

A Contrastive Study of Collocation of Chinese Verb “交” (*jiao*) and English Verb “*communicate*”

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ABSTRACT. With the help of dictionary definitions, the present study addresses itself to the semantic features, grammatical structures and the extension ways of the Chinese verb “交” (*jiao*) and English “*communicate*” with the morpheme meaning of interpersonal communication. It deals with the corresponding relationship between the collocative meaning and the lexical forms of both words in question and explores the Chinese and English cultural basis concerning the issue. The collocability of Chinese verb “交” (*jiao*) is strong with the diversified internal operation mechanism. The collocation of the English verb “*communicate*” are mainly based on the characteristic of part of speech.

Keywords: collocation, semantic; “交” (*jiao*) “*communicate*”; cultural basis

1. **Foreword.** The study of collocations is about the syntagmatic relation between words or the co-occurrence relationship. (XuYulong, 1992) Firth (1957) first used the term of collocation, “You should know a word by the company it keeps.” Linguists such as Crystal (1980), Palmer (1976), Leech (1983), Bolinger (1968), also from different perspectives did their research into the semantic relationship of collocation types reaching the consensus view that collocation is “*habitual co-occurrence* .”

A principle of combination is: the meaning of linguistic units above phrase is not simply the sum of the meanings of lexical entries of the phrase. (Nida, 1975) Combination is a micro-context, which even determines the significance of combined units. (Zhang Zhiyi, 2012) This paper is to study the extended meanings of the Chinese verb “交” (*jiao*) and English verb “*communicate*” produced after the collocation.

Extension of meaning is used for the development of a new sense of a lexical unit and also used of widening of an existing sense.

Extended meaning of a word refers to the meaning associated with and derived from the original meaning of it and meanwhile it is also the primary means of the evolution of the meaning of lexical entries.

Leech points out that unlike other types of meaning with general properties, collocation is just the specific nature of individual words and convention is one of the most basic and important characteristics of collocation. Conventions in a language are mainly routine formulae and idiomatic expressions and it is conventional indirectness that has contextually unambiguousness meaning by virtue of conventionalization. But Su (1996) holds the different opinion that in the structure of a language, the more abstract the language form is, the deeper impact of the convention, the latent layer culture it will have.

There are six lexical entries of “交” (*jiao*) in the “*Contemporary Chinese Dictionary*”, namely :1. be trusted by, 2. contact with, 3. sexual intercourse, 4 connect A with/to B, 5 near some time (a particular point in time or a certain season), 6. meet, encounter.

English verb “*communicate*” is divided into five entries in the “*Oxford Advanced Learner’s English-Chinese Dictionary*” : 1.to exchange information (or news, opinions, etc), 2. to make your (thoughts, feelings, thoughts. known to other people so that they can understand them) (share ideas / feelings), 3. to have a good relationship because you are able to understand and talk about your own and other people's thoughts, feelings etc., 4. pass a disease from one person to another, 5. two rooms are next to each other and you get from one to another

This paper selects from dictionaries the Chinese verb “交” (*jiao*) with morpheme meaning of interpersonal communication , namely, the second entry, *contact with* ,the forth entry *connect A with/to B*; the English verb “*communicate*” with the morpheme meaning of *exchange information*, and *share ideas/ feelings* as the research corpus ;compares and analyzes the grammatical structure, semantics features, the corresponding relations between these two as well as the ways of extension of the collocation of Chinese verb “交” (*jiao*) and English “*communicate*” and explores the foundation of Chinese and English national culture .

The selections of the Chinese character “交”(*jiao*) and English word “*communicate*” are on the basis that it is agreed Chinese is a semantic language and English is morphological language and the difference between the basic structures of the two languages is that character rather word is basic unit of the Chinese language, and in English the basic unit with independent meaning is word.

The study of Chinese in tradition commonly known as “小学” [*xiaoxue*](*primary study*) is based on the study of Chinese characters with semantic as its core. The basic structural unit of inflectional language is the word with prominent feature of its morphological changes stressing the morphological rules of words dominated by structure rules and the relationship between words and words is syntactically consistent

The basic structural units of the language structure are the most active cells and the differences between them are the concentrated expressions of different types of

language with different structure.

This research corpus of this paper are from the “Modern Chinese Dictionary”, 《辞海》 [CiHai](the Dictionary), “Oxford Advanced Learners’ English-Chinese Dictionary”, “Dictionary of English collocations”, “Longman advanced American Dictionary”, “Collins COBUILD English Dictionary”.

2. The study of the collocative meaning of Chinese verb “交” (*jiao*) . The classification of the morphemes with interpersonal communication of “*jiao*” and analysis of its grammatical structures

2.1. contact with. “交” (*jiao*) +verb: successive predicate structure (Zhu Dexi, 2014)

The collocations of Chinese verb “交” (*jiao*) in the structure above:交际 (*jiaoji*) , 交往(*jiaowang*), 交涉(*jiaoshe*), 交结(*jiaojie*), 交游(*jiaoyou*). 际(*ji*): socialize with each other, 往(*wang*) : come and go; contact , 涉(*she*): implicate sb in sth. , 结(*jie*): have a kind of connection 游(*you*): make friends , 结(*jie*): mix with ; 涉(*she*): involve, relate to

The successive predicate structure called Resultative Verb Compounds (Li and Tompson, 1981)is composed by the combinations of “交” (*jiao*) and another verb; the first verb “交” (*jiao*) expresses causal behavior and the second verb describes the state or result of the action caused by “交” (*jiao*), which is characterized by the fixed sequence and too tight combination to insert any other language components like the aspect marker, similar to a independent verb, and can be used as a predicate in its syntactic structure. (Xu, Yanqing, 2009)

“交际” (*jiaoji*) (*communicate , socialize*) has the "generalized meaning, referring to people’s contacts, entertainment such as “善于交际” (*good at communication*). “交往” (*jiaowang*)(*associate, contact with*) emphasizes the interaction between two people such as “不善与人交往” (*not good at the contact with people*).交结(*jiaojie*) :associate with, mix with, make friends with; 交涉(*jiaoshe*): discuss in order to solve the problem; negotiate , bargain “交游” (*jiaoyou*):make friends. The collocative meaning of “交际” (*jiaoji*) , “交往” (*jiaowang*) are the wide extensions of the morphem meaning of their constituents; “交结” (*jiaojie*), “交游” (*jiaoyou*), “交涉” (*jiaoshe*), on the contrary , are the narrow extensions of the morpheme meanings with distinctive semantic features for things or interpersonal relationships .

“交” (*jiao*) +nonu : agglutinative predicate and object structure

The connotations of “交” (*jiao*) in the structure above:交友 (*jiaoyou*) ,交孚(*jiaofu*).

In agglutinative predicate and object structure, the predicate is in the form of verbal root without complements and suffixes; the object is in the base form of noun without attributives. 交友(*jiaoyou*) : make friends ; 交孚(*jiaofu*): like-minded, to have the same likes and dislikes.

The original meaning of“孚”(*fu*)was prisoner, and was explained in 《说文》(Analytical Dictionary of Characters) as the captured prisoner by the army , which was extended to *trust, honesty* because when ancient tribes might exchange prisoners in the war, the

trust between the sides involved in the war ensured the successful exchange of prisoners between both sides. (Lin Baoqing, 2003) The combinations of “交友”(jiaoyou)、 “交孚”(jiaofu) follow the principle of subject-object sequence but extended in different ways. The semantic expression of “交友”(jiaoyou) is specific with concrete means of extension; the extension of “交孚”(jiaofu) is metonymy with semantic grammaticalization. The extended meaning of “交孚”(jiaofu) with the abstract “孚”(fu: trust, honesty) as the metonymy generation body gives the same expression of abstract meaning.

交(jiao)+adverb: the predicate complement structure

The connotations of “交”(jiao) in the structure above: 交好(jiaohao), 交欢(jiaohuan), 交恶(jiaowu).

The connotations of “交”(jiao) in the structure: 交好(jiaohao) : make contact with each other to become friends or allies; 交欢(jiaohuan): befriend each other and rejoice ; 交恶(jiaowu): fall foul of each other after the breakdown of relationship, regard each other with enmity. The semantic focus of extended meaning of “交”(jiao)+adverb in predicate complement structure is based on the nature of adverbs. “交好”(jiaohao), “交欢”(jiaohuan) are the commendatory extension and “交恶”(jiaowu) is derogatory extension of interpersonal communication results

Predicate complement structure is the combination of predicate and complement; the basic function of the adverbs “hao”(good) and “huan”(love) and “wu”(evil), from the perspective of syntax function is a description of the situation of action to make the predicate "integration" and the adverb is the only component connected into the post modified structure set. Although it is the complement in grammatical structure, but it functions as the semantic focus in collocation. (Liu Miqing, 2006)

2.2. **join, mutual contact.** “jiao” + noun: predicate object structure

The connotations of “交”(jiao) in the structure above: 交锋(jiaofeng): cross swords; engage in battle, 交手(jiaoshou), 交火(jiaohuo), 交颈(jiaojing), 交心(jiaoxin)

The extended way of the collocation of “交”(jiao)+noun is metaphor, the morpheme meaning of the object in this structure are almost all relevant parts of the body almost losing their original meanings to the abstract meaning of interpersonal interaction.

交锋(jiaofeng), 交火(jiaohuo) and 交手(jiaoshou) express the extended pejorative meanings. 交锋(jiaofeng) : engage in battle, compete with each other, or have a debate with each other 交火(jiaohuo) : open fire, exchange fire or fight ; have a heated argument with each other, 交手(jiaoshuo) fight hand to hand ,come to grips , wrestle with ; on the contrary, the collocation of 交颈(jiaojing), 交心(jiaoxin) are the commendatory expression; 交颈(jiaojing) is a metaphor meaning the harmonious love between men and women, 交心(jiaoxin) open one's heart to somebody; the extended meaning of it is to be frank with each other and say your thoughts without reservation.

The total of “交”(jiao)'s collocation containing the morpheme meaning of interpersonal communication is 10, of which 5 have the morpheme meaning of "contacts" and the other 5 contain the morpheme meaning of *connecting A with B*.

Ancient Chinese is a typical pictographic language, which means the meanings of many Chinese characters can be understood from their written forms. The earliest written form of the character “交”(jiao) was a picturesque drawing of a man standing his legs crossed. 《说文》(Analytical Dictionary of Characters) explains “交”(jiao): “jiao” means the intersection of foot neck. From the original meaning of a man standing with his legs crossed it is extended to the kinds of Chinese characters shaped like a cross, staggered like.

3. The study of the collocative meaning of English verb “communicate. English is morphological language and English verbs adopt various morphological changes to show the different grammatical meanings. And the collocation structure is kind of permutation and combination according to certain logical and syntax relationship. For understanding of the collocation meaning and analysis of the structure of English collocation “communicate” it is expected to identify the verb suffix morphological markers "ate". The part of speech of verb determines the function and meaning of communicate. When it is an intransitive verb, it collocates with preposition “with” becoming “communicate with” meaning “exchange and sharing with others, information, ideas, feelings, for example, *The prisoner was forbidden to communicate with his family.* when “communicate” implies reciprocity, meaning to have a sympathetic mutual understanding, for example, *Parents sometimes find it difficult to communicate with their teenage children.* When communicate is an intransitive verb, it also collocates with often preposition and adverbs representing means and attitude to communication. When communicate is a transitive verb, it expresses one-way behavior, meaning to transfer information, the common objects, ideas, feelings, thoughts to the other, such as: *He was eager to communicate his idea to the group.*

The biggest difference in the semantic meaning between the English verb “communicate” and the Chinese “交”(jiao) is the English “communicate” with the morpheme meaning of interpersonal communication is one-way behavior, emphasizing that one party transmits information to another when it concerns the expression of bilateral relations, it is only an act of exchange of information, ideas, and emotions. As for the bilateral communication it focuses being aware of each other’s feeling and thoughts for the purpose of establishing a friendship or arousing sympathy. As Samovar (2006) points out “Human communication is the process through which individuals--- in relationships, groups, organizations and societies---respond to and create messages to adapt to the environment and one another.”

The collocative meanings of Chinese “交”(jiao) are from the “intersection of the two identical things” with diverse extension ways emphasizing bilateral interactive exchanges; semantic connotation is rich containing a wide range of entries with obvious distinctive semantic features and specific grammatical function. The requirements for the grammatical structure of collocation of Chinese “交”(jiao), with smaller restriction, are much broader than those of English collocation.

The differences between collocation structure of Chinese “交”(jiao) and English

“*communicate*” are Chinese collocation structures are compound words consisting of notional morphemes with specific meaning, while the English ones are phrases made up by the notional morpheme and function words, that is the prepositions, adverbs.

Chinese compound words of “交” (*jiao*) are agglomerating structures; the other constituents can't be added to the middle part of it while the English collocations of “communicate” are phrases and can be separated by other grammatical components. So the Lexicalization of Chinese collocations is stronger and they are the comprehensive expressions, featured by rich semantic meanings and concise expression while English ones tend to be analytic expressions.

4. The nationalism of semantic selection and grammatical structure of Chinese verb “交” (*jiao*) and English “communicate”. Talor (1989/2001:99-105) holds the opinions that the extension of words are the process of Categorization and conceptualization of the things and the broadening of category means, the single centre, original meaning of a word develops into the structure of multi-centres the cognitive mechanism of broadening of meaning of words is the human common metonymic and metaphorical thinking. Lakoff & Johnson (1980) said: “In a culture, the most basic conceptual metaphor structure is consistent with the most basic values of this culture.”

A variety of reasons for the similarities and differences between the Chinese collocation of “jiao” and the English “communicate” are that the diversities of Chinese and Western cultures cause various language phenomena. Investigating why there is this similarities and differences between them is the rational knowledge.

Successive predicate structure of Chinese “交” (*jiao*) reflects the characteristics of Chinese people are good at thinking in images and Chinese traditional culture emphasizing “*exercise*” performance

Chinese culture believes that the focus of the perfect personality, social progress, is not on the knowledge and language, but action. “力行近乎仁” (*The exercising is close to benevolence.*) “君子纳于言而敏于行。” (*The superior man wishes to be slow in his speech and earnest in his conduct.*) “知之者不如好之者,好之者不如乐之者。” (*They who know the truth are not equal to those who love it and they who love it are not equal to those who delight in it.*)

R. Nisbett (2004) from the perspective of philosophical thinking explains why Chinese people like to use verbs: “... but the ancient Chinese people were uninterested in categories, believed in change, and understood the behavior of both physical and social objects as being due to the interaction of the object with a surrounding field of forces”

The collocative meaning of the predicate and complement structure of Chinese “交” (*jiao*) takes on emotionality; expressing the attitude of interpersonal communication of Han nationality and subjective evaluation criteria as an emotional component being added to the semantics.

A significant difference between English and Chinese in the expression of interpersonal communication is the performance evaluation of the behavior of exchange that is the attitude, emotional color differences between them. The collocations of Chinese “交” (*jiao*)

have both commendatory sense and derogatory sense evaluation. English collocations also express evaluation implication but not by the verb collocation itself, but by adverbs and are dynamic real-time description in a relative context, rather than the inherent meaning of the collocations of “*communicate*”.

The collocation of the predicate and object structure of the Chinese “交” with the morpheme of interpersonal relationship best embodies the characteristics of Chinese image thinking and parts of human body when collocating with “*jiao*” expresses commendatory or derogatory manner of interpersonal dealings. This paper argues that the most representative of this type is “交心” (*jiaoxin*). “心” [xin] (heart) is the emotional container, in ancient and modern people daily concept, it is generally considered the emotion is the heart function. Joy, anger, sorrow, joy, love, evil, and desire for all kinds of emotions is determined by the heart. “*jiaoxin*” (*heart to heart communication*) means exchanging feelings, which is the unique exchange content of the Han nationality interpersonal communication containing profound cultural implication.

English “*communicate*” is a systematic, real-time speech; different background such as communication scenarios, setting, timing, the number of attending participants, constitute the basic communication principles. (Samovaret et al. 1988)

The extended way of collocation semantics for English “*communicate*” is determined by its language form that is transitive verbs and intransitive and prepositions. In terms of interaction, the mutual exchange of information and understanding of each other's instant speech content are as the main content.

In western culture, the individual is the single most important unit of society; emphasizes independence rather than dependence of self uniqueness of each individual the individual is always significantly higher than others and groups; individual interest always enjoy priority.

At the level of society, the individual is considered abstract, general entities. Principles of interpersonal communication are not to interfere with each other's life. Self is a constant entity, the core of the “true me”, and the highest principle of it is the pursuit of conformity and integration. Western self stresses the separation of people and society, boundaries of the self and others, the ultimate goal of self is to bring the personal potential into full play and constant pursuit of self transcendence.

5. Conclusion. The interpersonal relationship is one of the core contents of culture. Based on human morality, Chinese culture's interpersonal relationship processing principle makes the Chinese “交” (*jiao*) have strong collocation ability, extension mode radial, its semantic connotation rich, the grammar structure less restrictive. The concept of self in western culture, is persistent in separation with others in the interpersonal relations, ignoring the need for joint cooperation and alliance with others, therefore, the semantic of English “*communicate*” is simply based on the chain extension of the main contents of exchanging information.

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