

# ***The Impact and Influence of Internet Language on Chinese Language in the New Media Environment***

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**Abstract:** Given the ascendance of new media as the primary conduit for the dissemination of popular culture, an investigation into the stylistic characteristics of online language reveals a notable divergence from the findings of previous studies, as evidenced by data mining and literature research. This paper presents a summary of the linguistic and literal characteristics of Chinese Internet language: image-enabled, video-enabled, facilitated, de-territorialized, trying to sort out the causes of the new phenomenon of Internet language and the different views of Internet language from the perspective of different user groups. The study also identifies the new media platforms that employ online language to introduce novel nuances to the Chinese language script, characterized by concision, ingenuity and temporal brevity. The study also provides solutions to dissipate the negative impact of Internet language on Chinese language and script and explores how to make use of new media Internet language to better develop Chinese language and script in the present day, such as standardizing the use of Chinese characters, making proper use of new media platforms, and enhancing people's awareness of discrimination.

**Keywords:** New media, Internet language, Chinese language.

## **1. Introduction**

With the continuous development of electronic information technology, the Internet, which began with the connection of personal computers, has become the most popular platform for communication in the public sphere as the user base has further increased along with the access to mobile digital devices. Internet language was born as a product of language development. This form of language provides a new way of expression and communication for people's life and challenges the standardized use of traditional language and writing. Network language is a new form of language with the development of Internet technology. It is not only organically linked with traditional language, but also has formed its own way of expression and communication rules [1]. In the early stage of the generation of Internet language, Internet language pursued the efficiency of communication and was limited to a small number of users who were the first to contact the Internet.

With the popularity of new media platforms, mainly social media, the mass media began to pay attention to and use online language, and light Internet users and even non-Internet users began to understand and use this language. The broad definition of internet language refers to the extension

and variation of traditional language in the online environment, that is, internet language is not a language system, but a manifestation of Chinese language in the online environment [2]. The Chinese language and characters themselves are constantly updated along with the times, increasing their diversity and pluralistic elements. However, with the development of network technology, the attributes of network language, such as videoization, pictorialization and symbolization, have had a negative impact on the dissemination of the Chinese language, misleading people's cognition and understanding of Chinese characters, and thus hampering the standardization of the Chinese language and its dissemination. Specifically, there is a conflict between the cultural intent of the characters and their usage on the Internet; some people forget the characters when they put pen to paper and lose their knowledge of the structure of the characters.

This paper summarized the concepts of new media and cyber-language through literature analysis, survey research, and generalization, discarding the phenomenon of cyber-language, which has been the focus of attention in recent years in academia but has gradually lost its popularity. It also analyzed the trend of Internet language changes, studied the views of different users on Internet language and the reasons for its emergence, to analyze the impact of Internet language faced by the current development of Chinese language, and actively seek favorable solutions.

## **2. Concepts and Characteristics of Cyber-Language**

### **2.1. The Concept of Internet Language**

With the emergence and development of online media, cyber-language is gradually formed and constantly developing. Domestic scholars and those who use English abroad have different discussions on the definition of 'cyber-language', the more representative ones include:

As early scholars in China who study cyber-language, JIN Song and QI Ke elaborated on the definition of cyber-language. In their view, 'cyber-language' in the broadest sense refers to 'alternative languages' that have emerged on the Internet and e-era and are related to Information Technology and electronic technology. 'Cyber-language' in the narrow sense refers to the 'language' used by self-proclaimed 'netizens' [3]. In 2010, another scholar defined 'Internet language' as: "According to the prevailing understanding in the academic community, there are different understandings of cyber-language, both broad and narrow. The broad understanding refers to the various forms of language used in the field of network communication, including two main categories: one is the Internet-related terminology and special terms, and the other is the language used by Internet users in chat rooms and Internet forums. The narrower understanding is mainly the latter" [4].

Later, some other scholars put forward the concept that network language refers to the language spread and circulated through the network, including the popular vocabulary generated in the network as a result of the hot social events, the chatting terms used by netizens in communication and the network professional words. This definition is used in this paper [5]. Cyber-language in a narrow sense refers to an emerging form of language relative to traditional language, which is used in the virtual space of the Internet, and whose distinctive feature is that it breaks the linear rules of linguistic symbols, incorporating a large number of new words, simplified grammar, symbolic expressions, etc. [6]. That is, cyber-language is an emerging form of language that has arisen with Internet technology and is a unique Internet language [7].

## 2.2. Characteristics of Cyber-Language

### 2.2.1. Visualization and Videoization

In the context of the new media era, more and more young people are willing to use emoticons as well as animated drawings to express their ideas and make Chinese characters more vivid. Emojis instead of Chinese characters objectively favor increased expressiveness and emotional transmission. When people use emojis to convey their thoughts, the words or forms on the emojis allow the other person to understand more directly the emotions they are trying to express. For example, when people want to show that they are angry, emojis can add to the rage by a ball of fire. When chatting on the internet, you can use emojis with hearts or a kiss to convey intimacy.

The use of these emoticons makes the understanding of people's feelings more intuitive and enhances their ability to express themselves and transmit their emotions. It can deepen people's emotional connection.

### 2.2.2. Facilitation

Internet language, as a product of the new media era, is characterized by simplification, symbolism and neologism creativity. Simplicity is mainly reflected in simplified form and simplified content. Internet language tends to use acronyms, pinyin acronyms, and combinations of numbers and letters. For example, some people use 'U1S1' represent 'you yi shuo yi'. The simplified form allows for quick typing and reading, and the use of harmonics adds to the fun of chatting.

Cyber-language conveys information in highly condensed form by omitting sentences, implanting idiomatic or colloquial variants, and using semantically loaded words. For example, '*shekong*' for '*shejiao kongjuzheng*' (this expression means social phobia). That is, the fear and anxiety that arises from the worries of misbehaving when interacting with others. Originally, '*mo yu*' means to catch fish in the water, especially in troubled waters. Now is used for not doing your job, slacking off at work, etc. Such facilitation benefits the extreme compression of content while retaining core meaning.

### 2.2.3. Weak Spatial Locality, Strong Identity

As the Internet becomes more and more convenient, communication is not limited to time and geographical constraints, and the most intuitive display of this is that in Internet chatting, dialects have become a form of expression and understanding. Dialects are no longer confined to a particular geographic area and understood by the people of that area.

Through online communication, outsiders can also communicate in dialectal script. For example, a few years ago, the popular expression which hit the trend "*lan sou xianggu*" is from the dialects of Nanning, Guangxi, which means "*nanshou xiang ku*" (with similar pronunciation means feeling depressed and want to cry). It was later quoted all over the internet to express users' feelings of sadness. The influence of this phrase on the Internet is not only limited to Guangxi, but pass through the new media, it has been understood and utilized by everyone. But at the same time, the labeling of specific online terms makes people pay more attention to the division of identity beyond the natural geographical space, whether they belong to the same subculture or value circle. This began to push netizens to engage in cyber-visionary cyber rodeo.

### 2.2.4. Highspeed Self-Innovation

Internet language is often created by creative netizens. With the development of the Internet and the popularity of the self-media platform, new modes of communication and cultural phenomena continue to appear, and the Internet language also continues to innovate and evolve in the process.

For example, new words and sentence patterns that appear frequently on the Web tend to spread quickly and be accepted by a large number of users. This innovation is not only reflected in vocabulary, but also in grammar and sentence patterns, which makes online language a dynamic and creative language system. The rapid spread of the Internet allows the newly created phenomenon of cyber-language to be transmitted to all users in a short period of time, and the scope of use often extends beyond the invented group.

As a result, new appropriations or even intentional deconstructions of the initial usage will be made in a short time, and such Internet terms will either be established as fixed terms and circulated for a long time, or eventually lose their vitality and leave the Chinese language stage. This is different from the traditional Chinese language script, which has been passed down from the Chinese culture as well as humanities after a long history.

### **3. The Influence of Internet Language in the New Media Environment**

There is a clear difference between Internet language and Chinese language. In order to be close to life as well as to facilitate people's understanding and use, there are certain neologisms and abbreviations in Internet language, which make Internet terms not standardized. The Chinese language, on the other hand, has a complex structure and focuses on norms and sentence completeness, which creates a great difference with Cyber-language.

Moreover, Cyber-language is used more casually and tends to be colloquial, while Chinese language is more suitable for formal occasions and is mostly used in literature and articles. In the new media environment, online language has an important influence on Chinese characters.

#### **3.1. The Literary and Cyber Nature of the Text Conflict**

As the many emerging vocabularies that have appeared on the Internet have begun to enter everyday communication, the use of some of these words breaks the traditional linguistic norms that we have come to know. While such innovations have objectively given new life to the Chinese language and script, where people get a new perspective on understanding Chinese characters, they have also created obstacles to the correct perception of the Chinese language and script. Some of the abused words are used in a range of ways that are often not in line with traditional grammar and semantics, and even with the deliberate use of misspelled words.

For example, the recently popular “da wazi” are a misinterpretation of “wa”. Since the word “wa” is relatively isolated and like “wa”, it has been mispronounced as “*da wazi*” on the Internet. This expression is now sometimes used as a playful term to describe a character who has a characteristic style of acting and exaggerated mannerisms. This kind of incorrect communication happens frequently on the Internet, where communication is already random and high-speed, and the incorrect communication makes people's understanding of Chinese characters gradually deviate from the true meaning behind them.

Moreover, young people and even students are the main force using new media, and at this stage it is the key period to understand and recognize Chinese characters, and the adverse influence of Internet language will make them unable to grasp the original meaning of Chinese characters, and create difficulties in understanding, standardized use and subsequent dissemination of the characters [8]. Therefore, the influence of Internet terms on Chinese characters, to a certain extent, causes the lack of standardization of Chinese characters, confuses the literary nature of Chinese characters with the Internet nature, and is not conducive to the subsequent development of Chinese characters and people's mastery of the correct Chinese characters.

### **3.2. The Loss and Inability of Chinese Characters**

With the continuous development of information technology as well as new media, people have fewer and fewer opportunities to write by hand, and the use of electronic devices for typing as well as direct voice and video calls is increasing. This development has on the one hand allowed people to feel the convenience of being able to communicate anytime, anywhere, but on the other hand it has made handwriting on paper a thing of the past. People use pinyin spelling and other input methods to directly find out the desired Chinese characters, identify similar characters, and memorize complex character patterns replaced by machine programs of electronic data, the phenomenon of forgetting the characters when putting pen to paper has become a dilemma directly faced by modern people, resulting in the loss of part of the vitality of Chinese characters in China.

And with the development of digital media and the vivid and clear displays of various smart terminals, people gradually tend to read e-books, and there is no way to sink their teeth into reading paper books. This will make people lose the patience to read the Chinese characters carefully and lose part of their taste for the deep meaning behind the words. In the old days of handwritten letters, the first greeting would be ‘zhan xin an’ (means hope safety when the receiver unseals the envelope). Nowadays, if one wants to express his thoughts, he can chat directly by typing “hi”, which makes Chinese characters lose their literary beauty and charm.

### **3.3. Enriching Vocabularies and Increasing Novelty**

For the development of language to be passed on, it needs to be constantly innovated with the changes in the society and updated to make it conform to the characteristics of the development of the times. So, with the new media and internet age. Nowadays, the network buzzwords appearing in people’s sight are people’s viewpoints on a certain event or social phenomenon, and the event and phenomenon are conveyed by people through a kind of quick and easy buzzwords, so that everyone can understand the phenomenon and the essence of the society more profoundly, which accelerates the advancement and development of the society to a certain extent.

In terms of our literary influence, Internet buzzwords are more of a novelty vocabulary, which includes uses such as harmonization, combining with the numerical alphabet, and acronyms. These applications and combinations have continuously enriched the Chinese characters and made them less distant from people’s lives, so that they are not only confined to books, but also active in life. Some of these words have acquired new meanings and increased the periodization of words through interpretation and processing on the Internet.

## **4. Solutions**

The reason why Internet buzzwords can spread rapidly and arouse heated discussions in a short time is that behind them, they represent the mainstream cultural values of the society, and Internet buzzwords can, to a certain extent, speak to people’s emotions and psychology, and trigger people’s resonance. Therefore, the process of dissemination of all-round measures have to ensure that the beginning of the Internet buzzwords is carried out on the premise of relying on the Chinese characters, and in the process of dissemination will not be misinterpreted for the Chinese characters and can have a positive impact on the dissemination of the Chinese characters.

### **4.1. Increase in the Specification of Chinese Characters**

When publicizing Chinese characters daily, it is important to pay attention to the normative nature of Chinese language and literature, so as to increase people’s correct understanding of the Chinese language, which in turn allows them to learn correctly. People can be encouraged to make



autonomous Chinese language corrections in their daily lives, which can enable the society collectively to have a favorable environment for Chinese language communication.

The organization can detect and oppose wrong usage when confronted with irregular and incorrect use of the Chinese language, increasing the breadth of correct use of the Chinese language and decreasing the probability of incorrect use. Strengthen the transformation of Internet language, so that it can conform to the mainstream values of society and keep pace with the times. Let the positive energy as well as standardized online terms be spread. Unstandardized and bad Internet terms should be resisted.

## **4.2. Proper Utilization of New Media Platforms**

The current online platform is developing rapidly and in various forms. When publicizing the Chinese characters of Wen, we can make use of online platforms to increase the publicity, make the Chinese characters interesting and closely connect them with people's daily life, and increase people's understanding and love of the Chinese characters. Increase the influence and dissemination of Chinese characters.

On the media platform, some publicity activities can be carried out, such as Chinese character competitions, etc., so that the new media platform can act as a good medium of communication, understand the needs of the masses, and organize Chinese character activities that can attract the masses to increase the masses' understanding of Chinese characters and reduce the impact of the erroneous Internet language on people.

On these platforms, traditional literary works can be creatively transformed, such as pairing poems and songs with artistic illustrations, audio recitations or dynamic videos, to enhance the infectious power of the works. Topic discussions on Weibo, tweets on WeChat, creative short videos on Douyin and literary interpretation videos on Bilibili can all be used in different forms to appeal to audience groups with different preferences.

## **4.3. Increase the Public's Sense of Discernment**

In the era of new media, the influence of network language on Chinese characters is two-sided, and people nowadays lose their realistic and rational judgment due to the deepening socialization, which leads them to follow the herd mentality seriously. Therefore, in order to develop Chinese characters in the era of new media, the public need to increase their ability to recognize good and bad Cyber-languages, actively disseminate the Cyber-languages that are in line with the background of the times and the mainstream culture, and resolutely resist and correct the unhealthy Cyber-languages. They should not have a herd mentality and believe that "popularity" equals "good".

With the de-territorialization of cyber language, cyber users from different backgrounds are engaged in "face-to-face" communication and emotional output, and de-territorialization is gradually bringing about regional discrimination and discourse discrimination in cyberspace, all sectors of society should focus on calling on cyber users to increase their judgment and not to let linguistic violence intrude into the millennia-old culture through the Internet. All sectors of society should focus on calling on Internet users to increase their judgment and not to let language violence intrude into the culture of excellent Chinese characters inherited for thousands of years through the Internet.

## **5. Conclusion**

To sum up, under the promotion of new media, Cyber-language has promoted the development of Chinese characters to a certain extent, created certain opportunities for the development of Chinese characters, and the Chinese characters have been energized with the Cyber-language. However, it is also necessary to pay attention to the negative impact of Cyber-language on the development of

Chinese language and literature, and the rational use of the new media will be able to transform the existing negative impact into a positive impact and help people's Chinese characters to develop more healthily. Therefore, we analyze and summarize from multiple angles, find out the characteristics of Cyber-language, analyze the influence on Chinese characters, and propose measures that are beneficial to the promotion and inheritance of Chinese characters.

This paper argues that the combination of new media and Chinese characters, which have a long history in China, has achieved a kind of inheritance and development in the context of the development of new media. In this paper, exploring this impact in terms of both pros and cons can provide a more comprehensive perspective for further research to follow. The measures provided in this paper for the phenomenon of Cyber-language can be analyzed from multiple perspectives, trying to expand beyond the perspective of sociology and communication in the new media field, and combining measures with psychology and medicine, providing novel measures for the development of Chinese characters.

### Authors Contribution

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

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