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Term Formation Processes and its main features in Chinese language (based on terminology of automotive industry)

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Abstract

Current study is focused on term formation processes and its main features in Chinese language; the sphere of research is a terminological system of automotive industry. This paper concentrates on loanwords in technical terminology and ways of adoption foreign lexis from English as the source language into Chinese language. The complexity of adopting foreign terms roots in the belonging of Chinese language to the radical type of languages; it means that internal conditions of word building have a huge impact on the final form of the term. Factors that make it even more complex are the following: technical backwardness of China and underdeveloped term base of Chinese language. Current study presents a detailed componential analysis that shows the main ways of term formation in Chinese language.

Keywords: Term, term combination, term formation, Chinese language, English language.;

1. Introduction

An onrush of technology in China has created a demand for researchers in Chinese terminology. Technological development is usually followed by strengthening of international connections, organising conferences, exchange of specialists etc., it appropriately creates a demand for high-qualified technical translation. Due to its independent development, modern Chinese language is complicated even on a common lexis level. That is why researching and classification of Chinese terminology has become an important challenge for linguistics. One of the main directions in terminology is term formation processes, term formation focuses on structural patterns of term building. This research allows scientists to understand the meaning of a linguistic unit more accurately and consequently to choose a right translation method. According to the statements listed above, the research of Chinese terminology structure is important for terminology and terminography.

1.2 Materials and methods

Using continuous sampling method we have selected 66 terms from the parallel manuals of automotive industry given on the website of “Great Wall”. We have studied c50 and c30 car models manuals [2]. Theoretical foundation of the study is a number of papers made by V.M. Solntsev, V.G. Burov, A.L. Semenas, I.V. Kochergin, Carsten Mende. These scientists have contributed a lot to lexicology, ways of adoption and terminological studies of Chinese language. According to

the specific character of the research, we used several methods: descriptive research with continuous sampling method, analytic method, the method of contextual analysis, definitional and componential analysis.

2. Discussion

As a radical language, Chinese has several features, such as no flexion, the importance of the word order, weak contradiction between content words and functional words [5]. Due to the long-lasting technical underdevelopment of China, the Chinese language has adopted a big number of terms, most of them are Russian (especially strong adoption was in Soviet time) or English [1]. That is why many narrow terminological systems are mostly represented by loanwords.

Loanwords are the clear mark of how one language influences another one on the lexis level. In terminology the specific units of one language are transferred to another one as well as the concept itself. Most of the world's languages partake this process on the "source language - acceptor language" model. [4].

In the automotive industry, Chinese is an acceptor-language to English. Entering Chinese language foreign lexis is exposed to rearrangement in accordance with internal conditions and regulations of Chinese language system. Foreign loanwords have phonetic elements that Chinese language cannot provide by itself. So, the changes in the loanwords phonetic part are enforced by fixed phonetic rules of Chinese language. Moreover, loanwords are also heavily influenced by Chinese principles of derivation. The structure of a term can be easily changed because of inner settled derivation rules. These requirements in phonetics and derivational structure guarantee that terminological units will be successfully adopted into the Chinese language [4].

As it is mentioned above, English language is considered to be the source language for Chinese in researched terminological system. So, in current study we use the classification of loanwords proposed by Carsten Mende, as he focuses on the role of English lexis in the field of Chinese terminology. [3]. The scientist underlines that adoption of English terms were the most efficient way to nominate new objects and phenomena, which were created in China due to innovative development inside the country [3]. To classify loanwords in Chinese language, Carsten Mende suggests dividing them according to the following principles:

1. Words loaned phonetically

Phonetic loanwords could be understood easily by ear, but their hieroglyphic component signs don't form any sense unity. It means that such words are understandable by reading aloud, but it is impossible to guess the meaning of a word trying to combine the sense of each hieroglyphic component together. For example a word 幽默 yōumò «humor» has a similar sounding with English word «humor», the sense can be easily guessed by ear, however hieroglyphic signs that form a word have following meanings: 幽 yōu «dark, dim» and 默 mò «silent». Relying on the meaning of hieroglyphs-morphemes, it is impossible to derive the semantic meaning of the term.

2. Words loaned semantically

Words and terms of this group have nothing in common in phonetics with the source of loaning, but the combination of each component-hieroglyph sense forms the sense of the whole word. For example, the word 电话 diànhuà «telephone» consists of two hieroglyphic signs that define the sense of the word: 电 diàn «electricity» and 话 huà «speech». The combination of components senses gives the following conjunction «electric speech», which is very close to the meaning of the word «telephone» a device that uses electric currency to transfer a human's speech.

3. Mixed type

A term, a terminological combination or a lexical item in this group are made by the intermixture of two or more types of term formation. For example a word 酒吧 jiǔbā «bar» consists of

hieroglyphic signs 酒 jiǔ «alcohol», that character has Chinese original meaning, while character 吧 bā is loaned sense from English and means «bar».

4. Words loaned without changing

Words of this group could be understood both by reading and by ear. Loanwords of the fourth group save their natural form and sounding, it means that in Chinese they are written with use of the Latin alphabet and sound as they did in the donor language. For example: E-mail, X-RAY, T-shirt. Carsten Mende notices, that this type of loanwords could be often met in spoken Chinese [3].

3. Results

According to the results of the research, one of the selected 66 terms is loaned phonetically. A word «radar» 雷达 léidá consists of the following characters:

雷 léi «thunder» + 达 dá «arrive»

None of these lexical items has something in common with the meaning of the word «radar», this allows us to place it into the first group. It is an important note that the sound [r] does not exist in Chinese language and often being substituted with [l], this may explain the usage of the lexical item 雷 léi «thunder».

Mixed type group also has 1 term: Bluetooth control 蓝牙控制 lán yá kòngzhì, which could be divided into 3 hieroglyphic signs:

蓝 lán «blue» + 牙 yá «tooth» + 控制 kòngzhì «control»

It is seen that the word 蓝牙 lán yá «bluetooth» is adopted literally, like «blue tooth». A word 控制 kòngzhì in Chinese means ‘control’. An intermixture of these two components in Bluetooth control 蓝牙控制 lán yá kòngzhì is a mark of the mixed type.

In the group where words are loaned without changing there are 4 abbreviations, such as: GPS, MP5, ABS, EBD. These four words are represented in manuals without any sort of annotation or translation. We could also conclude that words loaned without changing mostly include abbreviations, as they are regarded as international lexical units.

The results above show that phonetical type, mixed type, and words loaned without changing are not productive when it comes to loaning words, it could be explained, terms of this 3 groups could hardly be exposed to internal rules of Chinese language.

A group of the words that loaned semantically has 60 terms and it is the biggest number of terms in a single group. The basic principle of term formation of semantic group resides in the meanings of morphemes that form a terminological unit. In this study there are 12 terms described, to show the special features of term formation of this group their componential analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table1. Componential analysis of the words loaned semantically.

| S No. | English | Chinese | Morphological structure |
|-------|---------------------------------|--|--|
| 1 | instrumental pannel | 组合仪表 zǔhé yíbiǎo 组合 zǔhé «combination» 仪表 yíbiǎo «instruments» | A combination of instruments |
| 2 | tyre pressure monitoring system | 轮胎压力监测系统 lúntāi yālì jiāncè xìtǒng 轮胎 lúntāi «tyre» | System that controls pressure in the tyres |

| | | | |
|----|------------------|--|--|
| | | 压力 <i>yālì</i> «pressure» 监测 <i>jiāncè</i> «control» 系统 <i>xìtǒng</i> «system» | |
| 3 | loudspeaker | 扩音器 <i>kuòyīnqì</i> 扩 <i>kuò</i> «to enlarge» 音 <i>yīn</i> «sound» 器 <i>qì</i> «device» | A device for making a sound louder |
| 4 | spare tyre | 备胎 <i>bèitāi</i> 备 <i>bèi</i> «to spare» 胎 <i>tāi</i> «tyre» | Spare tyre |
| 5 | gearbox | 变速器 <i>biànsùqì</i> 变 <i>biàn</i> «to change» 速 <i>sù</i> «speed» 器 <i>qì</i> «device» | A device for changing speed |
| 6 | brake light | 刹车灯 <i>shāchēdēng</i> 刹 <i>shā</i> «to brake» 车 <i>chē</i> «car» 灯 <i>dēng</i> «light» | Light, that emerges when a car starts to brake |
| 7 | foglights | 雾灯 <i>wùdēng</i> 雾 <i>wù</i> «fog» 灯 <i>dēng</i> «light» | Light that a car uses moving in a fog |
| 8 | fixing device | 固定装置 <i>gùdìng zhuāngzhì</i> 固定 <i>gùdìng</i> «to fixate» 装置 <i>zhuāngzhì</i> «equipment» | An equipment that is used to fixate something |
| 9 | front suspension | 前悬挂 <i>qiánxuánguà</i> 前 <i>qián</i> «front» 悬挂 <i>xuánguà</i> «suspension» | Front suspension |
| 10 | rear suspension | 后悬挂 <i>hòuxuánguà</i> 后 <i>hòu</i> «rear» 悬挂 <i>xuánguà</i> «suspension» | Rear suspension |
| 11 | tyre pressure | 汽车轮胎压力 <i>qìchē lúntāi yālì</i> 汽车 <i>qìchē</i> «car» 轮胎 <i>lúntāi</i> «tyre» 压力 <i>yālì</i> «pressure» | A pressure in tyres some car |
| 12 | rated power | 额定功率 <i>édìng gōnglǜ</i> 额定 <i>édìng</i> «to rate» 功率 <i>gōnglǜ</i> «power» | A power that has been rated |

As it could be seen in the Table 1, the translation of morphemes that form a term allows understanding a sense of a terminological unit. This type of loanwords can be exposed to Chinese internal rules on a larger scale that is what makes the second group the most numerous of all four.

It is important to add that terminological units presented in the table are indivisible because they are fixed word formations. Consequently, it is possible to assert that Chinese terminology, as all

other ones unconsciously goes the way of stretching a term and creating a terminological combination.

4. Conclusion

Concluding this study it is possible to say that the task to analyse and describe the main features of term formation in Chinese and loanwords from English in automobile industry is completed. Moreover, from the structural point of terminological units, we can assert that Chinese terminology becomes more complex, and substitute one indivisible lexical token with a combination of indivisible lexical tokens.

Words loaned semantically are 91% of all terminological units studied. As was mentioned several times, one of the key features of Chinese language is that Chinese always wants to change loanwords in accordance with internal rules of Chinese language. Hieroglyphic signs describe a function of an object; explain its purpose and sense that is why this is the most frequent model of adopting words.

Loanwords of 3 other groups are 9% of all terminological units. Among them Words loaned without changing are 6%, words loaned phonetically and mixed type have 1.5% respectively. These three models partially save graphical or phonetic levels or literally translate a lexical unit without explanation. That is why these types are so rare.

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