

# Translation Strategies of Network Buzzwords in 2023 from the Perspective of High-low Context Culture

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**Abstract:** With the development of the Internet in the ascendance, network buzzwords reflect people's cultural entertainment and social habits. With the continuous development of science and technology as well as the update of people's ideas, language is also constantly evolving. Network buzzwords can reflect the characteristics of The Times and have unique cultural marks. Therefore, the study of network buzzwords is also highly valued by researchers, and the translation of network buzzwords is conducive to promoting cross-cultural communication between China and foreign countries. Based on the perspective of high and low context culture, this paper selects some Chinese network buzzwords in 2023 and analyzes their Chinese-English translation strategies, so as to provide references for the Chinese-English translation of network buzzwords.

**Keywords:** High-Low Context; Network Buzzwords; Chinese-English Translation

## 1. Introduction

The concept of high-context culture was first proposed by American anthropologist Edward T. Hall, whose purpose is to explain the diversity of world cultures according to the differences between high and low contexts. Hall divides different cultures into high-context culture and low-context culture according to the mainstream communication modes in cultures [1].

In these two kinds of cultures, context and language play different roles in communication. Context culture, that is, the social and cultural background in which the speaker lives, is often the synthesis of all social ideology knowledge structures accumulated by a society, national customs and thinking sets, that is, the long-established common status of a nation in

human linguistic communication. Ideological background culture and knowledge structure that can be understood through prediction and speculation in the process of language communication [2]. Cross-cultural communication is an indispensable part of the current world's common development, and is of great significance to interpersonal communication and international cooperation[3]. Language is not only the carrier of culture, but also an important means of cross-cultural communication.

Hall takes Chinese culture and American culture as typical examples of high-context culture and low-context culture respectively, so exploring the English translation strategy of Chinese network buzzwords has practical significance for cross-cultural communication.

## 2. The Communicative Differences Between High and Low Context Cultures

### 2.1 Differences in Expression

High-context culture is formed by people in a long-term fixed communication environment. For example, people living in China, Africa, Latin America and other regions live in a very fixed region. With the development of society, social life is gradually changing, but the speed of such change is relatively slow and the range is small[4]. People living in this culture have long-term and stable communication with each other, so they have the same way of understanding the living environment, and this same way of understanding allows them to form mutually recognized communicative behavior patterns. In other words, the communication parties have little dependence on the language itself when exchanging information, and they can understand each other's meaning without clearly expressing specific information. High-context culture mainly relies on context to

transmit information, so both parties have a pre-set information transmission procedure before communication, such as common customs, values and social axioms. In contrast, low-context culture mainly relies on information coding to transmit information and attaches great importance to the logic of language expression in communication, while the degree of dependence on context is very low. Therefore, people in low-context culture regard devious expression modes as disrespect to communication itself, and different contexts decide that they adopt different expression modes in cultural communication. People in low-context culture like to express their thoughts and opinions directly and frankly, and are not good at guessing each other's ideas according to the context, while people in high-context culture prefer indirect and obscure ways of expression when communicating, and pay more attention to each other's feelings and feelings, so as to avoid embarrassment caused by direct communication. Due to the long-term influence of different regions and cultural environments, different countries and regions gradually form their own unique cultural value systems and values, thus forming the differences in belief culture and ideology between countries and nations. Such differences will lead to bias or misinterpretation in the encoding and decoding of transmitted information in the process of communication. Due to the lack of common cultural foundation, it is difficult for both receivers to form a common cultural cognition, that is, cultural resonance. If the cultural cognition of both sides is insufficient, cultural conflicts will easily occur and the effect of cultural communication will be affected. So in translation, how to find aesthetic commonality is the key to break through cultural boundaries.

## **2.2 Differences in the Attribution of Communicative Responsibility**

Western culture is deeply influenced by Greek philosophy, and deductive argumentation is deeply rooted in people's hearts, so it pays attention to oral hearing; Eastern philosophies, on the other hand, tend to use indirect reasoning and vague statements. Context is an important part of communication for them, so they tend to use non-verbal forms[5] In a high-context culture, because most of the communicative information is given to the context or internalized by the communicative parties

themselves, and less relies on language to encode information, the responsibility of the speaker in communication is less. He does not need to express his own views completely and in detail, so that the listener can understand the overtones. However, for the listener, due to the speaker's subtle and obscure way of expression, he needs to speculate and analyze the comprehensive information inside and outside the speech according to the communicative context. Therefore, in the high-context culture, the listener shoulders more communicative responsibilities[6], and he must have strong reasoning and logic ability to understand the speaker's intention.

In low-context culture, communication information needs to be expressed by accurate and detailed encoded information, so speakers bear more responsibilities for the smooth progress of communication. They need to have strong language expression ability to express the meaning viewpoint in the language information, otherwise listeners will not understand or misunderstand the real intention of the speaker. For the listener, he wants the speaker to give a comprehensive and detailed expression in order to have an accurate understanding of the communicative information. Therefore, in low-context culture, it is mainly the speaker who decides whether the communication can proceed smoothly. Of course, realistic communication is relative to the identity of the speaker and the listener, and there is neither pure speaker nor complete listener. In short, only through direct and clear expression can the communication go on.

Due to the influence of comprehensive factors in the historical process, different countries and nations also show a kind of solidified comprehensive thinking. Under the western low-context cultural environment, Westerners have formed an intuitive linear analytical thinking mode, emphasizing logic and individualism values that make individuals center and pay attention to expression. However, in the high-context cultural environment of Orientals, implicit spiral thinking mode is formed, with awareness and tactfully, emphasizing image, mostly taking the group as the core, and emphasizing collective interests. In most cases, individuals will try to avoid conflicts with collective ideas due to holding certain beliefs and attitudes alone. Therefore, in cross-cultural communication, image thinking of

high-context culture is formed. The implicit expression nature conflicts with the Westerners' rational way of thinking and the intuitive expression nature, resulting in communication barriers and barriers in cross-cultural communication [7]. How to bridge such cultural barriers and overcome the heterogeneity of different cultural contexts is the key to good translation.

### 3. Analysis of Translation Strategies of Network Buzzwords from the Perspective of High-low Context Culture

#### 3.1 The Concept and Characteristics of Network Buzzwords

Buzzwords are a kind of lexical phenomenon. From the point of view of research, it is a classification study of vocabulary. The words used are generally easy to understand and catchy. As a lexical phenomenon, it reflects the issues and things that people are generally concerned about in a country or a region in a period, and different buzzwords in different periods, while different buzzwords, as a sensitive nerve in the society, reflect social changes [8]. Network buzzwords keep up with social hot spots, can vividly express the characteristics of the times, and have the basic characteristics of concise and colloquial language spreading widely.

The essential characteristic of buzzwords is popularity, so popularity is the essential attribute of buzzwords. Timeliness is the first meaning of popularity. In other words, buzzwords have a process from popularity to unpopularity. The second meaning of entering the popularity of general words is stage. Generally speaking, the popularity process of buzzwords is relatively short.

When buzzwords are used for a period of time, they will fade out of public view; If not, when this level of popularity reaches a certain degree of universality, for example, when the regional buzzwords of Beijing and Shanghai have been quite common in Beijing and Shanghai district, and gradually lose their freshness, and the frequency of use decreases correspondingly, the buzzwords will enter the regional dialect and become a common word in the local dialect, although they are derived from buzzwords. The third character of popularity is high-frequency. Popular words are used more frequently than ordinary words and are used by the masses for a period of time. The fourth character of

popularity is newness. Popular words are necessarily new words and phrases, or new words and phrases are the basis of popular words.

#### 3.2 Analysis of English Translation Strategies of Chinese Network Buzzwords

The communication between high-context countries and low-context countries often has differences in understanding due to differences in cultural background and mode of thinking, which sometimes even hinders the normal communication. As a cross-cultural communication activity, translation plays an important role and occupies a position in the communication between two different languages [9]. The Internet buzzwords of the year 2023 selected in this paper are the top ten Internet buzzwords of the year 2023 selected by Language Weekly and the English translation strategy will be analyzed from the perspective of high and low context culture.

Network buzzwords are not only a popular expression of language symbols, but also a barometer of the national mentality of social development to a certain extent. They reflect all aspects of social development, record the melody and sound of the development of The Times, and also reflect the expression of social groups' current life attitude, emotion and value pursuit[10].

##### 3.2.1 Literal translation

Literal translation means that under the premise of conforming to the linguistic background of the target language, it should not only retain the main sentence structure and sentence pattern of the original text, but also keep the content and style of the original text and the target text consistent. However, literal translation is not a word-by-word hard translation or dead translation. Literal translation can also reasonably adjust the expression form or change the syntactic structure order of the original text when necessary according to the needs of the target language, so that the translation can fully or basically express the meaning of the original text. For example:

[ST]: i 人/e 人

[TT]: introverts/extroverts

In 2023, a test called MBTI caught fire among young people, replacing zodiac signs as the most popular social hashtag. The MBTI test, or Miles Briggs Personality Type Index, is a personality assessment tool developed by American Briggs

mother and daughter based on the personality classification theory of Swiss psychologist Carl Jung, and is now used by enterprises to assess the personality characteristics and development types of employees. “i 人” and “e 人” come from two types of tendencies in the MBTI that represent the direction of attention: Introversion and Extroversion. “i” refers to a person who loses energy socially and is generally introverted, while “e” refers to a person who gains energy socially and is generally extroverted. Given that this test comes from countries with low context cultures, so they can be literally translated as “introverts” and “extroverts”.

### 3.2.2 Free translation

Free translation refers to the necessity to abandon or change the form or rhetoric of the original text when the literal translation cannot accurately convey the content and rhetoric style of the original text. Under the premise of keeping the content of the original text faithful, the translation is carried out according to the language expression habits and styles of the target language readers. Many emerging buzzwords on the Internet are usually created by people themselves. For adapted English translation of these words, it is often difficult to find words in the target language whose formal expression or meaning is completely equivalent. Therefore, in translation, the translator should not only use literal translation to preserve the literal meaning of the original text, but should use free translation to replace the image in the original text with the image familiar to the target language readers, so as to facilitate readers' understanding. For example:

[ST]: X 门

[TT]: An aficionado of ...

It is worth noting that the noun + 门, which originated from the Watergate scandal in the 1970s, previously had another meaning: it specifically referred to sensational events, mostly scandals, and unlike this, “X 门” refers to a group of people who gather into a virtual camp out of their extraordinary love for something, which has been mostly used in the inner circle of subcultures before. What really makes “X 门” become a hot word on the Internet is the “麦门”, (which means someone extremely like to eat McDonald), spontaneously formed by the lovers of a well-known restaurant chain brand. “X 门” is no longer limited to people and food, such as

“cat 门” and “mouse 门” also have a certain number of fans on the Internet.

It is too formal to translate it into “follower” or “disciple” and other words. Moreover, considering the cultural beliefs of the United Kingdom and the United States, the translation should be distinguished from the cultural concepts related to religious beliefs. Culture, its significance lies in the connection between translation studies and politics, economy and society. It should be fully connected with ideology and consciousness, so that translation studies can become a comprehensive and comprehensive study of multiple disciplines, levels and angles in the true sense [11]. In view of the understanding and acceptance degree of readers in low-context culture, translation studies should be translated as “an aficionado of...” To clarify the actual meaning of the word to avoid ambiguity.

### 3.2.3 Amplification

Amplification refers to add to the translation words that are omitted from the original text or that are absent from the original text but express their meaning. Many network buzzwords are related to local hot topics. When translating these words, it is difficult to find appropriate words in the target language to express their complete meaning and specific background and cultural information. Therefore, in the process of translation, translators must fully consider the environmental differences at home and abroad and the reading psychology of readers in different countries under low-context culture, and carry out corresponding supplementary translation on the cultural background knowledge of the materials that readers are not familiar with, so as to meet the reading needs of readers and achieve the purpose of communication. For example:

[ST]: 多巴胺...

[TT]: A style that causes a person to release dopamine

“多巴胺...” is an Internet buzzword that became popular in the summer of 2023, originating from “多巴胺穿搭”, which refers to the use of highly saturated colors to show bright and bright clothing styles. Dopamine is a kind of neurotransmitter, its characteristics are: when its secretion is strong, people will feel happy and satisfied. “多巴胺穿搭” is through bright color matching, stimulate the visual senses, and make people feel happy and confident. Later,

dopamine manicure, dopamine hairstyle, dopamine literature, dopamine music and other statements dopamine. It is interesting in that it combines scientific terminology with fashionable life, directing attention to positive emotions and positive things, in order to combat anxiety and dark emotions.

A reader in a high-context culture who has relevant background information will immediately understand the word, but a reader in a low-context culture will not understand the implicit message and be confused if translate it into “dopamine...” and may even mistake the word for a science-related term. Therefore, when translating, the translator should fully take into account the implicit information behind the original text. “Style” (especially the style on clothing) indicates that the buzzword refers to a style that can make people release dopamine, and the bright and gorgeous visual impact will make people excited and release dopamine. Increasing the amount of information is easier for the target language readers to understand.

#### 4. Conclusion

Cross-cultural communication is closely connected with all aspects of human life, and it is an inevitable communication activity between individual nations and countries. Chinese network buzzwords reflect the cultural characteristics of China's times, show the innovation of national language and people's active and vivid way of thinking, and play an important role in cross-cultural communication. Therefore, a good Chinese-English translation of Chinese network buzzwords is one of the important channels for the dissemination of Chinese culture. When translating Chinese network buzzwords, it is necessary to combine the high-low context cultural theory, fully consider the similarities and differences between the cultural background of the source language and the target language, as well as the way of thinking, and choose a reasonable translation strategy to promote the effective communication of Chinese network buzzwords in cross-cultural

communication.

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