

# Research on the English Translation Strategy of Internet Buzzwords from the Perspective of Functional Equivalence Theory

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## ABSTRACT

Buzzwords on the Internet refer to words that are mainly used on the Internet and are given meanings in a specific era and language environment. This language of the internet, a language system that concentrates on the content of events and public emotions, has emerged and received wide currency [1]. Buzzwords symbolizes and reflects the characteristics of the Internet at different stages of development, and is also a banner for the advancement and development of human society. However, in the process of translating Internet buzzwords, due to the richness and high degree of refinement of their connotations, various translation methods are often used in different media. In this article, from the perspective of functional equivalence theory, the author takes some buzzwords from 2020 to 2022 as examples to analyze their translation strategies in different contexts. By collecting and analyzing the official translation results including Google Translate and Baidu Translate, and combining with the translation in major media and news reports, this paper concludes the application of functional equivalence theory in three different situations.

**Keywords:** Buzzword, English translation, Functional Equivalence Theory.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Research Background and Objective

In the current rapid development of network society, along with science and technology and the progress of the society, has produced more and more Internet buzzwords. Because these words are characterized by fast output and rich connotation, their translation results are often different.

Based on this, the author made statistics of some internet buzzwords in the past three years, determined that functional equivalence theory is the guiding theory, and conducted a classification research on the translation of internet buzzwords through comparative analysis and theoretical analysis, and obtained how to correctly use functional equivalence theory in different situations. This research has reference value for the optimization of AI translation software, and at the same time provides reference for the majority of translation learners to promote the translation of Internet buzzwords to keep pace with the times.

### 1.2. Overview of Buzzwords and Functional Equivalence Theory

The Functional Equivalence Theory was first put forward by the American linguist Eugene Nida in 1969. Nida points out that translation consists in reproducing the information of source language by using the most appropriate, natural and equivalent language from semantic to stylistic [2]. In order to accurately reproduce the source language culture and eliminate cultural differences, the following principles and steps are often followed: when the background allows, try to make the translation conform to the semantics of the original text and reflect the cultural characteristics of the original text. If the meaning of the sentence and culture cannot be taken into account at the same time, the form equivalence with the lowest priority needs to be discarded, so as to achieve the purpose of reproducing the semantics of the original text. If the change of the form is still insufficient to convey the semantics and culture of the original text, it is necessary to transform the meaning and culture of the source language through structural transformation, using the reorganization of the target language is expressed.

The rapid development of the Internet and the popularization of social media have led to the reconstruction of social expression, communication and values [3]. "Internet buzzwords", from these two words reflected its most significant characteristics and elements. The first is "Internet". Internet buzzwords are born because of the network. The internet is not only its communication medium, but also a carrier of culture and the spirit of the times.

While "buzzword" reflects its within a certain amount of time, the impact of production and life of human society, because of its wide range of popular, with periodic characteristics, different from the traditional words or phrases, buzzwords are often in a fixed period of time there is higher popularity, so for the translation of internet buzzwords need to keep pace with the times. It is a long and continuous process to find the best way to interpret its meaning in a short time.

Internet buzzwords are often characterized by flexible language, unfixed format and rich connotation.

In the process of translation, it is necessary to pay more attention to the correct interpretation of their inner meaning in form and semantics. The author believes that functional equivalence is one of the best theories for translating Internet buzzwords.

## 2. ANALYSIS ON THE CURRENT SITUATION OF ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF INTERNET BUZZWORDS

### 2.1. Translation Results of Major Translation Software

In view of the characteristics of the Internet buzzwords mentioned above, the author took the popular Internet buzzwords in 2020 and 2021 as examples to summarize the corresponding answers given by Google translate, Youdao translate and Baidu translate and put them in the table in table 1.

Table 1. Statistics of Translation Results of Internet Buzzwords

Internet Buzzwords in Chinese	Google Translate	Youdao Translate	Baidu Translate
打工人	Workers	Working people	office worker
工具人	tool man	Utility player	Tool man
逆行者	retrograde	people who brave a dangerous situation	heroes who put themselves in harm's way
内卷	Involution	Within the volume	Inner volume
夺冠	win the championship	The title	take the crown
集美	Jimei	Jimei	sis
躺平	lie flat	Lie flat	lying flat
破防	break defense	To break the	Break defense
野性消费	wild consumption	Wild consumption	Wild consumption
双减	double minus	ShuangJian	Double subtraction
小康	Well-off	A well-off	well-to-do
赶考	rush the exam	descend	Rush to the exam
碳中和	carbon neutral	Carbon neutral	Carbon neutralization
后浪	Waves	After the wave	Rising Waves
光盘行动	disc action	clear your plate campaign	"Clear Your Plate" campaign

### 2.2. Translation Analysis of Major Translation Software

Combined with the three types of translation given in table1, we can clearly see that although the scope of application of translation software, relevant translation technology and machine-assisted translation capability is constantly expanding and its functions and accuracy

are constantly improving, when facing Internet Buzzwords with fast iteration speed, concise language and rich connotation, there are still many problems that are inconsistent with the functional equivalence theory.

Let's first look at the first category, when the superficial meaning of Buzzwords is basically the same as the substantive connotation, such as "打工人",

including all people who mainly rely on salary for their living, from senior white-collar workers, company employees, programmers, couriers, to assembly lines. The workers are all doing the job. Therefore, the three types of translation are all related to workers and offices. Another example is the "工具人", which refers to a person is someone who gives to others at their beck and call, never being treated equally emotionally or financially, and always being used as a tool. At this point, we can directly use literal translation to interpret its meaning, because the first two characters of "tool man" are sufficient to show its essential characteristics, which not only conforms to the semantic meaning of the original text but also reflects the cultural characteristics of the original text.

In the second category, when "Buzzwords" are composed of Chinese homonyms. For example, the word "集美" evolved from "姐妹". The reason was that a network anchor often pronounced "sister" as "Jimei" during live broadcast, which seemed close and lovely. Therefore, netizens followed suit and called their good sisters. When faced with such words, they are often translated as a combination of their Chinese pronunciation. From the perspective of functional equivalence theory, although such translation conforms to the formal consistency, it lacks the elaboration of its connotation and cannot fundamentally explain the true meaning of the word, so it is difficult to reproduce the original semantic meaning.

In the third category, when there is a difference between the intrinsic meaning and the superficial meaning of "Buzzwords", the translation can only express the superficial meaning, but lacks the real meaning of buzzwords. For example, the word "逆行者", referring to a person who walks backwards, is often used to refer to strong people who stand up in the face of danger, such as the most beautiful hero in the fight against COVID-19. Countless heroes emerged among ordinary people, protecting life with their lives, profoundly interpreting the connotation of the heroic spirit in the new era. The word is mostly translated as "people who brave a dangerous situation" or "retrograde." From the perspective of functional equivalence theory, such translation can only explain the literal meaning, but lacks the explanation of the inner meaning and background. It can be translated as "heroes in harm's way", which means heroes walking on a dangerous road, which is more consistent with the semantic and linguistic culture of the original text.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

According to the three categories mentioned above, the author collects and analyzes the Internet buzzwords mentioned in major media and news reports in recent years and their corresponding translations, which are sorted out in table 2.

**Table 2.** Statistics of Internet Buzzwords in Media and News Reports

Source of Translation	Internet Buzzword in Chinese	Internet Buzzword	The Original Translation
China Daily	只争朝夕， 不负韶华	seize the day and live it to the fullest	Let's seize the day and live it to the fullest, and greet the arrival of the year 2020 together.
China Daily	春运	Spring Festival travel rush	From Jan 10 to Feb 18, the total number of trips is likely to hit 3 billion, slightly up from the travel rush last year, with an 8-percent growth in train trips, 8.4-percent increase in air trips and 9.6-percent hike in waterway trips, according to a forecast from the National Development and Reform Commission.
SOHU Media	打工人	Laborers	There are two exceptionally dazzling lights in this world. One is sunshine, and the other is the face of a diligent laborer!
SOHU Media	逆行者	Heroes in harm's way	Hailed as heroes in harm's way, over 20,000 healthcare workers in 100 plus medical teams converged in Hubei, the hardest hit province, from across the nation to support epidemic control.

Behind the internet buzzwords is a faster-paced culture that China has shown at different stages of its development. It reflects the cultural and ideological

transformation in the development process of modern China, and it is a commemorative product of the times.[4]

According to the examples in the table 2 above, we can clearly see that only by applying appropriate functional equivalence theory to translate, can Internet buzzwords perfectly interpret their meanings. For example, "seize the day and live it to the fullest", even though formal equivalence and unity are abandoned to a certain extent, the verbs "seize" and "live" render the actions in the original sentence and enhance the appeal. At the same time, the word "fullest" preserves the linguistic culture of the source language.

As for "后浪", this internet buzzword, there are often many disputes in the process of translation. This term refers to the younger generation in the trend of the times. Actor He Bing made an impassioned speech about the short video "After Waves" on The May 4 Youth Day in 2020, which caused much discussion. Some people think that you can do a literal translation because the word itself reflects the meaning, it can be translated as "Rear waves". Some people think that the core part of this word is to emphasize the importance of the next generation, so as to highlight its inherent meaning. Therefore, it can also be translated as younger generation, youngsters, young people, etc. The author thinks that the above two statements can reflect functional equivalence theory, but they are different in semantic and source language culture.

To sum up, translation is a kind of activity to reproduce the beauty of the original one.[5] The Chinese buzzword is the mirror of every aspect of the latest development and trends of the Chinese society. With the deepening of the reform and opening-up polity, Chinese buzzwords spring up one after another.[6] The author believes that functional equivalence theory is a common and effective translation theory in the translation of internet buzzwords, which can balance the unity of language culture, semantics and form. This will provide reference for some international AI translation software optimization, thematic translation learners and Internet workers to promote the accuracy of translation, so as to correctly convey the connotation of words while preserving the source language culture as much as possible.

### **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS**

Weihe Sun, the author of this paper, is responsible for determining research methods, collecting data, analyzing data, and carrying out sample verification.

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