequently. At the same time, as the wheel of The Times continues to move forward, network buzzwords are constantly changing and alternating. In view of this, this study will explore the role of the variation of network buzzwords in the construction of national image from the perspective of sociolinguistics, so as to add a new perspective for people's cognition of network buzzwords.

2. Research Status

2.1 Research Status of Network Buzzwords

The so-called network buzzwords are a youth subculture phenomenon based on the Internet cultural ecology, which reflects the social mentality of the youth group and can also reflect the relationship between the values of the youth group and the mainstream discourse system. Network buzzwords, as the common words used by current netizens in information

exchange and social communication, have penetrated into real life [3]. As for the sources of network buzzwords, domestic scholars Zheng and Bai (2010) divide them into three categories. First of all, the homepage terms related to the network, that is, computer professional terms; the second is related to the network or is derived from the network platform of various trade words; the third is the common language used by netizens to express their ideas on the network platform. The first two categories are more professional terms, while the latter are commonly used in people's daily life, such as: "Shuan Q", "YYDS", "Duo Sun", "Qiang Guo You Wo", "She Kong", etc. Because such words are derived from a popular social phenomenon, they tend to get people's enthusiasm [4].

The related research of network buzzwords also updates its research angle or research corpus with the progress of The Times. Yue (2023) studied online appellations of gender from the perspective of sociolinguistics, and then explored the social reality causes and gender culture of changes of online gender appellations [5]; Sun (2023) analyzed the phenomenon of using network buzzwords in China Media Group Spring Festival Gala from the perspective of communication studies, so as to verify that there is a certain gap between the original intention of using network buzzwords in Spring Festival Gala and the actual evaluation of the audience [6].

2.2 Research Status of National Image Construction

In recent years, the construction of national image has been paid more and more attention by the majority of linguistics researchers, which makes the national image of China, which is dominated by "other shaping", increasingly deviate from the real image of China. Therefore, it is urgent to present a true and comprehensive image of China [7].

At present, some scholars devote themselves to studying the means of shaping national image, such as Tan (2012) from the perspective of international relations [8]; Fan and Zheng (2015) from communication strategy [9]; Chen and Xie (2015) studied the means of shaping national image from social psychology and other aspects [10]. They expanded the research field of national image construction to a certain extent, but most of

the traditional research focuses on the analysis framework and ideas, such as the application of public diplomacy theory and crisis communication strategy theory. However, the study of national image is interdisciplinary and cannot be completed by one subject alone [11]. Therefore, Wu (2019) expounded the path of national image self-construction from the perspective of translation studies [12]. Wang and Xin (2019) studied the discourse strategies of media in the construction of national image based on the theory of critical discourse analysis [13].

In view of the above literature review, it is not difficult to find that scholars' researches on national image construction are mostly combined with theories such as translation studies, systematic functional linguistics, social psychology, etc., while the results of the researches on national image construction based on network buzzwords as research corpus and sociolinguistics theories are still insufficient. Therefore, based on the above research deficiencies, this paper will explore the variation characteristics and causes of network buzzwords, and then explore and discuss the role of network buzzwords in the process of national image construction, in order to provide a new perspective for people's understanding of network buzzwords.

3. Research Process

3.1 Research Questions
(1) What are the variation characteristics of network buzzwords?
(2) What are the reasons for the variation of network buzzwords?
(3) What influence does the variation of network buzzwords have on the construction of national image?

3.2 Corpus Selection
In this study, the web crawler software "Octopus Collector" was used to collect data from official websites of authoritative institutions and magazines such as "Language and Text Weekly", "People's Daily" and "Microblog Hot Search List". A total of 104 network buzzwords were retrieved from five years from 2018 to 2022, and then a small corpus was built by ourselves. The summary is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Network Buzzwords from 2018 to 2022

Years	Han Yu Pan Dian, Language and Text Weekly, Yaowen Jiaozi
2018	Ming Yun Gong Tong Ti, Jin Li, Dian Xiao Er, Jiao Ke Shu Shi, Guan Xuan, Tui Qun, Fo Xi, Ju Ying, Gang Jing, skr, Que Ren Guo Yan Shen, C Wei, Tu Wei Qing Hua, Pi Yi Xia, Ran Shao Wo De Ka Lu Li
2019	Wen Ming Hu Jian, Qu Kuai Lian, Rong Geng, Ning Meng Jing, Ba Lin Zhu Yi, Dao Lu Qian Wan Tiao, Hao Hai Yo, Shi Ge Lang Ren, Yu Nv Wu Gua, Ying He 996, 14 Yi Hu Qi Shou, A Zhong, Pan Ta, Shang Tou, Wo Suan Le, Wo Tai Nan (Nan) Le, XX Zi You, Zan Ye Bu Zhi Dao, Zan Ye Bu Gan Wen, Wo Bu Yao Ni Jue De, Wo Yao Wo Jue De
2020	Ren Min Zhi Shang, Sheng Ming Zhi Shang, Zui Mei Ni Xing Zhe, Sa, Hou Lang, Shen Shou, Zhi Bo Dai Huo, Shuang Xun Huan, Da Gong Ren, Nei Juan, Qiu Tian De Di Yi Bei Nai Cha, Yun Jian Gong, Guang Pan Xing Dong, Ao Li Gei, Hao Jia Huo, Duo Guan, Bu Yue Er Tong, Ji Mei, Shuai Guo, Ye Qing Hui, Fan Er Sai, Ni Pin, Ni Xi Pin, You Nei Wei Le, She Hui Xing Si Wang
2021	Bai Nian Wei You Zhi Da Bian Ju, Xiao Kang, Gan Kao, Tan Da Feng, Tan Zhong He, Ye Xing Xiao Fei, Ji Wa, Tang Ping, Jue Xing Nian Dai, YYDS, Shuang Jian, Yuan Yu Zhou, Jue Jue Zi, Shang Hai Xing Bu Gao, Wu Ru Xing Ji Qiang, Wo Kan Bu Dong, Dan Wo Da Shou Zhen Han, Qiang Guo You Wo, Po Fang, emo, Duo Sun, She Kong, She Niu, Geng Xu, Yi Zheng Ge X Zhu, Pu Xin Nan, Pu Xin Nv
2022	Shuan Q (Wo Zhen De Hui Xie), PUA (CPU/KTV/PPT/ICU), Yuan Zhong, Xiao Zhen Zuo Ti Jia, Tuan Zhang/Tuan, Tui! Tui! Tui! Zui Ti, Yi Zhong Hen Xin De XX, Fu Le Ni Ge Lao Liu, XX Ci Ke, Ba Bi Q Le, Ren Sheng Wu Chang, Da Chang Bao Xiao Chang, You Bao Nv, Liu Geng Hong Nv Hai/Nan Hai, Wai Juan Xia, Yi Zheng Ge Beng Bu Zhu, Tian Xuan Da Gong Ren, Yin Qing Yuan Que

3.3 Research Method

This study mainly uses qualitative analysis method to analyze the acquired corpus and uses diachronic research method to make a comparative analysis of the characteristics and causes of the variation of network buzzwords.

4. Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Characteristics of Variation of Network Buzzwords

4.1.1 Semantic deviation

Semantic variation refers to the development and change of linguistic meaning or speech meaning in a conventional or extra-conventional way [14]. The concrete embodiment is to enlarge or narrow the scope of use of the original words by giving new meaning to the original words, such as: "Experienced Driver", was originally a name for the experienced driver, and now it is extended to those who are experienced in various industries, various rules, content, technology, and gameplay, that is, people who get the hang of the industry rules. It is the emergence of this variation that makes vocabulary more novel and interesting, which further vividly demonstrates the progress of

language and vocabulary in social change. Another example is "Po Fang", the original intention is to break through the defense in the game field, and now in the Internet environment, it means that the psychological defense line of people is broken through, and it also means that after being mocked, it is anxious. This variation makes the scope of meaning more specific and vividly shows the helplessness of people after frustration.

4.1.2 Part of Speech Variation

In some network buzzwords, there will be changes in the original parts of speech, which will make the expression of the meaning closer to people's real life. For example, the word "Tao Lu", originally intended as a noun to indicate martial arts moves, is now often used as a verb, such as "he always likes to Taolu me" "I have been Taolu". This kind of variation of original nouns and words vividly restores the scene of people being fooled, makes the language more humorous at the same time, and satirizes the insincerity of people's communication.

4.1.3 Lexical deviation

Lexical variation of network buzzwords refers to the change of the original arrangement structure of words, forming a special visual or usage effect, including abbreviations and

spelling variations [15]. Such as: "PUA (spiritual control)" "YYDS (God forever)" "emo (melancholy)" "XSWL (laugh my ass off)". These abbreviations of network words are usually for the purpose of simplification and high efficiency when netizens use this means of communication, and then reflect the language "Economic Principle" followed by this means. Another example is "Gong Sui (These two words mean very powerful, too powerful to be described in one word)", which deliberately divides the original Chinese characters to increase the unique characteristics of the language, and then expresses the deep implicit meaning of the speaker. At the same time, it also increases the interest of language and the ease of communication.

4.1.4 Phonetic variation

With the development of the times, some homophonic words have emerged in an endless stream. For example, the appearance of words such as "Ba Bi Q le (It was originally a homonym of the English "barbecue", which means "barbecue"; and later it means that things have ended and gone in a bad direction)"; "Shuan Q (The pronunciation of the English phrase "thank you" is derived from the empty sound, and the original English meaning is thanks. Later derived to express oneself very speechless, a particular dislike of the emotion.)"; and "Wei Bo (microblog)". The appearance of these words comes from the similarity of pronunciation with some words. This phonetic variation makes the communication between people more humorous and easier to achieve the effect of language communication.

4.2 The Causes of Variation of Network Buzzwords

4.2.1 Social factor

In the process of language development, whether and how the elements of language change are not entirely caused by human factors, but are jointly decided by the public, that is, the collective identity of language [16]. In recent years, with the social development and social changes, people's cross-regional mobility has been increasing, and people in different regions have brought their dialects into different social groups, which has impacted the local indigenous languages and produced multiple linguistic subsystems. Due

to the communication and collision of regional dialects, such language variants with regional characteristics are also used and inherited by people outside the region, thus providing favorable conditions for the variation of network buzzwords [17].

4.2.2 Cultural factor

The spread of network buzzwords occurs in the appropriate social and cultural context, while the social and cultural environment also restricts the formation and spread of buzzwords [18]. The development of network language is closely related to the cultural background of the times. For example, "Versailles" originally refers to the palace where the French aristocracy lives, and now we use such an architectural culture to satirize those who show their superiority in a way of "Pretend to show off in distress, want to play hard to get others' admiration", which make the language more humorous and playful.

4.2.3 Register factor

A register is a variety of styles of language used in a particular situation or domain. As the old saying goes, "Act according to the actual circumstances", which means that the scene of communication dialogue is not always the same, and we ourselves should use different language forms to make the dialogue more reasonable and easier to understand. Network language is a kind of special occasion language that crosses time and space restrictions, regardless of gender and age, it needs more concise, accurate and shortcut chat words, such as, "Fu Le Ni Ge Lao Liu". These words vividly ridicule those who do things very speechless, very funny, not very reliable, which makes the language more vivid, funny, and highly respected by netizens. In the same communication context, the use of official words would seem inappropriate and unacceptable; on the contrary, the use of such humorous network words will get better language communication effect.

4.2.4 Personal factor

In the process of social communication, people will pay attention to the realization of personal identity. The emergence of network buzzwords not only makes the communicative language more humorous and simpler, but also makes the social distance between the speaker and the listener closer, thus making it easier for the speaker to have a strong sense of personal identity. For example, the word "Ji

Mei (The original meaning refers to the town called "Ji Mei" that means "the beauty of the world", but now it is used for the meaning of "sister", a form of address). This form of address implicitly makes the social distance between the listener and addressor closer, and generates a sense of personal identity, which lays a good foundation for the following conversation content and can better realize the communicative purpose of the discourse.

4.3 The Influence of Network Buzzwords on the Construction of National Image

Culture is the spiritual bond of a country and a nation. As a special cultural form, network buzzwords also play an important role in the construction of China's national image. For example, "Qiang Guo You Wo" originated from the solemn oath of young students in Tiananmen Square, which is a solemn oath made by the young generation to our country and the people, highlighting the aspiration, backbone and confidence of Chinese youth in the new era. It is these four words that have inspired the determination of the young generation of Chinese to move forward vigorously, and then built a China image of young people with responsibility and people with backbone.

Such as, "Gan Kao, Xiao Kang, Zui Mei Ni Xing Zhe, Hou Lang" and other words. A few words, however, represent the image of a China that is constantly striving, constantly making progress, and has a spirit of dedication. The term "Tian Xuan Da Gong Ren" presents to the public the image of people fighting the epidemic with optimism and enjoying themselves under the COVID-19 pandemic, constructing a strong and optimistic image of the Chinese people. These words, "PUA, Ba Bi Q Le", originated from the English words "pick-up artist" and "barbecue" and have become popular buzzwords to construct the image of China as a great country with great cultural inclusiveness.

5. Conclusions

Language is a social phenomenon, and the development and change of language reflects the dynamic development of society. Based on the exploration of the characteristics and causes of the variation of network buzzwords in the past five years and the construction of Chinese images, this study finds that network buzzwords, as a special language symbol, reflect the latest trend of society, cultural integration and the evolution of people's thoughts and cognition in the process of communication in a dynamic way.

For one thing, the wide use of network buzzwords enriches the oral vocabulary, strengthens the expression effect of communicative language, makes language more expressive, richer and more flexible, and injects new vitality into daily communicative language. For another, the variation of network buzzwords also promotes the construction of China's image and plays an irreplaceable role in Chinese culture and external propaganda of China image, which makes the image of China in different social periods can be publicized to the public in a timely and effective manner. In view of this, this study can provide a unique cognitive perspective for the cognition of network buzzwords --the construction of national image.

Limited by the length of this paper, however, this paper is limited to the diachronic study of the research corpus, and the research focus has certain limitations and in-comprehensiveness. Subsequent studies can be based on synchronic studies to conduct comparative studies of network buzzwords and other language varieties in the same period, and then explore network buzzwords in a more comprehensive way. In addition, this paper only traces the variation of one language-network buzzwords, so the universality of the study is still insufficient. If subsequent relevant studies simultaneously select multiple language variations for comparative analysis, it may be more able to highlight the role of language in the construction of national image.

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