

Concept Integration of Network Neologisms in the We-media Time

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Abstract: The emergence of new network vocabulary has enriched the expression of Chinese. From the material conditions of its formation, we-media has played a great role in the emergence and development of new vocabulary. On the other hand, conceptual integration contributes a lot to the cognitive and psychological explanation for the formation of new words in the era of we-media. Meanwhile, network neologisms in this era present different ways and characteristics of concept integration.

1. Introduction

In the era of we-media, the increasing autonomy and interactivity of information exchange has injected new vitality into language expression on the Internet and promoted the emergence of a large number of new network vocabulary. The rapid development of the Internet and we-media has become a powerful external motivation to the promotion of network language. Meanwhile, as one of the basic tools of human thinking and conceptualization, the formation and development of language is closely related to human cognition, because some common cognitive ways will affect language development and change to a certain degree such as iconicity, metaphor, metonymy, categorization, and conceptual integration etc., among which, concept integration plays a crucial role in explaining the formation of new Internet words and other new expressions in language.

2. Network Neologisms in the Ear of We-media

As a kind of social dialect variation, network language presents many characteristics which are different from everyday language. It usually conveys some complicated concepts or emotions with intuitive and novel expressions, such as new meanings of old words like “*jiōng, lei and yun* etc.” or new expressions like “*× Style*” and “*being killed by suicide*”.

Due to their subtle, accurate and vivid meanings, some Internet terms have entered the daily expression of the public and become fixed in the dictionary as emerging senses and expressions. The Internet has a great influence on language development. In the age of we-media, the Internet has brought much more obvious impact on language. “We-media” refers to some emerging network media that transmit normative or non-normative information to the non-specific majority or a specific individual by means of modernization and digitization including blogs, micro-blogs, WeChat and post bars and other different forms. It breaks the traditional mode of information transmission based on TV, newspapers, magazines and other basic forms, weakens the advantages and dominance of the mainstream media, changes the production mode centered on journalists and editors, and presents stronger characteristics of information transmission, such as privatization, popularization, generalization and autonomy. In the era of we-media, the public has a freer voice, and the boundary between the media and the public is gradually blurred meanwhile the interaction becomes stronger. The communicative context based on we-media makes the development and change of network language much more complicated and its expression forms are more flexible, since letters, numbers, words, phrases, sentences and even pictures can be the lexical ways of expression and they have offered more flexible forms of expression for network communication such as “*very Q, 88, appearance, tears, don't be too... oh*” etc.

3. Cognitive Study and Conceptual Integration of Language

We-media is the external driving force for the generation and development of network language, while concept integration is the indispensable psychological and cognitive basis for the formation of network neologisms. Conceptual integration refers to a series of cognitive activities that selectively extract partial information from different input spaces and recombine it to form new conceptual structures and meanings. “Integration” emphasizes that “the whole is larger than the sum of the parts”; which is a reflection on the “analytical thinking” in scientific research for a long time. This is a new development of the second generation of cognitive science and an important field of cognitive linguistics. Fauconnier proposed concept integration theory to analyze how information in mental space maps and integrates with each other, thus explaining the generation and formation mechanism of new concepts. It is a universal way for human beings to know the world and form thinking and language. It has important theoretical significance to explain people’s imagination and innovative thinking, acquire concepts and understand meanings. Fauconnier and Turner found that in the four spaces of conceptual integration, the generic space maps to the two input spaces and the integration space reflects the shared, common and Abstract.organization and structure of the input space. The two input spaces map and select some attributes to put them into the integrated space, and then interact with each other to produce a new creation structure and thus completes the generation of meaning in it.

For example, “*shuaping*” at first refers to the fact that the same person sends a large amount of information in a short period of time when chatting on the Internet (usually repetition or nonsense). Later, it refers to a situation in which many people follow an event or person at the same time and thus their conversation topic (or attention focus) is the same. Too much identical content makes people constantly swipe the phone or computer screen to end up viewing the similar information. This behavior is called “*shuaping*”, that is, “constantly swipe the screen”. The Input Space 1 of this expression is the integration meaning of “*shua*” (brush), that is “to move back and forth with the brush to achieve the purpose of cleaning or daubing”, belonging to the action space; the Input Space 2 is the integration meaning of “*ping*” (screen), belonging to object space. In human cognitive psychology, action is always associated with certain objects. “*Ping*” is the object of “*shua*”, and there is a certain correlation between them. On this basis, the generic space project “action” and “object” respectively to the two spaces, namely “to keep swiping the screen to achieve the purpose of removing the same information”, form a new emergent structure “*shuaping*” and finally create a new emergent meaning “to make the same person send a large number of similar or meaningless content in a short period of time”. In the process of its use, the meaning of “*shuaping*” has changed a little. Nowadays, the concept is integrated again and it means that someone or something is paid more attention to. For instance, “my Wechat Moments have been *shuaping*ed by Kobe these days.”

4. Concept Integration Types of Network Neologism in the Era of We-media

In the era of “we-media”, the characteristics of information dissemination, such as autonomy, popularization and non-standardization, together with netizens’ novelty seeking and group psychology, have become the material basis for promoting the emergence and widespread use of new Internet vocabularies. Internet terms are abundant and frequently used, which greatly enriches Chinese vocabularies. From the psychological and cognitive basis of their formation, these words and expressions have shown different ways of integration in the construction of new meanings.

Conceptual integration includes two types: blending and hapology. The former refers to the fact that two similar but not necessarily related events blend together to generate new conceptual meanings. Since it is often related to metaphor, it is also known as “metaphorical integration”. Metaphor refers to the use of one concept to describe another similar concept, but it cannot fully explain why the integration of concepts produces new meanings. In fact, this new emergent meaning is the product of conceptual integration. For example, the two sources of “positive energy” are “physical space” and “real life space”. The positive and negative energies in physical space are bounded by the zero point of vacuum. In real life space, people tend to associate “positive” with

“active, upward and beneficial” in their cognition of “positive and negative”, while “negative” is associated with “passive, declining and harmful”. There is a corresponding relationship between the two concepts, which is reflected in the generic space of the degree between “high or low and good or bad”, and then forms the emergent structure of “positive energy” in the integration space, and finally generates the integration meaning of “healthy, optimistic, positive motivation and emotion” while the integration meaning of “negative energy” is the opposite.

Haplology is the way to integrate two related events to produce new conceptual meaning, emphasizing the correlation between events. As it is related to metonymy, it’s also known as “metonymic integration.” For example, in “*Ta ku shi le zhen tou*” (she weeps; so the pillow becomes wet.) “*Ta ku*” (she weeps) is one event and “*zhen tou shi le*” (the pillow becomes wet) is the other event. Obviously there is a causal relationship between the two. Through the syntactic operation of “*ku shi*”-the core predicate element, the two related events are constructed into one clause, which embodies the causative meaning. In the network language in the era of we-media, blending is generally adopted to form new meanings from old vocabularies, such as “*taocan* (package)”. And the emergence of new expressions (that is, new vocabulary) is more usually a result of haplology, such as “*yanzhi*” (appearance). There is another integration way by which both blending and haplology are used, such as “*XX-yi jie* (XX- No. One Woman)”. “*jie* (sister) originally refers to “the older women of the same generation”, but also to “younger women” nowadays, like “*kongjie* (air hostesses)”, “*gangjie* (Miss Hong Kong)” etc. In the integration process, the generic space projects the meaning of “the woman who has a leading role and great influence” respectively to “*jie*” (referring to the human space) and “*yi*” (referring to the amount space) and forms in the integration space the emergent structure “*yijie*”, and thus produces the emergent meaning, referring to “the woman who is at the top of one industry or the one who has an influential power in a certain field”, like “*weishi yijie* (NO. one hostess in TV) and “*dianli yijie*” (No. one woman in electricity) and so on.

Both blending and haplology are adopted in the integration process of the word-formation model “*XX-yijie*”. The new words and phrases derived from the above model mostly adopt this kind of comprehensive concept integration mode: The mold standard is formed through blending and the mold slot is mostly haplology. For instance, the new expressions “*jiankang zhishu* (health index), *xingxiang gongcheng* (face project), *luokao* (take an exam without preparation) and “*ershou fang*” (the second-hand house) etc. come from such structural model as “*XX zhishu, xingxiang XX, luo X, ershou XX*” and so on. Blending and haplology are two common types of conceptual integration. The Chinese scholar Shen Jiakuan describes the former as “taking a strand from each rope and twisting the two into a new one” based on correlation while the latter as “taking a section from each rope and connecting the two into a new one” based on similarity. Network terms are mostly formed by the integration of these two ways respectively, while new words and phrases derived from the word-formation model are more likely to come from the concept integration of these two ways.

5. Concept Integration Levels of Network Neologism in the Era of We-media

“Integrated framework” and “input element” are two key factors of conceptual integration: because of the effect of “framework”, “elements” begin to integrate, yield integration effect and form integration meaning. The basic unit of conceptual integration between words is the specific sense. The differences of the word prototype will lead to different levels of word integration: new words formed by extracting some semantic features from the original meaning of words have a lower degree of integration and belong to the low-level integration; However, new words formed by extracting some semantic features on the basis of extended meaning (including metonymic or metaphorical meaning) have a high degree of integration and belong to high-level integration. In between, there are other two levels, namely, the sub-low integration level and the sub-high integration level. For example, “*lei ben*” literally means “tears come out”, which refers to a complex state of mind when people experience various feelings such as happiness, touching, pain and grievance. Among the two characters, the integrated sense of “*lei*” falls into its original meaning while that of “*ben*” belongs to the extended meaning, so the conceptual integration of the expression

“*lei ben*” belongs to the sub-low level. “*Leng baoli* (cold violence)” refers to the behavior that causes others to be hurt or violated spiritually or psychologically by means of indifference or alienation, among which the extended meaning of “*leng* (cold)” and the original meaning of “*baoli* (violence)” are integrated to form the expression “*leng baoli*”. It is a concept integration of sub-low level. Similarly, such expressions as “*leng men*(a dark horse)” and “*leng xiaohua* (cold jest)” also belong to this level. However, “*leng qiang* (sniper’s shot) and “*leng jian* (an arrow shot from hiding)” pertain to the integration of higher level.

Through research, it can be found that the conceptual integration of network neologisms focuses more on the sub-low and sub-high levels, and there is little high level integration. This is because network neologisms in the era of we-media, in order to obtain the best effect of communication, often choose direct and clear ways to convey communication information, rather than the obscure expressions formed by high-level integration, which is completely in line with the principle of labor saving in human communication. The reason why the lower level integration is adopted is that after a long period of development and evolution, the original meaning of language is rarely used, and the extended meaning is more likely to be used. Therefore, the integration of new words also chooses the extended meaning, which is in line with the basic laws of language development and human cognitive psychology.

6. Conclusion

The advent of the era of we-media promotes the rapid development and changes of network language, but the main changes are carried out within the normal field of modern Chinese grammar and word-building. From the perspective of Chinese word formation, the sense of derivatives is relatively transparent, that is to say, the general meaning of words can be inferred from their word-formation components. However, compound words may not be able to deduce their meaning from their components. In other words, the meaning transparency of compound words is low, and it is often difficult to deduce the rough meaning of words from their components. For instance, “second-hand” is not “the second hand”. This phenomenon is very consistent with the view of cognitive linguistics on “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts”, on which the conceptual integration theory is formed and developed. It is found that in the era of we-media, the new words and expressions on the Internet are mostly compound words with low semantic transparency. In the process of integration, there is always a generic space projecting to the two input spaces respectively, so as to reintegrate the meaning in the integration space and obtain new meaning. This process not only conforms to the general cognitive law but also to the trend of the derivation and development of Chinese new words and expressions. Although they are all conceptual integration based on compound word formation, some new words are integrated on the basis of similarity, which belongs to blending. Some are built on the basis of correlation, which belongs to haplology. Others are built on the basis of the above two integration types. From the perspective of the integration level, in order to express simply and intuitively and communicate smoothly, the integration of network language focuses on the sub-high and sub-low levels. In this way, it has not formed the expression of high-level integration like idioms, and there also have appeared few low-level expressions with original meaning.

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