



English Translation of Internet Buzzwords from the Perspective of Fusion of Horizons

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Abstract. As a reflection of contemporary culture, the English translation of internet buzzwords involves complex cultural negotiation and meaning reconstruction. Based on Gadamer's Theory of Fusion of Horizons, this study adopts a Three-Horizon Analysis Framework— author's horizon, translator's horizon, reader's horizon — to analyze the translation of three internet buzzwords. Buzzwords are highly sociocultural in nature and lack corresponding translations. Currently, fewer translation is universally applicable in these new internet Buzzwords. Study shows that each existing translation is the result of a creative balance among the author's connotation, the translator's subjectivity, and reader's acceptance. Therefore, users can select an appropriate translation version according to their specific use scenarios and purposes.

Keywords: Fusion of Horizons; Internet Buzzwords; Ai Ni Lao Ji; Huo Ren Gan; Nong Ren, Dan Ren

1 Introduction

In recent years, words like “Huo Ren Gan” have appeared on the annual “Top Ten Buzzwords” list published by *Yao Wen Jiao Zi*, reflecting contemporary society's growing emphasis on authenticity. Words like “Ai Ni Lao Ji” and “Nong Ren, Dan Ren” also gained popularity among young people. Internet buzzwords have increasingly become a symbol of social psychology and cultural change in the digital era.

This study adopts Gadamer's Theory of Fusion of Horizons and takes a Three-Horizon analysis framework to address the connotations of the three internet buzzwords, the difference of various translations, and the horizon types of different versions. The Three-Horizon analysis framework restores author's horizon and applies to the emerging field, aiming to provide feasible methodology and practical guidance for the translation of internet buzzwords.

2 The Theory of Fusion of Horizons and Its Analytical Framework

The “Fusion of Horizons” is philosophical concept proposed by Hans-Georg Gadamer in *Truth and Method*. It refers to the dynamic process of understanding achieved through dialogue between the interpreter and the object of interpretation. The fusion of horizons in translation refers to the encounter among the horizons of the author, translator, and reader, as well as the elucidation of the original text and its translation (Zhu Hua, 2024).

2.1 The Application of the Theory in Translation

The concept has been applied across various research fields. Ndekha (2025), for instance, employs it to compare the narrative of Zacchaeus in the *Gospel of Luke* with contemporary Malawian reader’s perception of “public offenders”, revealing how the author’s horizon and the reader’s horizon collide and fuse around the issue of exploitation. In China, Jia and Gao (2017) integrate this theory with translation strategies for current affairs buzzwords, proposing that translation involves “two rounds of fusion”: first, between the translator and the source text; second, between the translator and the target language readers.

2.2 The Three-Horizon Analysis Framework

This study adopts a Three-Horizon Analysis Framework, firstly restoring the author’s horizon, then analyzing the differences of translations through translator’s horizon and reader’s horizon. At last, the author will evaluate the horizon types of diverse translations from multiple dimensions.

The author’s horizon is the generative horizon of buzzwords within the source language culture, including its generation background, usage scenarios, and emotional connotations. Author-oriented type should retain at least one source-language cultural connotation. The syntactic structure of the translation should be close to that of the source language, while the core semantics of the source language should not be altered due to the need for comprehension.

The translator’s horizon means the translator’s pre-understanding and translation purpose. Translator-oriented type should manifest the translator’s subjectivity, so they can give play to creative translation based on his or her own cultural stance and personal translation purpose.

The reader’s horizon refers to the expectations of target-language readers. It includes cultural norms, cognitive frameworks, and social contexts. Reader-oriented type should apply to target language’s idiomatic or colloquial structures.

3 Case Studies on the Translation of Internet Buzzwords

The translations of the internet buzzwords in this study are all selected from Chinese official accounts. Currently, there are no authoritative translations of these terms. Only a few have been disseminated abroad.

3.1 The Translation of “Ai Ni Lao Ji”

Semantic Analysis from the Author’s Horizon.

“Ai Ni Lao Ji” is a buzzword that emerged in Chinese social media in 2025. It originated from the line “Love Your Mom, See You Tomorrow” in the game of League of Legends (LOL). Later, netizens adapted it to “Ai Ni Lao Ji” to express self-love, self-acceptance, and self-nurturing. Characterized by a gentle tone, this word is highly colloquial and stands in contrast to negative concepts such as “selfishness”.

Translation Versions from the Translator’s Horizon.

Table 1. The Translation Versions and Source of “Ai Ni Lao Ji”

Version	Translation	Source
①	Love you, good old self	<i>Oxford Dictionary Official Account</i>
②	Love ya, me. Catch ya tomorrow	<i>English Reading Official Account</i>

Cultural differences, defined as the unique features distinguishing one culture from another, not only justify the necessity of translation (Hu & Li, 2025), but also facilitate intercultural understanding. As shown in Table 1, the phrase “good old...” in Version ① is a common expression in English, and it can embody the affectionate tone of “Lao Ji”. Meanwhile, the expression “Love you, ...”, and “self” directly correspond to the source language structure. In doing so, the translator intentionally exposes readers to cultural differences. However, The character “Lao” does not mean “old”; instead, it serves as an intimate form of address between peers. So the expression “old self” may cause misunderstanding in ages.

In Version ②, the translator aims to enhance educational reach and facilitate reader comprehension. The expressions “love ya” and “catch ya” conform to the norms of daily spoken English. The translator adopts the Theory of Functional Equivalence and Domestication to reduce cultural unfamiliarity and evoke emotional resonance in readers.

Acceptance Analysis from the Reader’s Horizon.

Version ① has been used in international reports like South China Morning Post. Version ② mainly targets learners of English or language professionals. This version highly retains the internet buzzword “Ai Ni Lao Ji” in terms of intimacy, ordinariness, and the form of self-talk, as well as fits the discourse style of the English online context. In a poll conducted by Tsinghua University’s Weibo account regarding the translation

of “Ai Ni Lao Ji”, the version “Love you, good old self” received 84 out of the total votes, ranking first among three options, followed by “Love ya, me. Catch ya tomorrow”. This suggests that Version ① is more suitable for international readers in formal contexts and is more widely accepted.

Horizon Type Categorization.

Horizon type is determined based on the criteria in Section 2.2. The horizon types of the translations of “Ai Ni Lao Ji” are in the following Table 2.

Table 2. Different Dimensions for Evaluating Two Translation Versions

Dimension	Version ①	Version ②
Cultural Connotation Handling	The intimate connotation of “Lao” is preserved	The image of “Lao” is omitted
Linguistic Form	Source-oriented structure	Target-oriented, colloquial structure
Translation Strategy	Literal translation	Functional Equivalence and Domestication
Reader’s Comprehension Difficulty	Relatively high	Relatively low
Horizon type	Author-oriented	Reader-oriented

3.2 The Translation of “Huo Ren Gan”

Semantic Analysis from the Author’s Horizon.

“Huo Ren Gan” was selected on the annual “Top Ten Buzzwords” list published by Yao Wen Jiao Zi. It refers to “the genuine, vivid, and vigorous qualities an individual displays in social media or real life”. “Huo Ren Gan” , as a positive term, reflects people’s appreciation of the real and natural state, and is in opposition to “the human-machine sense” .

Translation Versions from the Translator’s Horizon.

Table 3. The Translation Versions and Source of “Huo Ren Gan”

Version	Translation	Source
①	real-person vibes	<i>Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press (FLTRP) Official Account</i>
②	human touch	<i>Oxford Dictionary Official Account</i>

As indicated in Table 3, the word “vibes” in Version ① denotes a mood or an atmosphere produced by a person, thing, or place. According to the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), this word appears 1,159 times, indicating its high frequency in English, particularly on social media. Translator mainly adopts the Domestication strategy, focusing on the dissemination and comprehension of the translation. “Real person” corresponds to the structure of the original text, conveying an easily understandable meaning, and successfully communicates the sense of “authenticity”.

Version ② also employs the Domestication, focusing on conceptual equivalence and idiomatic naturalness. In the COCA corpus, “human touch” appears 233 times, which is mainly used to describe “a feeling of warmth and authenticity”.

Acceptance Analysis from the Reader’s Horizon.

In Version ① the word “vibes” has a light, colloquial tone, which is suitable for use in social media and online contexts. However, “vibes” refers more to “atmosphere” or “ambience”, focusing on the external mood that a person creates rather than the inward authentic traits.

Version ② fits for readers aiming to master authentic English, as it helps develop appropriate linguistic intuition. The word “touch” carries warm and intimate connotations, which closely align with the emotional dimension of “being warm and not indifferent” in the Chinese concept of “Huo Ren Gan”.

Horizon Type Categorization.

The Table 4 below is the horizon types of the translations of “Huo Ren Gan”.

Table 4. Different Dimensions for Evaluating Two Translation Versions

Dimension	Version ①	Version ②
Cultural Connotation Handling	Preserves “authenticity” but loses “vivid vitality” and opposition to “machine-like”	Preserves “warmth” but loses the cultural contrast
Linguistic Form	Literal correspondence + modern slang	Common idiomatic expression
Translation Strategy	Domestication	Domestication
Reader’s Comprehension Difficulty	Low	Low
Horizon type	Author-oriented +Reader-oriented	Reader-oriented

Both of the two belongs to the reader-oriented. It suggests that when the source language culture lacks a direct equivalent in English, translators tend to prioritize reader acceptability over cultural fidelity.

3.3 The Translation of “Nong Ren, Dan Ren”

Semantic Analysis from the Author’s Horizon.

“Nong Ren, Dan Ren” emerged as popular personality labels on Chinese social media in 2024 and were the year’s annual internet buzzwords. People often refer to those who have strong emotional expression, a strong desire to share, and a love for socializing as “Nong Ren”. While those who typically show little emotional fluctuation and give an impression of being easygoing and calm are “Dan Ren”. These two words have no positive or negative connotations. “Nong” and “Dan” draw on the aesthetic imagery of colors and flavors in Chinese culture.

Translation Versions from the Translator’s Horizon.

Table 5. The Translation Versions and Source of “Nong Ren, Dan Ren”

Version	Translation	Source
①	A hot-blooded person; souls of serene	<i>Oxford Dictionary Official Account</i>
②	Exuberant, passionate ; reserved, stoic	<i>YiXi English Official Account</i>

Xu Jun (2003:11) defines translator’s subjectivity as the translator’s conscious personality and creative awareness manifested in translation. In Table 5, the Version ① creatively uses “souls of serene”, endowing “Dan Ren” with philosophical depth, which demonstrates a strong sense of translator’s subjectivity. At the same time, “hot-blooded” and “serene” forms a semantic opposition, corresponding to the aesthetic imagery of “Nong” and “Dan” in Chinese. As Xie (1999, p. 137) notes, “translation is a form of creative treason.” Accordingly, the translator avoids direct personality descriptors and instead adopts a poetic expression to convey the literary connotations of the source text.

In Version ②, the translator also adopts the Domestication, choosing common English vocabulary to correspond to the personality traits of “Nong Ren; Dan Ren”, thereby facilitating reader’s understanding and retention.

Horizon Acceptance Analysis from the Reader’s Horizon.

In Version ①, the translator employs creative expressions, making the phrasing more philosophical. It is more suitable for academic readers and those with a higher level of literary appreciation. While Version ② uses basic vocabularies related to personality traits. Some of these words are ambiguous. For example, “passionate” may be misinterpreted as “sexually related”, and “stoic” may be misunderstood as “indifferent” or “apathetic”, all of them don’t reflect the cultural and aesthetic concept of “Nong” and “Dan”. It is more appropriate for general readers or scholars who need to grasp the meaning quickly.

Horizon Type Categorization.

The horizon types of the translations of “Nong Ren; Dan Ren” are in the following Table 6.

Table 6. Different Dimensions for Evaluating Two Translation Versions

Dimension	Version ①	Version ②
Source cultural connotation handling	Retain the antithetical aesthetic concept of “Nong, Dan”	Loses cultural imagery, relies on personality descriptors
Linguistic form	Creative, poetic expression	Common words
Translation strategy	Domestication, Creative adaptation	Domestication
Reader’s comprehension difficulty	Relatively High	Relatively Low
Horizon type	Translator-oriented	Reader-oriented

4 Conclusion

This study is based on Gadamer's Theory of Fusion of Horizons and constructs a Three-Horizon Analysis Framework. Through the study of the translation practices of three popular internet buzzwords, this research has replied to issues proposed in Introduction, and summarized the reader types of different translations. In this study, the analysis of the "reader's horizon" is the researcher's prediction of reader acceptance according to target language cultural norms. In the future, researcher will introduce more international reader's questionnaires and corpora to further verify the acceptance of different translation versions. Due to the cultural differences, intercultural communication is fraught with obstacles. The translation of internet buzzwords cannot achieve a perfect fusion of the three horizons. This study finds that among the six translation versions of the three cases, the horizon types are different. During the translation, translator plays a mediator between cultural transmission and reader's acceptance. Readers can choose an appropriate translation version based on their usage scenarios and its level of acceptance.

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