

Research on the English Translation of Internet Buzzwords: A Scoping Review Approach

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Abstract: This study employs a scoping review methodology to explore research on the English translation of Internet buzzwords, focusing on Chinese journals published in the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI). By analyzing the retrieved literature, this paper systematically examines the theoretical foundations, research contents, contextual backgrounds, and methodologies used in current studies. It identifies existing research gaps and provides recommendations for future investigations. An analysis of 106 articles reveals that while numerous theoretical resources are engaged within this field, there is a weak correlation between theory and empirical research, with some empirical studies lacking a robust theoretical foundation. The research content tends to be relatively narrow, primarily concentrating on the English translation of Internet buzzwords themselves, and methodological approaches have been predominantly qualitative. Based on these findings, suggestions are proposed to guide subsequent research.

Keywords: Internet Buzzwords; English Translation; Scoping Review

1. Introduction

In the context of the digital age, Internet buzzwords have emerged in a flood, profoundly revealing the linguistic characteristics and cultural trends of contemporary society, while also becoming an indispensable part of social culture. In recent years, studies on the English translation of Internet buzzwords have been conducted across multiple dimensions, including skopos theory^[1], memetics^[2], intercultural communication theory^[3], Peter Newmark's translation theory^[4], John Catford's theory of translation shifts^[5], Eugene Nida's theory of functional equivalence^[6], translation shift theory, and cognitive linguistics perspectives^[7]. Given this diversity, a systematic study of the English translation of Internet buzzwords is particularly crucial.

This research conducts a comprehensive retrieval and analysis of relevant literature on the English translation of Internet buzzwords, aiming to provide a thorough review and summary of existing studies from the perspectives of theoretical foundations, research scopes, and methodologies. This overview intends to offer readers a clear understanding of the current state of research while identifying existing gaps. Additionally, this study proposes constructive suggestions for potential future research directions, with the aim of advancing the field further. Through such systematic investigation, we aspire to better understand the complex mechanisms underlying the English translation of Internet buzzwords and to facilitate effective communication between different cultures.

2. Data Retrieval and Analysis

This study employs a scoping review methodology (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005), which involves collecting and synthesizing literature on a specific topic based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. This approach aims to summarize the scope, extent, and nature of current research in this area and provide recommendations for future studies^[8]. Initially, the keyword search focused on "Internet buzzwords" and "English translation", targeting relevant Chinese journal articles indexed in the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI). The time frame for the search was set from 2014 to the present, yielding a total of 107 journal articles. After excluding irrelevant papers, 106 articles were retained for analysis.

Following the identification of the target literature, these 106 papers were systematically coded. The coding dimensions included basic paper information (title, author(s), publication journal, journal source,

publication year, language of writing), theoretical foundations, research content, and methodologies (type of study, research duration, tools used, data analysis methods). Upon completion of the coding process, the obtained information was further refined and categorized to distill key insights and patterns.

3. Research Findings

3.1. Overall Development Trends

The following Figure 1 illustrates the trend of the number of publications on the English translation of Internet buzzwords from 2014 to 2024.



Figure 1: Trends of the publications on the English translation of Internet buzzwords from 2014 to 2024

Based on a detailed analysis of existing literature, it can be argued that the research process on the English translation of Internet buzzwords can be broadly divided into three distinct phases.

Firstly, from 2014 to 2018, research in this field demonstrated a fluctuating yet overall upward trend. During this period, scholars gradually recognized the uniqueness of Internet buzzwords and their importance in intercultural communication, sparking significant interest and discussion on the topic. Despite some fluctuations, there was an overall increase in both the quantity and depth of research.

Notably, 2018 saw a peak in research activity, with up to 19 articles published that year alone. This not only marked the recognition of Internet buzzword translation as a legitimate and independent area of study but also reflected the academic community's heightened focus on understanding how to accurately and effectively translate these dynamic linguistic phenomena.

However, from 2018 to 2021, there was a noticeable decline in the number of studies. This reduction could be attributed to a natural adjustment phase following initial explorations or possibly due to researchers shifting their focus to emerging areas. By 2021, research on the English translation of Internet buzzwords had stabilized, indicating that core issues within the field had been comprehensively addressed. Newer studies began concentrating more on refining specific aspects or applying innovative methods and technologies to deepen our understanding of the subject matter.

In conclusion, through a systematic review of these three phases, we can clearly trace the developmental trajectory of research on the English translation of Internet buzzwords. This phased observation not only aids in understanding the historical development of the field but also provides valuable direction for future academic inquiry. Moreover, it underscores the necessity for researchers to continually monitor the impact of sociocultural changes on language expression, ensuring that theoretical frameworks and methodologies are updated to maintain the effectiveness and forward-looking nature of research outcomes.

3.2. Theoretical Foundations

After conducting an exhaustive analysis of 106 journal articles, it was found that 35 of these did not cite or discuss any theoretical frameworks, indicating that a portion of the research relies more heavily on descriptive analysis or case studies. In contrast, the remaining 71 articles engaged with up to 14 different theoretical perspectives, as detailed below:

1) Newmark's Translation Theory (1 article), which emphasizes the influence of text types on translation strategies; 2) Variation Theory (1 article), focusing on language changes and their impact on translation; 3) High-Context and Low-Context Culture Theory (2 articles), used to explore characteristics of information transmission across different cultural backgrounds; 4) Memetics (13 articles), concentrating on mechanisms of replication and diffusion in cultural transmission; 5) Intercultural Communication Theory (9 articles), aiming at facilitating effective communication between cultures; 6) Cognitive Linguistics (4 articles), interpreting linguistic phenomena from a cognitive perspective; 7) Eco-Translation Studies (20 articles), emerging as one of the most popular research perspectives, especially concentrated between 2016 and 2019, though its popularity has waned in recent years; 8) Nida's Functional Equivalence Theory (6 articles), pursuing functional consistency between source and target texts; 9) Semantics (1 article), centering on the transfer of word meanings; 10) Skopos Theory (9 articles), determining translation strategies based on the purpose of translation; 11) Translator Subjectivity Theory (1 article), exploring the role and influence of translators during the translation process; 12) Adaptation Theory (1 article), studying the adaptability of language use; 13) Relevance Translation Theory (2 articles), investigating the translation process based on relevance theory; 14) Sociolinguistics (1 article), examining the influence of social factors on language use.

Notably, among these theories, those related to Eco-Translation Studies had the highest number of articles, reaching 20, primarily published between 2016 and 2019. During this period, Eco-Translation Studies provided new insights for the English translation of internet buzzwords due to its unique perspective and methodologies. However, over time, especially after 2020, the enthusiasm for Eco-Translation Studies in this field has gradually diminished, possibly indicating that the application of this theory has reached a certain level of saturation within academia, or researchers are beginning to shift towards other more innovative theoretical frameworks.

In summary, through the systematic review of these articles, we can clearly observe the application of various theories in the study of translating internet buzzwords into English. This not only aids in understanding the current research focuses and development trends but also provides suggestions for future research directions.

3.3. Research Contents

Through a systematic organization and analysis of existing literature, it is clear that studies on the English translation of Chinese internet buzzwords primarily focus on five key areas:

Firstly, research on the English translation of internet buzzwords under theoretical guidance. This type of study typically bases itself on specific translation theories such as Eco-Translation Studies, Skopos Theory, or Nida's Functional Equivalence Theory to explore their applications in translating internet buzzwords. Such an approach not only aids in verifying the effectiveness of various theories but also provides a solid theoretical foundation for subsequent research.

Secondly, discussions on the English translations of specific online buzzwords in different contexts. This category of research zeroes in on the translation treatment of particular internet buzzwords terms or buzzwords across diverse cultural backgrounds and contexts. By comparing translation variations of the same term in multiple scenarios, researchers can uncover issues related to cultural adaptability and flexibility during language conversion, which is crucial for enhancing the efficacy of intercultural communication.

Thirdly, detailed exploration of translation strategies for internet buzzwords. These studies aim to develop and evaluate effective translation strategies specifically tailored for internet buzzwords. Given the unique nature of internet buzzwords—including its rapid evolution, heavy reliance on context, and rich cultural connotations—formulating appropriate translation strategies is particularly critical. Such research often involves case studies, proposing and testing different translation methods to identify optimal solutions.

Fourthly, in-depth analysis of the characteristics of internet buzzwords. To better understand and translate internet buzzwords, numerous studies focus on meticulously analyzing its features, including but not limited to linguistic style, sociocultural background, and mechanisms of dissemination. A deeper understanding of these characteristics helps more accurately grasp the essence of internet buzzwords, thereby providing guidance for translation practices.

Lastly, comprehensive reviews of internet buzzwords research. Finally, a significant portion of research is dedicated to comprehensively reviewing and summarizing existing findings in the field of

internet buzzwords. These review articles not only outline current research advancements but also highlight existing deficiencies and suggest directions for future research.

Overall, current research on the English translation of Chinese internet buzzwords has become relatively comprehensive, covering aspects from theoretical foundations to practical applications. However, there remains a noticeable deficiency in comparative studies between different translation methodologies. Although some research has begun to address this area, there is still considerable room for improvement in terms of depth and breadth compared to other facets of study.

3.4. Research Methods

Firstly, regarding the selection of research method types, studies on the English translation of internet buzzwords tend to favor qualitative research methods. This approach emphasizes in-depth and detailed descriptions and explanations of the meanings of internet buzzwords and their practices in translating from Chinese to English. Through case analysis and textual interpretation, researchers are able to uncover cultural backgrounds, linguistic features, and social impact factors involved in the translation process. However, it is noteworthy that while qualitative research provides rich perspectives for understanding internet buzzwords, its application remains relatively singular and lacks effective integration with other research methodologies.

Secondly, concerning the choice of sample size, because qualitative research focuses on depth rather than breadth, it typically selects a small number of representative cases as subjects of study. Although this approach facilitates an in-depth exploration of the meanings behind individual cases, it may also limit the generalizability and representativeness of the research findings. To address this limitation, future research might consider expanding the sample size and incorporating quantitative methods to enhance the universality of conclusions.

Furthermore, in terms of research tools, current studies predominantly rely on textual analysis and case studies, seldom employing direct data collection methods such as surveys or interviews. While these traditional qualitative research tools have shown good applicability in specific contexts, their reliability and validity need further verification. Especially for data sources with high subjectivity, ensuring their objectivity and reliability remains an urgent issue to be addressed.

In summary, although current research methods on the English translation of Chinese internet buzzwords mainly adopt qualitative approaches and play a significant role in revealing deeper meanings, their singularity also imposes certain limitations. To further improve research quality, future studies should, while maintaining the advantages of qualitative research, appropriately introduce quantitative research methods, optimize research designs, and refine tool selections to achieve more scientifically rigorous research outcomes. Additionally, greater emphasis on the reliability and validity of research tools will help enhance the credibility and practicality of research conclusions. This not only deepens our understanding of internet buzzwords and its translation but also supports cross-cultural communication.

4. Discussion and Future Prospects

4.1. Theoretical Foundations

Firstly, with the evolution of theories, future research could leverage emerging theories to provide more scientific and systematic guidance for the English translation of internet buzzwords. For instance, recent advancements in cognitive linguistics and eco-translation studies may offer new perspectives and solutions to address issues encountered in current translation practices. By incorporating these novel theories, not only can the effectiveness of existing translation strategies be enhanced, but researchers can also better cope with the unique variability and complexity associated with internet buzzwords.

Secondly, while emphasizing theoretical innovation, it is equally important to develop new theories during the process of translation practice. Theory and practice are complementary; ideally, they should progress together. Specifically, through in-depth analysis and reflection on specific cases within actual translation projects, universally applicable principles and methods can be distilled, which can then evolve into new theoretical models. This approach ensures the practicality and operational feasibility of theories, while also promoting continuous improvement in the quality of translation practices.

Moreover, to facilitate the coordinated development of theory and practice, establishing an interdisciplinary collaboration platform is particularly crucial. Such a platform could bring together

experts from diverse fields, including but not limited to translation scholars, linguists, computer scientists, and sociologists, to collectively discuss how to apply the latest research findings to practical translation work. Feedback from practice can then be used to further refine and improve relevant theories.

In conclusion, although significant progress has been made in the study of translating Chinese internet buzzwords into English, there remains substantial room for development. By actively absorbing and applying emerging theories, while simultaneously focusing on developing new theories from practice, we can achieve a positive interaction between theory and practice, driving continuous advancement in this field.

4.2. Research Contents

Based on previous studies, it can be observed that current research on internet buzzwords mainly focuses on translation practices themselves and related theoretical discussions. However, with the rapid advancement of technology, particularly the widespread application of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies in translation, future research directions are expected to expand into multidimensional analyses that include translation technologies. Several areas warrant further exploration:

Firstly, considering the increasing use of automated tools and technologies in current translation practices, future research could focus on comparative analyses between different translation technologies. For example, by comparing the effectiveness and efficiency of advanced AI translation tools like ChatGPT with traditional human translation, researchers can comprehensively evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of various technological approaches. Such studies not only help understand how new technologies impact translation quality and accuracy but also provide translators with evidence-based guidance on selecting appropriate tools.

Secondly, when comparing translation technologies, particular attention should be paid to the differential analysis of translated content. This includes, but is not limited to, word choice, sentence structure, and cultural adaptability. By meticulously comparing results from translating the same piece of internet buzzwords using different technologies, researchers can identify unique strengths and potential limitations of each approach. Additionally, this analysis helps uncover the most suitable translation strategies for specific contexts, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication.

Furthermore, to ensure the scientific rigor and reliability of research findings, it is essential to carefully design the evaluation criteria and indicator systems used. For instance, a comprehensive assessment framework incorporating multiple dimensions, such as accuracy, fluency, and cultural adaptability, which can systematically measure the performance of different translation technologies. Considering the diversity of languages and cultures, it is advisable to repeat experiments in various contexts to verify the universality and stability of the results.

Lastly, another crucial approach to advancing this field involves promoting close integration between theory and practice. Beyond conducting technology comparison studies under laboratory conditions, these technologies should also be tested in real-world application scenarios. For example, representative cases of internet buzzwords could be selected and translated using both AI tools and human translators, with target audiences invited to participate in evaluations. Such empirical studies not only provide valuable data support for academia but also guide industry practices, thereby improving overall translation standards.

In summary, through systematic comparisons of different translation technologies (e.g., ChatGPT vs. human translation) and in-depth analyses based on specific translation content, we can enrich our understanding of translation technologies and offer new perspectives for optimizing translation processes.

4.3. Research Methods

Currently, studies on the English translation of internet buzzwords predominantly rely on qualitative research methods. Future research could consider adopting a mixed-methods approach that integrates both quantitative and qualitative research in an organic manner. Specifically, this can be achieved by combining quantitative surveys with qualitative in-depth analyses to enhance the scientific rigor and rationality of translation studies. Below is a detailed explanation of this approach:

Firstly, when designing research, quantitative surveys can be introduced as one of the data collection tools. Through carefully designed questionnaires, it is possible to broadly gather information on the

perceptions, acceptance, and preferences of target audiences regarding specific internet buzzwords terms and their translated versions. This large-scale data collection not only helps improve the typicality of research findings but also provides a solid foundation for subsequent statistical analysis.

Moreover, to ensure the effective implementation of mixed-methods research, it is essential to strictly adhere to the principles and operational guidelines of scientific research. This includes, but is not limited to: clearly defining research questions and hypotheses, reasonably selecting samples and ensuring their representativeness, scientifically designing questionnaires to guarantee data validity and reliability, and employing appropriate analytical methods to comprehensively interpret the collected data. Additionally, given the diversity of languages and cultures, it is advisable to repeat experiments in different contexts to verify the universality and stability of the results.

Lastly, another crucial approach to advancing this field involves promoting close integration between theory and practice. Besides conducting mixed-methods research under laboratory conditions, these methods should also be tested in real-world application scenarios. For example, representative cases of internet buzzwords could be selected, and different translation strategies could be applied, with target audiences invited to participate in evaluations. Such empirical studies not only provide valuable data support for academia but also guide industry practices, thereby enhancing overall translation standards.

In summary, by integrating quantitative surveys with qualitative in-depth analyses, it is possible to compensate for the limitations of single research methods while significantly enhancing the scientific rigor and persuasiveness of research outcomes. This will contribute to building a more comprehensive, accurate, and adaptable translation service system, which is better suited to address the complexities of translating internet buzzwords.

5. Conclusion

This study employed the scoping review method to systematically search and analyze research papers concerning the English translation of internet buzzwords from all Chinese-language journals available in the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) database. By systematically reviewing and summarizing the theoretical foundations, research content, and methodologies of the retrieved literature, this paper not only reveals the main findings of existing studies but also discusses the limitations within current research. Furthermore, it proposes directions and suggestions for future research. Through this scoping review, the paper aims to provide readers with a systematic presentation of the current research status and developmental trends regarding the English translation of internet buzzwords, thereby offering valuable references and guidance for subsequent studies. It is hoped that this research will provide beneficial assistance to scholars and practitioners in related fields, promoting the advancement of internet buzzwords translation studies to a higher level.

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