

МІЖКУЛЬТУРНА КОМУНІКАЦІЯ

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THE ETHNIC-CULTURAL AND PRAGMASEMANTIC ASPECTS OF THE ADOPTION OF ENGLISH EPONYMS BY MODERN CHINESE

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The eponym is a personal name in the form of a word or a group of words with their characteristics. It is frequently used in languages but has seldom entered the field as an object of study in contrastive lexicology and intercultural communications. In Chinese loanwords from English, eponyms with their rich cultural and historical implications prove conducive to the molding of signification mapping in borrowings.

Keywords: borrowings, English-Chinese language contacts, personal names, implicational semantics, paths of cross-cultural adaptation.

1. Introductory remarks

What is an eponym? In Greek mythology, mention is made that if God finds someone who has the characteristics of uniqueness, or cruelty and heartlessness, he will change the person's name into a common vocabulary word, so that the person will be remembered or denounced by the later generations forever. This is expressed as 'eponymos' in Greek, which means 'given as a name; giving one's name to something or someone. The English word eponym is derived from this Greek word and its meaning.

However, we may be not familiar with the term and notion of the eponym in Chinese. Not all the dictionaries even included this word. For instance, the *Oxford Advanced Learner's English-Chinese Dictionary* [1], which is often used by the Chinese students, and *Macmillan English-Chinese Dictionary* [2] only refer to the word 'eponymous', which is an adjective meaning that the eponymous character in a story has the same name as the title.

The word 'eponym' first appears in the book *An Advanced Course of English Lexicology* compiled by Wang Rongpei in 2002 [3]. Wang Rongpei thinks the Eponym to be significant for the origin of a number of English words. He lists eponyms derived from mainly names of scholars in natural sciences alongside of place names (toponyms) as examples of proper names singled out in Chinese lexicology.

The eponym is almost neglected in Chinese, while studies on eponyms abroad seem very common on the material of English. At the same time a number of such words are involve in the lexical contacts between the two languages and enter Chinese as a target language of the borrowing process.

Many experts and scholars are interested in this phenomenon of word-formation. The direction of their studies goes mainly towards the origins as well as the historical and cultural stories behind eponyms.

As we know, personal names, place names and brand names all belong to the proper names in English, so there appears the term eponymy, which is the phenomenon where a proper name develops into a general sense built onto its origin meaning or associations. As a separate sphere of onomasiology eponyms are quite unique naming tools in the lexicon. Each eponym would have its own literal or enriched path of cross-language adaptation.

2. English eponyms in Chinese from a cultural perspective

We may be curious about many exotic words used every day in our life: what their original meanings are, where they come from and what is behind them. A large number of these words are eponyms.

There are various sources for eponymy. If we try to explore the origin of an eponym, we will find it an interesting phenomenon. The original meanings of most eponyms have been forgotten, while their new sense comes to be used instead and stored in the speaker's mental lexicon.

In Chinese, a lot of eponyms derive from the individual names form the west. With the development of economy and society, some place names and brand names evolve into common words too.

2.1 Personal names

2.1.1 Eponyms from imaginary people in literature and religion

The eponym from an imaginary being is greatly influence by literature and religion in culture. The names of gods, goddesses, characters and protagonists in mythologies, novels, poems, dramas, and so on often possess unique properties and are usually in general use. In literature, some characters from novels, dramas, plays, poems, or movies and cartoons, etc., are created with a certain implicational meaning ascribed by the author deemed to be possessed by some unique personalities. So there are certain cultural connotations under these names. A significant source of eponymy is also in the Bible.

1. **Frankenstein** 弗兰肯斯坦 (fū lán kěn sī tǎn, modified phonetic transliteration) is the name of *Baron Frankenstein* in the novel *Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus* (1818) by the English novelist Mary Wollstonecraft Shelly (1791-1851). Nowadays, the name Frankenstein is often referred to the monster rather than the person Baron Frankenstein in Chinese, especially in the literary works.

Some English eponyms in Chinese originate from cartoon characters. Mickey Mouse (米老鼠 Mǐ lǎoshǔ), an expression for something trivial and trite, derives from the name of the cartoon *Mickey Mouse*, created by the American film producer Walt Disney : It's the Mickey Mouse Clubhouse! 这是米奇妙妙屋. The same implication is noticeable in this eponym when it is used attributively in English: Mickey Mouse money.

It is beyond doubt that religion, closely related to the lifestyle and values cherished by a given community, is a very important element of culture-specific considerations.

Unsurprisingly, religious concepts have a great bearing on changes in the meanings of the lexical items already existing in the target language.

Thus, it is possible that the names of the people related to religion evolve into eponyms, for example, Adam, Eve, Eden, Noah's ark, etc.:

Adam 亚当 (yà dāng, pure phonetic transliteration): Old Testament, in Judeo-Christian mythology; the first man and the husband of Eve and the progenitor of the human race;

Eve 夏娃 (xià wá, pure phonetic transliteration): Eve is a figure in the Book of Genesis in the Hebrew Bible. According to the creation myth of the Abrahamic religions, she was the first woman;

Eden 伊甸园 (yī diàn yuán, you diàn, pure phonetic transliteration): any place of complete bliss and delight and peace;

Noah ark : 诺亚方舟 (nuò yà fāng zhōu, Noah诺亚nuò yà, pure phonetic transliteration; 方舟fāng zhōu – ark, semantic translation) : In the Bible, the ark was a large boat which Noah built in order to save his family and two of every kind of animals from the Flood. 船 in Chinese is a character combining mouth, eight, and vessel. In line with the componential analyzability of the character for Noah 女嫖 its meaningfulness 'boat' is decomposable into 舟 'vessel', 八 'eight', 口 'mouth'; 八+口 sometimes also have a meaning of person and 舟 stands for 'eight people in the boat'.

The above introduced the eponyms from spurious and imaginary persons, the fictional and the mythical. Because an eponym most frequently reveals a certain kind of relationship with the persons, whether real or mythical, the following analysis will introduce eponyms derived from the names of real persons from field to field.

2.1.2 Eponyms from real people in natural sciences

This kind of English eponyms in Chinese derived from the Western scientists and inventors in mathematics, physics, chemistry, medicine, botany and horticulture, architecture, astronomy, aviation, navigation, and so on. For instance:

Watt 瓦特 (wǎ tè, pure phonetic transliteration), the metric unit of power, it was introduced to remember James Watt (1736-1819), Scottish engineer and inventor;

Volt 伏特 (fú tè, pure phonetic transliteration), the metric unit of electric potential, after the name of the Italian physicist Count Alessandro Volta;

Ampere 安培 (ān pé, pure phonetic transliteration), the basic unite of electric current, after the French physicist *Andre Marie Ampere*;

Ohm 欧姆 (ōu mǔ, pure phonetic transliteration), the metric unit of electrical resistance, after the German physicist Georg Simon Ohm;

Farad 法拉第 (fǎ lā dì, modified phonetic transliteration) the metric unit of electric quantity, after the English scientist Michael Faraday;

Newton 牛顿 (niú dùn, modified phonetic transliteration), the metric unite of force, after the British physicist and mathematician Sir Isaac newton, etc.

Medical eponyms have a particular rich tradition in a sense of history. The name of the doctors, surgeons, nurses or even the patients become eponyms to name the disease, organs or some procedures. And they are also transliterated purely phonetically into Chinese from English.

For instance, **Salmonella** 沙门氏菌 (shā mén shì jūn, where shā mén is an instance of pure phonetic transliteration) is the rod-shaped bacteria which can cause typhoid fever and

food poisoning. The American veterinary surgeon Daniel Elmer Salmon (1850-1940) first identified these bacteria.

Florence Nightingale 南丁格尔 (nán dīng gé ěr), is a nurse known for her work during the Crimean War. Now her name sometimes refers to a devoted and efficient nurse in Chinese.

Parkinson's disease / Parkinsonism 帕金森 (pà jīn sēn, pure phonetic transliteration) after the British surgeon James Parkinson.

In architecture, the style of the buildings and even furniture often honors the architect who has designed it. The word **gothic** 哥特 (gē tè, pure phonetic transliteration), characterized by the pointed arches, slender tall pillars and counterbalancing buttresses, is a style of architecture originated in northern France and then spread throughout Europe from the 12th to the 16th centuries. It is to remember a Germanic people, the Goths. Nowadays gothic style of buildings and furniture are quite popular in China, like a new Renaissance in the orient. Interestingly, this eponym is characterized by derivational productivity in the recipient of the language contact: cf. 哥特式 [gē tè shì] {noun}, but also 哥特人(语)的 [gē tè rén (yǔ) de] {adj.} and 哥特式 [gē tè shì] {noun}

From the multitude of examples and some analysis, we conclude that the process of eponymy is a hallowed tradition in science. The eponyms are the highest accolade for the scientists and inventors. Eponyms remind us that many dedicated people work hard to make a great contribution to society. They can be remembered and respected by generations through eponyms. Scientific and technological progress and social economic development exert great influence on the eponyms in natural sciences and substantiate the motivational-pragmatic factors of eponymy.

2.1.3 Eponyms from names of people in daily life and society

The vocabulary is the carrier of society and culture. An eponym from people in social science is affected by politics, history, art, linguistics, literature and so forth in culture. For instance:

Washington 华盛顿 (huá shèng dùn, modified phonetic transliteration), capital of the United States, the name commemorating George Washington (乔治华盛顿 qiáo zhì huá shèng dùn, modified phonetic transliteration), the first president of the USA. Nowadays with the development of the media and internet, the president is the focus of the public. Their speeches and deeds are paid great attention. For instance:

Clinton and Lewinsky, 克林顿 (Clinton kè lín dùn, pure phonetic transliteration) 莱温斯基 (Lewinsky lái wēn sī jī, pure phonetic transliteration), Clinton **and** Lewinsky refers to sexual scandal.

Obama Care 奥巴马医改 (ào bā mǎ yī gǎi, **Obama** 奥巴马 ào bā mǎ pure phonetic transliteration; **Care** 医改 yī gǎi, semantic translation).

Trumpist, 特朗普 (tè lǎng pǔ, modified phonetic transliteration). This eponym also produces a string of derived nominations: 川普 (chuān pǔ pure phonetic transliteration); 支持者 (zhī chí zhě implies a supporter, semantic translation)

Platonic 柏拉图 (bó lā tú, modified phonetic transliteration): This adjectival eponym signifies a spiritual and intellectual relationship between a man and woman in contrast to physical and sexual desire. It was first described by the Greek philosopher Plato

2.2 Eponyms from trade marks

Trade name is a name given by a manufacturer to a widely available product to identify a particular brand. With the development of globalization tendencies, market economy and

commercial society, new products appear quickly and more and more brand names are created on the market. Some of them become popular and are welcomed in our daily life. These brand names are used widely and win out in the popular lexicon.

With the quick development of computer technology, new products and technologies have appeared continuously. **Internet** 因特奈特 (yīn tè nài tè , pure phonetic transliteration) was a name of the American military computer web station. Now it refers to the computer network.

Now when we surf the internet we frequently use the search engine to **google** (谷歌 gǔ gē , pure phonetic transliteration) to acquire some information. The word google is from *Google Inc.* which is a public corporation. Now it can be used as a verb in Chinese.

The restructuring of the original pattern to obtain a shortening, abbreviation or blending is borrowed in the resultant form, respectively,

Wikipedia 维基百科 wéi jī bǎi kē (维基 wéi jī pure, phonetic transliteration by Wiki; 百科 bǎi kē semantic translation of the element –pedia)

KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken) 肯德基 (kěn dé jī, modified phonetic transliteration) and Adidas 阿迪达斯 (ā dí dá sī pure phonetic transliteration)

2.2.1 English eponyms in the Chinese urban skyline

The Chinese urban skyline shows the presence of borrowed eponyms from English. They are the heterograms in the language of the street. Some of them are phonetic loans – McDonald 麦当劳 (mài dāng láo, modified phonetic transliteration), Likewise Nike 耐克 (nài kè, pure phonetic transliteration) from the name of the Greek goddess personifying victory that could be even of pre-Greek origin. Also, cf. Pizzahut 必胜客 (bì shèng kè, modified phonetic transliteration).

Starbucks, the coining of this brand having been originally inspired by the *Moby-Dick* character involved in early coffee trade and service, invokes a mixed strategy of reception in the target language: 星巴克 (xīng bā kè, 星 xīng, lit. a star), semantic translation, which in fact is a curious case of patronymic attraction in the context of language contacts and intercultural communication; 巴克 bā kè bucks, pure phonetic transliteration

Names of international hotel chains with eponyms in their base get expressed in pure (Hilton 希尔顿, xī ěr dùn) or modified (Radisson 丽笙, lì shēng) phonetic transliteration. Presumably, (almost) pure transliteration would be found in names of international companies, e.g. Monsanto (a publicly traded American multinational agrochemical and agricultural biotechnology corporation) 孟山都 (mèng shān dōu). The same would hold true for makes of cars: **Ford** 福特 (fú tè, pure phonetic transliteration); Cadillac 凯迪拉克 (kǎi dí lā kè, pure phonetic transliteration).

The Chinese eponyms integrated from English into the urban setting are a factor of linguistic ecology as well as cross-cultural and even sociolinguistic interactions.

3. Conclusions

Culture obviously appears to greatly influence the semantic development in lexical transformations. Culture, particularly literature and religion, scientific and technological progress, social-economic development, politics and history, arts and especially science, industry and commerce give an enormous external impetus to the formation of eponyms. The latter opens up a bright chapter of contact lexicology still to be described for the pragmatic-semantic repercussions, structural transformations of language means and interacting naming potentials between cultures, peoples and societies.

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**ЕТНОКУЛЬТУРНІ ТА ПРАГМАСЕМАНТИЧНІ АСПЕКТИ
ЗАСВОЄННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКИХ ЕПОНІМІВ
У СУЧАСНІЙ КИТАЙСЬКІЙ МОВІ**

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Вивчено способи передачі англійських епонімів китайською мовою та варіанти адаптації таких проникнень до цільової мови. Особливу увагу звернено на засвоєння компонентів у фенотипній контекстуалізації міжмовного контактування щодо пропріальної лексики для пари різносистемних мов за іншомовного глобалізаційного побутування елементів з мови-джерела, подано приклади багатой графічної адаптації епонімних утворів різноманітної референтності у цільовій мові, випадки їхнього словотвірного, асоціативного та епідигматичного побутування після здійсненого контакту.

Ключові слова: епонім; англійська мова; китайська мова; фонетичне запозичення; семантичне запозичення; стежка міжкультурної адаптації.