

Cultural Mapping in Online Buzzwords

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ABSTRACT

Online buzzwords are social phenomena in the Internet Era, closely linked to political, economic, cultural and other factors, with the characteristics of non-normativeness, convenience, metaphoricity, timeliness, spontaneity and comedicity. This paper analyzes the cultural mapping of online buzzwords in terms of nationality, society, psychology, aesthetics and values, interprets the cultural demands and psychology of the public, and provides reference for the construction of socialist culture.

KEYWORDS

Online buzzwords; Cultural mapping; Cyber language

1 Introduction

Language serves as a mirror, reflecting the cultural phenomena of society, while buzzwords more prominently mirror the essential requirements of its development. Specifically, as a brand-new linguistic form and cultural landscape, online buzzwords truthfully reflect the public's cultural aspirations and psychological states, exhibiting distinct characteristics of the times. Studying the cultural reflection in online buzzwords carries profound significance for analyzing the needs of the era and the trajectory of social development.

2 The meaning and characteristics of online buzzwords

Online buzzwords were originally conventional terms used for communication among netizens, and then gradually evolved into popular languages summed up by netizens for major social events. Early online buzzwords were mainly expressed as words, symbols or fixed phrases. In recent years, specific sentence patterns or styles can also be used as online buzzwords, and this trend is intensifying. The main characteristics of current online buzzwords are:

2.1 Non-normativeness

Online buzzwords are mainly text-based, but different from written language, online buzzwords are for the purpose of communication, with a strong sense of spoken language. The text arrangement has great autonomy and innovation, and a large number of dialects, wrong characters or alternative characters are used, giving people a strong visual impact. However, online buzzwords do not violate the rules of language combination, but only differ from traditional modern Chinese in expression form.

2.2 Convenience

Convenience includes two aspects. From the perspective of online buzzwords themselves, because they are communication terms in the online social environment of modern society and are very closely related to daily communication, terms that are concise in wording, convenient to input and quick to spread are highly respected. In terms of communication speed, with the development of self-media, the communication of online buzzwords often grows geometrically, and a new buzzword will quickly spread with the help of new media.

2.3 Metaphoricity

Many online buzzwords are not only descriptions of daily things, but also contain metaphors of real culture. Netizens are not only creators of network information, but also supervisors of real society. Online buzzwords are increasingly becoming a bond for the public to convey folk voices in the process of surfing the Internet. The views and attitudes contained in some buzzwords can arouse the resonance or controversy of the public, which helps to find common ground in the controversy and promote social progress.

2.4 Timeliness

It is undeniable that the formation, development and use of online buzzwords is a dynamic process. In recent years, online buzzwords have all been related to social hot issues, which truly reflect social phenomena. Their changes are inseparable from the changes of social and cultural phenomena, and they influence and map each other, so they show strong timeliness.

2.5 Spontaneity

The Internet is an equal and open communication platform, which has incorporated many human characteristics in its development. The public can publish their own ideas on the Internet, and online buzzwords are gradually formed in the seemingly loose online communication, which is obviously spontaneous. Of course, the essence of them that reflects social reality will survive in the wide spread, while the dross will be forgotten with the passage of time.

2.6 Comedicity

Online buzzwords mostly use nonsensical humor. It is this humor shining with wisdom that transforms the public's dissatisfaction with negative figures in major events into neutral online buzzwords, and voices the parties through ridicule, satire, teasing and other ways, promoting social progress. At the same time, the comedic effect also enhances the spread speed, cognitive degree and acceptance level of online buzzwords.

3 The categories of online buzzwords

Since the birth of online buzzwords, they have also had an interactive impact on the modern Chinese culture itself. With the continuous development of society, online buzzwords are also keeping pace with the times, presenting different categories. The main types of current online buzzwords are:

3.1 Old words with new meanings

The old words with new meanings type of online buzzwords is the most common type, which endows new meanings to the existing vocabulary in modern Chinese. For example, the word "buying soy sauce " originally referred to the behavior of the public buying loose soy sauce. However, when a citizen was interviewed by Guangzhou TV about his views on an event, his answer " I'm here to buy soy sauce " gave the word " buying soy sauce " the new meaning of being indifferent, not talking about politics or sensitive topics, which was widely spread on the Internet and became a buzzword.

3.2 Homophony

With the rise of keyboard culture and the popularization of Pinyin input method among the public, in the commonly used Pinyin input method, the word that first appears after inputting Pinyin often becomes the substitute for the word actually needed, and homophonic online buzzwords came into being. For example, "鸭梨" (pear) originally meant a common fruit. Because it is homophonic with "压力" (pressure), a word that originally made people feel tangled and depressed has a bit of entertainment characteristics, which is not only full of small wisdom to challenge life, but also contains the inner energy to resolve pressure.

3.3 Pictographic structure

In recent years, Chinese linguists have shouldered the task of Chinese character shaping, and the Ministry of Education also issued the General Standard Chinese Character Table in 2013. However, on the Internet, most netizens denounce as these measures as "futile efforts " , and venerate online buzzwords represented by "囧" and "orz" according to the pictographic structure. "囧" is an uncommon character. Because it is very similar to a face in embarrassment, it is given the meaning of "depressed, sad, helpless, embarrassed". "Orz" is originally a combination of three meaningless letters. Because some netizens found that the arrangement of these three letters is very similar to a person kneeling with his body forward and his head facing left, it is given the meaning of "worship, extremely admire".

3.4 English-Chinese abbreviation

With the acceleration of China's opening to the outside world and the pace of globalization, some foreign words, especially English-Chinese mixed languages, have become members of buzzwords, forming English-Chinese abbreviation

online buzzwords. For example, the online buzzword "city 不 city" originated from a short video of an American blogger after China implemented the 144-hour visa-free transit policy at the end of 2023, when a large number of foreign tourists flooded into China. The dialogue "上海 city 不 city 啊? " (Is Shanghai city or not city?) "好 city 啊! " (So city!) in the video made the word "city" popular on the Internet. In English, "city" refers to a city, and also means urbanization. And "city 不 city" refers to being stylish, progressive, foreign-style, novel, representing a yearning for a better life, an exploration of cross-cultural communication, and an appreciation of Chinese culture.

3.5 Sentence pattern imitation

The sentence pattern imitation type of online buzzwords is a new type that has appeared in recent years. Many ordinary sentence patterns can burst out extremely creative content through the spontaneous a large number of imitation of netizens, showing the power of the people to create history. For example, " the god in ancient Greece in charge of xx " originates from the netizens'parody of the ancient Greek mythological system. A doctoral student in classical music used " the god in charge of notes " to analogize professional ability, which attracted attention, so that the sentence pattern has less relevance to the original myth, and is instead used to describe the exaggerated praise of personal specialties or daily things, and the fields in charge are also more close to the people, such as " the person in ancient Greece in charge of lemon tea " , " the person in ancient Greece in charge of rock-paper-scissors " , and so on.

3.6 Event reference

With the development of the Internet, public events have been paid more and more attention by people, and the event reference terms summed up from public events have gradually become a kind of online buzzwords. For example, the news that American "TikTok refugees" flooded into the Chinese social application "Little Red Book" went viral on the Internet. The event originated from the fact that in January 2025, the U.S. government politicized the operation of TikTok on the grounds of so-called "national security", and a large number of American users chose to move to the Chinese social application "Little Red Book" in order to find an alternative platform. American netizens interacted with Chinese netizens, thus breaking the previous stereotypes about China. "TikTok refugees" gradually became a synonym for American people calling for a normal life and protesting against the U.S. government's restriction of freedom of speech.

3.7 Others

In addition to the above six types of online buzzwords, there are a few buzzwords that cannot be clearly classified. For example, "gelivable " means " something is superb, cool, exciting, interesting or that something is cooperative and helpful". It is not an old word with a new meaning, nor does it belong to event reference. It comes from a line of Wukong in the Chinese dubbed version of the Japanese funny comic Journey to the West: The End of the Journey: " ungelivable ". The front page of the People's Daily once used Jiangsu Jiangsu is gelivable for building a "cultural strong province"as the headline, which pushed the use of " gelivable " to a climax. The fact that online buzzwords appeared in the headline of the central media not only highlights the influence of network discourse power and network public opinion, but also reflects the continuous progress of our society.

4 Multidimensional analysis of cultural mapping in online buzzwords

At present, China is still in an important strategic opportunity period where great things can be done. As a special cultural carrier, online buzzwords inevitably map the cultural characteristics of real social life and play a role in promoting the process of social development. Its cultural mapping mainly includes:

4.1 National cultural mapping

National culture refers to the culture with national characteristics created and developed in the historical development process of our country. The spirit nurtured by national culture not only condenses the past history, but also nurtures the future of the nation. Many online buzzwords also reflect the mark of national culture. For example, the old word with new meaning online buzzword "忐忑" (uneasy) now mostly refers to the same-named song sung by Gong Linna at the Beijing New Year Concert. This song is played with traditional Chinese instruments such as flute, dulcimer, and sheng, and uses the gong and drum scores in opera as the lyrics, integrating the tones of old female role, painted face male role, young female role, etc., with a strong sense of exploration, which is deeply loved by the public. Whether from the perspective of entertainment mentality or artistic perspective, the popularity of "忐忑" is not only an affirmation of the era spirit with reform and innovation as the core, but also the public's recognition of the excellent traditional Chinese culture. Another

example is " Somebody, your mother is calling you home for dinner ", which also reflects the influence of China's traditional family model.

4.2 Social cultural mapping

Social culture is the general term for various cultural phenomena and activities created by the people and closely related to the actual production and life of the people, which have a wide range of influence on society. As people's fragmented time is occupied by the Internet, a large number of fragmented and low-quality information is quietly increasing the physical and mental burden of the public. The homophonic online buzzword "brain rot" came into being. "brain rot" does not mean that the brain is really diseased, but a feeling description of cognitive decline or mental fatigue caused by information "overload", just like the brain is rotten. At the same time, this online buzzword also reflects the concept change of the whole society in the instant satisfaction brought by the information influx, carrying out value sorting of the overwhelming information. The national digital literacy has entered a new stage of paying attention to the ability of deep thinking.

4.3 Psychological cultural mapping

Psychological culture refers to the general term for the psychological phenomena and activities shared by most people in society and influenced by a certain social culture. The sentence pattern imitation online buzzword "Sweeping Old Lady" is a typical example. It originated from a Weibo post by "programmer humor": "It is said that in every Internet company, there is a cleaning lady. By chance, when she passes by a programmer and glances at the code on the screen, she will whisper to remind him: Be careful, stack overflow." Since then, the Weibo has been crazy forwarding, and the public has imitated her narrative tone, taking various industries as the background, and deduced many versions of "Sweeping Old Lady". She is always hidden, content to be a cleaner, and always give guidance at critical moments. The popularity of "Sweeping Old Lady" reflects the public's respect for ordinary people and gratitude for selfless dedicated people.

4.4 Aesthetic cultural mapping

Aesthetic culture is a special social activity in which human beings create and enjoy beauty purposefully and consciously. The popularity of the English-Chinese abbreviation online buzzword "city 不 city" shows that more and more foreign people have personally felt the beauty of China. Once upon a time, when it came to China, it might be a traditional and mysterious oriental country, with kung fu as the pronoun and panda as the mascot, which seemed to have nothing to do with the aesthetics of foreign style and modernity. Just a few years ago, the China in the minds of many foreign people was exactly the "Xanadu" in Li Ziqi's videos. However, with the advancement of Chinese-style modernization, the fast-running high-speed rail, robots that can deliver takeout to the room, and new energy intelligent cars all over the street, various "City" facilities and technological products have refreshed the aesthetic cognition of foreign people about China. "city 不 city" allows us to understand that China is both ancient and young, both modern and traditional, with both advanced technology and rich humanistic atmosphere, both very international and very local. This is the real China, the complete China, and the vivid China.

4.5 Value cultural mapping

Value culture refers to the creed or concept that most people think is correct, and is the universal value concept rooted in culture. For example, the sentence pattern imitation online buzzword "Digging and digging" is a reflection of the mainstream social value culture. In 2023, the children's song teaching video Little Garden with the lyrics "Digging and digging in what kind of garden, planting what kind of seeds and blooming what kind of flowers" aroused positive imitation and adaptation by the public and quickly became popular. Miners adapted it as "Digging and digging in the deep mine, digging a lot of coal to light up thousands of homes"; subway construction personnel adapted it as "Digging and digging under the dark ground, building a long subway to connect thousands of homes"; the official Weibo of China Railway Construction released "Digging and digging where the motherland needs it, the infrastructure maniac can do the work of three with one hand!" "Digging and digging" shows the whole society's affirmation of the labor value concept of "what kind of flower is planted, what kind of fruit is borne", and also reflects the public's beautiful expectation for the concept that labor creates happiness.

Through the analysis of the cultural mapping of online buzzwords, we can not only understand the development law of online buzzwords, but also grasp the pulse of social development. The cultural phenomena reflected in online buzzwords are not only conducive to improving the ideological and moral quality and scientific and cultural quality of the whole nation, enhancing the country's cultural soft power, but also providing intellectual support and spiritual strength

for upholding and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics. In the process of studying the cultural mapping of online buzzwords and guiding the development of buzzwords, we should promote the Internet to spread advanced socialist culture, meet the spiritual and cultural needs of the people, and build a beautiful online home together.

Funding

2022 Fundamental Scientific Research Program of Jiangnan University (Special Project on Ideological and Political Work): "Research on Youth Expression and Public Opinion Guidance in a World of Great Changes" (NO: JUSRP122105SZ); 2025 Philosophical and Social Sciences Research Project of Jiangsu Higher Education Institutions: "Value Leadership and Digital Empowerment: Study on Jiangsu Experience and Mechanism Innovation of Integrating the 'Grand Food View' into Ideological and Political Education in Universities" (NO: 2025SJSZ0382)

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