

# Research on the Formation Features and Translation Strategies of English Cyber-neologisms

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**Abstract:** With the advancement of Internet technology in recent years, English cyber-neologisms arise annually. This paper will select the English cyber-neologisms that have been existing for the past years and analyze them from the perspectives of their overt structure and word formation to demonstrate the characteristics of English cyber-neologisms further. Besides, some translation strategies will be introduced to facilitate English learners to master and apply cyber-neologisms in real life.

**Keywords:** Cyber-neologisms, Features of word formation, Translation strategies.

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## 1. Introduction

In recent years, scholars have been more and more concerned with the study of cyber-neologisms, but it is mainly confined to Chinese cyber-neologism. However, from 2006 to 2010, the research on cyber-neologisms at that time was ushering in a new era [1]. To help students further understand English cyber-neologisms and teachers improve teaching skills, this research will be conducive to both students and teachers in offering feasible and instructive advice on studying English and teaching English.

## 2. An Overview of The Definition and Classification of English Cyber-neologisms

### 2.1. Definition of English Cyber-neologisms

The definition of English cyber-neologisms has been a heated discussion stimulated over the long haul. Different scholars take various views on English cyber-neologisms. Hadumod Bussmann[2] in his book, *Rutledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics*, wrote that newly formed linguistic expression (word and phrase) that has been recognized by at least part if not all of a language community as the way to denote a new object or state of affairs, be it in technology, industry, politics, culture, and science. By looking up the Webster dictionary, they are defined as two following meanings: (1) a new word, usage, or expression; (2) psychology: a new word that is coined especially by a person affected with schizophrenia and is meaningless except to the coiner, and is typically a combination of two existing words or a shortening or distortion of an existing word [3]. Other scholars like Wang Xuelei[4] consider that English cyber-neologisms refer to a kind of words that appear during a period when something novel occurs, some new words are needed to describe it which are compiled into the next edition of a dictionary. However, three requisite conditions can be used to define English cyber-neologisms. Generally speaking, the first condition indicates the time when the new words appear, which should be confined within five to ten years. The second condition is that some authoritative dictionaries must adopt them and the last one is that the meaning of some existing words has been changed due to the development of society.

### 2.2. Classification of English cyber-neologisms

English cyber-neologisms can be sub-classified into two senses, namely broad sense and narrow sense. From the broad sense, they can be defined as the technical terms related to the Internet, such as online, gateway, server, firewall and hacker. They also can be defined as some special terms related to the development of society, such as e-bank, e-commerce, e-mail, webzine, and newbie, etc. From the narrow sense, they can refer to the numbers, symbols, and expressions, such as OIC (oh I see), nn=nite=good night, BTW(by the way), FTF(face to face) and THX(thanks).

## 3. Formation Features of English cyber-neologisms

The formation features of English cyber-neologisms have several types. This paper will focus on blending, abbreviation, derivation, homophonic word formation, analogical creation, and expanded meaning.

### 3.1. Blending

Blending is a kind of complicated compound that is derived by joining certain parts of two words separately, which is characterized by three types, namely slang, technical terms, and periodical terms[5]. For example, “netizen” is composed of the final part of the Internet and the final part of the citizen, indicating those people who surf on the Internet. “Webzine” is constituted by the first part of website and the last part of the magazine, which means a new kind of media for people to read. “Technonerd” is composed of the first part of technology and the word nerd, which refers to those people who are addicted to the Internet. All above-mentioned words are typically own to blending.

### 3.2. Abbreviation

Abbreviation is also called clipping. It has two types, initialism and acronym. They are completely different types of abbreviations.

#### 3.2.1. Initialism

Initialism is to take the first letter of each word to create a short new one, but cannot be pronounced based on phonological rules. For example, BF: boyfriend, GF: girlfriend, VIP=very important person, PC=personal computer, PK=player killing, and so on.

### 3.2.2. Acronym

Acronym has the exact mechanism as Initialism, but one thing which is different from Initialism is that the clipped one can be pronounced on the basis of phonological rules. For example, NATO, UNESCO, APEC, BRICS, COD (Concise Oxford Dictionary), OPEC, GEM, CAD, and so on.

### 3.3. Derivation

Derivation refers to the process of adding an affix to an already existing form to create a word, which includes prefixation, suffixation, and even both.

#### 3.3.1. Prefixation

Prefixation means adding a prefix to an already existed word. the prefix cyber- means something that is relevant to the Internet and computer, and they can be combined to form the following new words.

##### Cyber-

Cybercafe cyberfood cyberculture cyber-pals cyberspace cybercrime cyberworld

##### Tele-

Teleconference telepresence telescope telephone telecommunication teleoperation Tele-education

##### Inter-

International intersection interphone

##### Hyper-

Hypermedia hypertext hyperlink

#### 3.3.2. Suffixation

Suffixation indicates adding a suffix to an existing word, which usually changes the speech of words. For example,

##### -ware

Shareware Freeware software

##### -er/or

Scanner monitor hacker server printer spammer

##### -phobia

Xenophobe zoophobia hydrophobic dentophobia photophobia

### 3.4. Homophonic Word Formation

Homophonic word formation refers to those words which have similar sounds with numbers or alphabets, some of which sometimes combine both features, including numbers homophone, homophonic spellings, and the combination of numbers and alphabets [6]. First of all, numbers homophone indicates that some parts of numbers have similar pronunciation to some English words, which can substitute for a certain part of them.

1= won/one/wan (1der/ some 1 / S1)

2= two/to (face2face/ me 2/ 2wards)

4=four/for (4well/ 4ward)

8=ate(18ter /h8/ f8)

88= bye bye

9= good 9

This mechanism also functions in alphabets. Some examples are as follows.

B=be; CU=see you; OIC= oh I see; PLS=please; HK=Hong Kong; R=are

### 3.5. Analogical Creation

Analogical creation refers to the principle that can account for the co-existence of two forms, regular and irregular, in the combination of some English verbs. For example, it is commonly acknowledged that there have been some word structures like white-collar, blue-collar, and so on. And then, when people want to create new words, they tend to use

similar structures, such as open-collar (开领) and brilliant-collar (亮领). Another example is that the word “Friend™” refers to those friends who are always required to pay for others. It is related to the same concept of the word “ATM”, indicating that people withdraw money from the bank.

### 3.6. Expanded Meaning

The lexical changes of word meaning not only reside in the rules of word formation, but also in the semantic changes. Semantic changes include broadening, narrowing, class shift, meaning shift, and folk etymology. In this paper, meaning broadening is a kind of word formation. Some words in English may be changed due to the development of society and social communication in real communication among people. For instance, “bug” used to depict an insect in the past, while it is used to describe an unsafe computer that needs fixing.

Another example is the word “menu” which is usually relevant to a piece of paper in the restaurant through which consumers can order food and beverages.

## 4. Translation Strategies of English Cyber-neologisms

Four types of translation strategies are usually applied in translating English Cyber-neologisms, which are literal translation, free translation, transliteration translation, and zero translation. Each of them can be used in a proper way only if the features of English cyber-neologisms can be figured out.

### 4.1. Literal Translation

Literal translation doesn't mean the word-for-word translation. Superficially speaking, it means “not to alter the original words and sentences”; strictly speaking, it strives “to keep the sentiments and style of the original”. It takes sentences as its fundamental units and takes the whole text into consideration[7]. In this sense, when translating English cyber-neologisms, translators should take the context into consideration. Those words broadening their original meaning need to pay more attention to this rule. The following descriptions are some examples.

Example 1

A:I'm a great fan of rave music

B:She holds a fan

In example one, the “fan” in the sentence A means a group of people like someone who is famous and acclaimed, while it is quite different in the sentence B, with the meaning that it refers to a flat subject that one can hold on hand. When translating these two sentences, translators should check out the context where the words appear.

### 4.2. Free Translation

Free translation refers to an alternative approach generally used to convey the meaning and spirit of the original without trying to copy its sentence patterns or figures of speech. This approach is most frequently adopted when it is really impossible for the translator to translate the original meaning literally[7]. For example, “flash” is a word usually used to describe a beam of light. However, in the domain of computer technology, “flash” cannot be rendered into Chinese as “光束”, and the meaning of it has changed, which indicates a tool on computer for editing a movie or shoot. For those who usually use it on the computer, they call it “闪存” in Chinese

instead of “光束”. Moreover, the word “explorer” is used to describe people who prefer adventure, while it refers to the software in the field of the computer science, helping netizens browse the Internet. “CD” is a short form of a compact disk. Literally translated it into Chinese as “致密盘”, it is hard to understand and accept. The translation version would be ridiculous if we observe the rule of the literal translation. So in this sense, free translation can solve this problem. Not pursuing the totally equivalent on form, free translation puts emphasis on the effect of translation version that is consistent with the deep structure of source language so much so that translators can handle it in a proper way and don't allow to delete and misunderstand the original meaning[8].

### 4.3. Transliteration Translation

Transliteration translation refers to the translation method that some English cyber-neologisms can be directly translated into Chinese due to the similarity in its sound of pronunciation. In the past, translators usually applied this method in translating some proper nouns like the name of acclaimed persons, architecture and famous places [7]. However, now it is used more and more widely and people favor it because it is easy to understand and describe a situation more vividly and expressively. In recent years, the translation of English cyber-neologisms has already adopted this translation method. For example, the word “bobo” usually is used to describe those people at the age of fifty who praise highly of freedom, power and young girl. It can be directly translated into Chinese based on its sound of pronunciation as “波波族”. The word “neet” is the short one from the phrase “not in education, employment and training”, which can be directly translated into Chinese as “尼特族”, also known as “啃老族”. Another example is the popular business running mode, business to business, which is also directly rendered into Chinese as “B2B”.

Some unique items that minority groups may own, such as food, instrument, dance, measurement and currency, when translating them into Chinese, translators would better take this translation method to keep the target language closely equivalent to the source language. For example, cheese, chocolate and curry are directly translated into Chinese as “芝士, 巧克力, 咖喱”.

### 4.4. Zero Translation

Zero translation indicates that with the culture and globalization penetrating, some agencies and organizations have no need to translate them into Chinese, as they are the commonly accepted terms for the public. For example, WTO, CEO, BBC, CRI, CNN, DNA and RNA.

In this sense, when translating English cyber-neologisms,

translators should take into account whether it has already been a common sense made among the members of society.

## 5. Conclusion

In this paper, after introducing the definition of English Cyber-neologisms, the features of formation are introduced several types, including blending, abbreviation, derivation, homophonic word formation, analogical creation, and expanded meaning. Moreover, several types of translation skills have been mentioned to tackle how to translate English Cyber-neologisms into Chinese. The crux is that whatever translation skills translators adopt they would better take the context into consideration. Translators should be flexible and sensible to avoid rigid translation. English learners should master different ways to translate English Cyber-neologisms on the grounds that they can transfer from one language to another language freely to cultivate a sense of accomplishment, which can increase their interest in learning English.

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