

Analysis of Buzzwords from the Perspective of Sociolinguistics—Take “Waste Sorting” as an Example

Ruobing Han and Hongmei Ruan

Abstract—With the popularity of the Internet and the increasing number of netizens, the Internet has long become an inseparable part of people's daily lives. Every year, new online buzzwords will appear on the Internet. The buzzwords released by the National Language Resource Monitoring and Research Flat Media Center are based on the Beijing Language and Culture University Dynamic Circulation Corpus (DCC), which are obtained through computer extraction and human-computer interaction processing. This paper will use the buzzwords “waste sorting” as a case to analyze the social phenomenon mapped by this word.

Index Terms—Buzzwords, waste sorting, sociolinguistics.

I. INTRODUCTION

Frequent online communication and the increasing number of netizens have made the Internet an inseparable part of people's daily lives. The network language that comes along with it more or less reflects the characteristics of the current era and records the particular events that have occurred at that time, reflecting the hot issues that people are concerned about. A growing amount of buzzwords, as a certain type of language that is different from traditional written forms, is being widely spread online. It has now become a social dialect and sometimes reflects social development and changes. Chen Xinren, Yu Wei [1] pointed out that the discourse in the public domain contains ideas and concepts related to it, so the Internet as a public platform, so is its language.

Every year, new online buzzwords will appear on the Internet. Some buzzwords are not only used and spread by online users in the virtual world, but are also commonly used in reality – the daily face-to-face communication. The buzzwords released by the National Language Resource Monitoring and Research Flat Media Center are based on the Beijing Language and Culture University Dynamic Circulation Corpus (DCC), which are obtained through computer extraction and human-computer interaction processing. The buzzwords generally fall into eight categories: synthetic, domestic and political, international politics, economy, science and technology, culture, sports and entertainment, social life, and people's livelihood.

The top ten Buzzword-of-the-Year are selected by the National Language Resource Monitoring and Research Center based on the big data corpus, using language information processing technology. These buzzwords record and reflect the changes and development of the society. In

this article, the authors will focus on the buzzword “waste sorting”, conduct in-depth research and study on the social phenomenon of the word “waste sorting” and its English translation versions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Basic Knowledge of Sociolinguistics

Linguistic sociology (Joshua A. Fishman) [2] mainly studies sociolinguistic issues from a macro perspective, and tends to place language phenomena in social phenomena for analysis. Discourse culture school (Dell Hymes) mainly studies culture and communication from the perspective of language. Goffman [3] further complements Gumperz's contextual reasoning, emphasizing the role of social interaction. Weinreich and Labov [4] formally put forward the core point of view of language variation theory-“ordered heterogeneity”, which means that language is regarded as an orderly and heterogeneous object, that is, language in reality is different and heterogeneous.

B. The Characteristics and Problems of Internet Buzzwords

Deng Wenbin [5] proposed that the standard of network language should conform to the law of the development of the language of the whole people, and it is in favor of the general principles of communication and the seven principles of division. Jiangnan and Zhuangyuan [6] proposed to actively restrict the negative effects of online language, guiding principles, and treat online language in a scientific dialectical manner. Liu Fang [7] summarized the characteristics of word formation in Internet buzzwords, mainly divided into abbreviations, numbers, homonyms, derived words, pictures, key constructs and code mixing.

C. Research on Waste Sorting

Guo [8] argues that in China, it has been a long time that residents do not have a proper awareness of the importance of garbage treatment on the ecological environment. Generally, people litter the garbage, which is then collected and disposed of by the government. Shen [9] and others believe that the current breakthrough in solving waste sorting is in policy formulation, and pointed out that China's current waste sorting policy mainly has policy defects such as unstable classification standards, regional imbalance of classification facilities, and insufficient information basis for incentive policies. Ding [10] believes the community is the smallest unit of life of the people and the community. The construction of a community's ecological environment is directly related to the physical and mental health of the residents. The Second Session of the 15th Shanghai

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The author are with the Northwestern Polytechnical University, China (e-mail: 412973276@qq.com, ruanhm@nwpu.edu.cn).

Municipal People's Congress recently voted to pass the "Shanghai Municipal Waste Management Regulations" which clearly defined four types of wastes. They are household food waste, residual waste, recyclable waste, and hazardous waste.

D. Relevance to This Study

The definition of waste sorting refers to the general term for a series of activities that sort garbage in accordance with certain regulations or standards, so as to transform into public resources. The purpose of classification is to improve the resource value and economic value of garbage, and strive to make the best use of it. The phenomenon of waste sorting has come into being in some first-tier cities such as Beijing and Shanghai as early as the 1990s in China. At that time, there were only some pilot activities in those cities. What is more, there were few people who were aware of waste sorting, and not many people responded positively. However, as the economy continues to strengthen and the urbanization process continues to accelerate, the amount of domestic waste generated by people is also rising, but the ability to handle waste cannot be improved. In this paper, the author hopes to find out why the word "waste sorting" becomes one of the top 10 buzzwords.

III. REASONS OF "WASTE SORTING" BECOMING A BUZZWORD

A. Inadequate Environmental Tolerance

As of August 2019, the world's population is nearly 8 billion. Increasing population has also been accompanied by soaring energy consumption, and mounting garbage that has been produced on the planet. The garbage disposal process includes classifying, recycling, and processing. There are two most common ways to dispose of garbage. The first way is landfill, which easily causes secondary pollution to groundwater. The second way is incineration, but it causes serious air pollution. Most of the garbage on the earth is buried. The forecast data of relevant research institutes show that in 2020, the amount of domestic garbage produced in urban cities and towns in China will be as high as 35.914 million tons. This value is 1.94 times the amount of urban domestic garbage produced in 2006, and the total amount of urban domestic garbage produced is increasing rapidly. Therefore, Chinese people gradually began to pay attention to the importance of environmental protection and waste sorting. Actually in Japan and some other countries, waste sorting has long become a habit in daily lives.

B. China Now Pays More Attention to Waste Sorting

In 1990s, the phenomenon of waste sorting had appeared in only few cities in China like Beijing and Shanghai. Not everyone in China was aware of the importance and necessity of protecting the environment and waste sorting at that time. In 1996, a small number of residents and students in Beijing, with the help of some non-governmental organizations such as Global Village, began to have a sense of waste sorting and conducted simple waste sorting work such as recycling used batteries separately. However, as the development of the economy and the urbanization process continues to accelerate, the amount of domestic waste generated by people is also

rising, but the ability to handle waste has barely improved. In recent years, China is accelerating the implementation of the waste sorting system at the national level. In March 2017, the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development issued the "Implementation Plan for the Domestic Waste Sorting System", which requires the mandatory implementation of domestic waste classification in 46 cities nationwide. In June 2019, nine departments including the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, the National Development and Reform Commission, and the Ministry of Eco-Environment jointly proposed that from 2019 onwards, cities at prefecture-level and above will start the classification of domestic garbage. According to the plan, cities at prefecture level and above will basically build a waste sorting and processing system by the end of 2025.

C. Hot Discussion of the Public

Waste sorting appears in the public view mainly because Shanghai introduced the "most stringent" domestic garbage management regulations in July last year, making it the first city in the country to implement waste sorting in the past 20 years.

Nie [11] writes in her paper that People's Daily published a total of 24 articles on the topic of waste sorting within 5 months, including 2 in February, 1 in March, 1 in April, 1 in May, 10 in June, and 9 in July Articles. The reporting time ranges from June 4 to June 13 and July 2 to July 19, with an average of 1 report every 3 days.

In addition to national-level media reports, many other TV stations, self-media and platforms have made relevant news reports on Shanghai's waste sorting activities. We can read related news on TV, newspapers, and mobile phones. Waste sorting has also become a hot topic and social phenomenon in our lives.

Internet hot words are the embodiment of social pan-entertainment. Since the reform and opening up, people's living standards have been greatly improved, and food and clothing is no longer the primary concern of people. According to maslov's demand theory, China has now entered a pan-entertainment society. Compared with traditional media, the Internet is more open and interactive, and is closer to the people. Therefore, various humorous online hot words came into being. However, some online hot words have the characteristics of "excessive entertainment" and "collective revelry", which need proper guidance.

The popularity of online hot words is related to the structure of netizens. Among Chinese netizens, teenagers are the most active subjects. However, these young people who are active on the Internet have knowledge and culture, are active and open-minded, like seeking novelty and difference, and are eager to get rid of bondage, so they vent and express their psychology and thoughts through online hot words.

The development of society, the promotion of people's awareness and the enhancement of supervision awareness are the main reasons for the popularity of online hot words. As mentioned above, the main body of online people is young people with knowledge and culture, who have a strong sense of public participation and supervision. At the same time, as a series of contradictions caused by social development become increasingly prominent, young people also vent their dissatisfaction through online hot words.

D. Changes in People's Lifestyle

Citizens are required to actively participate in waste sorting activities in Shanghai and strictly implement waste sorting project. Meanwhile, waste sorting is not a simple process; The process should be identified carefully. For example, the kitchen waste, like crayfish, crabs, fish bone, shrimp shells, which may rot for a long time if you eat seafood at home. Large lobster shells, snail shells, scallop shells, oyster shells and other shells belong to another category because they are hard and cannot be recycled. To give another example. How to deal with milk tea that was not drunk up? Milk tea can be poured directly into the sewer. The nuts and other ingredients in the milk tea belong to kitchen waste. If the cup containing milk tea is made of plastic, it needs to be washed and dried before thrown into recyclables wast. If it is not convenient to clean in the open air, you can throw the litters into other garbage. If the cup is made of paper, it must be thrown directly into other garbage cans.

In recent years, waste classification in China has been gaining popularity and intensively implemented, not only in Shanghai, but also in major cities across the country. Up to now, 46 key cities across the country have issued waste sorting policies, and 14 cities including Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou have formulated or revised domestic waste management regulations.

IV. THE TRANSLATION OF WASTE SORTING

A. Different Versions of the Translation of Waste Sorting

Waste sorting is a social activity that not only improves the environment in which we live, but also better displays the good image of a city or even a country. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss the English translation of waste sorting. The English version provided by Baidu is "Garbage classification". While we can find other English versions like, garbage sorting, waste classification and waste sorting. The meaning of garbage is food that is discarded (as from a kitchen). Waste refers to any materials unused and rejected as worthless or unwanted. Classification is the act of distributing things into classes or categories of the same type. Sort is what a category of things distinguished by some common characteristic or quality.

Searching "garbage classification" on China Daily website, there are a total of 243 articles. For "garbage sorting", there are 594 articles in total. "waste sorting" are 1072 and "waste classification" are 279 articles in total. By comparing the meaning of each word and searching the frequency of use of each phrase, the translation version "garbage sorting" and "waste sorting" are the most commonly used.

By the end of July, the city will ensure its 348 residential communities are covered by waste sorting treatment facilities and dustbins.

(China Daily, 2020)

The 2020 Energy Conservation Publicity Week and the promotion of household waste classification opened in Siyuan Square, Jiangchengjiang district, Hechi on June 30.

(China Daily, 2020)

Deng and her family members have promoted garbage classification in the village since 2003.

Countless eco-friendly families are the major force in the building of a beautiful China.

(China Daily, 2020)

About 70 percent of the paper used in China now is recycled paper; 36 percent of the recycled paper was being imported till 2017. However, with the domestic garbage sorting system improving, more used paper can be recycled domestically, saving the cost of import.

(China Daily, 2020)

B. The Usage of Waste Sorting in the West

From the search results of Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) in British National Corpus, we found that the expression of waste sorting in COCA is relatively common, with a frequency of 8 (see Fig. 1). Searching "garbage sorting", it shows there are no matching records. The frequency of "waste classification" is 3 (see Fig. 2). These results show that the American media generally also use the expression "waste sorting".



Fig. 1. Searching results of "waste sorting" in the COCA corpus.



Fig. 2. Searching results of "waste classification" in the COCA corpus.

It can be seen from the search results that the "waste sorting" argument is still relatively common, and the frequency is 8. The search result of "garbage sorting" is 0, indicating that this expression generally does not appear in the US media reports.

V. CONCLUSION

Waste sorting is an effective method for reducing, recycling and harmless urban garbage, and is also an important link to improve the level of urban development. Obviously, with the deepening of the damage to our living environment, the increasing amount of garbage generated, and the continuous enhancement of people's awareness of environmental protection, waste sorting has become one of the top ten online buzzwords in 2019. It is hoped that waste sorting will no longer appear in our daily lives with the form of online buzzword, but will become our daily habits. waste sorting is a social activity that tests the quality of citizens, and its purpose is to achieve a transition from "heteronomy" to "self-discipline".

Waste sorting is a social behavior. How to use more accurate English expressions in publicity can help foreign readers understand the positive and social events that had happened in China. In this way, it will help foreigners understand the social life in China in the recent years, and it will also help the cities of China to build a good image and even a good image of China.

The appearance and popularity of online buzzwords also conform to the memetics of language. There is an extremely close relationship between memes and languages. On the one hand, every language unit survives by copying and spreading memes, and memes are the internal motive force of language

spreading. On the other hand, in the process of copying and spreading, language memes produce more alternative language units and their expression means through deformation, merger and other variation methods, thus promoting the enrichment and development of language.

Moreover, the emergence and popularity of online hot words are caused by various external reasons, which is also the main reason for the emergence and development of online buzzwords. American scholar Bright put forward the theory of "language and social structure co-change" in his book *Sociolinguistics: When social life changes gradually or drastically*, language as a social phenomenon will change unambiguously with the progress of social life. As the most active element in language, vocabulary can best reflect the influence of social development and changes on language.

Internet buzzwords have a short history, so that the research on web buzzwords is not deep enough at present. As we all know, the widespread and rapid development of the Internet has made Internet languages greatly affect the thoughts and psychology of netizens. These languages record people's joys and sorrows, and contain the marks of social progress and changes in the times, showing the current society. In the future, popular buzzwords will become more networked and block-oriented, and the social attributes will become more and more obvious, which will continue to affect social development, and at the same time will continue to have some change variation with social development.

It is of great significance to study the changes and development trends of online hot words, which can not only make the government understand people's needs and solve social contradictions and social problems effectively that people care about, but also grasp the trend of public ideas. There are positive and negative online buzzwords, and some of them are too vulgar. We should treat them rationally and adopt the principle of moderate standardization to guide the correct and rational use of online buzzwords.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Han Ruobing did some research on this topic and finished this paper.

Ruan Hongmei, as the supervisor of Han Ruobing who did a lot of help for finishing this paper, including giving advice and reviewed this paper.

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Han Ruobing is a master candidate on translation and interpreting at School of Foreign Languages, Northwestern Polytechnical University, China.



Ruan Hongmei is a professor at School of Foreign Languages, Northwestern Polytechnical University, China. Her research interests include translation, political studies on international relations.