

# A Comparative Analysis of Chinese and English Internet Popular Words in 2023 from a Sociolinguistic Perspective

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**Abstract:** This study conducts a comparative analysis of Chinese and English Internet buzzwords from 2023 using a sociolinguistic lens to explore their reflection and influence on respective cultural and social contexts. Internet buzzwords, as linguistic phenomena, encapsulate the dynamic interplay between language innovation and societal trends, offering insights into cross-cultural communication and the pervasive impact of digitalization. Utilizing a qualitative research methodology, the study analyzed data sourced from national and international digital media platforms. Findings reveal distinct cultural predilections: Chinese buzzwords largely underscore collective values and traditional sensibilities, while English buzzwords tend to highlight individualism and personal authenticity. The study underscores the role of language as a cultural artifact, shaped by and shaping social identities in a globalized discourse, thereby contributing to sociolinguistic theory by illustrating how language both influences and is influenced by socio-technological evolutions.

**Keywords:** Internet buzzwords, Sociolinguistics, Cross-cultural communication, Language evolution, Digital culture, Chinese linguistic trends, English linguistic trends.

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## 1. Introduction

With the popularization of the Internet in the global society, Internet buzzwords have gradually become an important window for the study of contemporary cultural and social phenomena. 2023 Chinese and English Internet buzzwords not only reflect the dynamics and creativity of language, but also map social trends, cultural values and technological developments. Sociolinguistics, as a discipline that studies the relationship between language and society, provides the theoretical foundation and analytical tools for understanding the deeper meanings behind Internet buzzwords. This study aims to comparatively analyze the Chinese and English Internet buzzwords of 2023 from a sociolinguistic perspective through a qualitative approach, exploring how these buzzwords reflect and influence the two cultural and social contexts. The

importance of this study is that it provides a unique perspective to understand contemporary social and cultural phenomena. Through a comparative analysis of Chinese and English Internet buzzwords, we will not only gain insight into cross-cultural communication and influence, but also gain a deeper understanding of how language evolves and adapts in the context of globalization. In addition, the findings will provide empirical support for sociolinguistic theories and may offer valuable insights into areas such as cross-cultural communication, language education and information dissemination.

## 2. Literature Review

In the field of sociolinguistics and media interaction, different scholars have presented diverse perspectives on the use of language in media and social media environments.

Bell (1995) was the first to explore the impact of media

on language use. Bell's research focused on analyzing how different media formats shape public discourse and expression, and how social reality is reflected and shaped through media communication. Moving into the 21st century, Johnson (2001) further explored the understanding and misunderstanding of sociolinguistic research by the public and the media. Johnson pointed out that the media, in simplifying or misinterpreting sociolinguistic issues, may lead to public misunderstanding of language-related phenomena. With the rise of social media, Rymes and Leone (2014) introduced the concept of "civic sociolinguistics". They emphasized the importance of using social networking platforms to understand the relationship between language and social life, pointing out the value of research on everyday language use by laypeople. Leppänen, Peuronen, and Westinen's (2018) study focused on language use in social media in a hyper-multicultural context. Their work highlights the intermingling and interaction of different languages and cultures on social media platforms in the era of globalization. More recently, Wu, Zhang, and Ren (2023) comparatively analyzed self-representation styles on social media in Chinese and English contexts. Their study revealed how individuals in different cultural contexts use language to construct self-images and explored the strategies, themes, and motivations for these behaviors. Ren R.'s (2023) study, on the other hand, focused on the use of English vocabulary in the Chinese online environment. This study reflects the impact of English as a global language on Chinese online communication in the digital age, demonstrating the dynamics and diversity of language use in the context of globalization.

These literatures construct a comprehensive view of the application of sociolinguistics in media and social media environments from different perspectives. From Bell's media language studies to Ren's use of English on the Internet, research in this field has gradually deepened, revealing the

complex interactions between language, media and culture. These studies not only provide insights into understanding the role of language in contemporary society, but also offer valuable guidance for intercultural communication and language education.

### 3. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research method to comparatively analyze the Chinese and English Internet buzzwords in 2023 from a sociolinguistic perspective. Qualitative research enables us to explore in depth the socio-cultural meanings behind linguistic phenomena and to understand the use and evolution of Internet buzzwords in different cultural contexts. The methodology is divided into several key stages: data collection, content analysis, comparative analysis, thematic coding and case study.

Data collection is the foundation of this study. The Chinese Internet buzzwords data were obtained from the 2023 list released by the National Language Resources Monitoring and Research Center. English online buzzword data were collected through authoritative online media, social media and cultural analysis articles. The purpose of data collection is to ensure broad coverage of Internet buzzwords while keeping the data current and relevant. Content analysis is the direct interpretation and explanation of the web buzzwords. Each buzzword will be analyzed in detail based on its literal meaning, contextual usage, cultural background and social influence. In the comparative analysis stage, Chinese and English Internet buzzwords will be compared against each other to identify their similarities and differences in terms of linguistic expressions, cultural meanings and context of use. This will help reveal how different cultures express their unique social phenomena and values through language. Thematic coding involves categorizing the collected data into different themes and categories. These themes may include, but are not limited to, technological influences, socio-economic trends, the interaction of globalization and localization, and language evolution and innovation. The purpose of this phase is to distill key patterns and trends from the data. The case studies will delve into specific Chinese-English Internet buzzwords and analyze the detailed social, cultural, and technological contexts behind these buzzwords. The case studies will provide a more specific and in-depth understanding of each buzzword and how these buzzwords are formed and evolve in specific contexts. The findings will be integrated with existing sociolinguistic theories. This includes the social and cultural functions of language, the role of language in identity construction, and the relationship between language and power structures. Theoretical integration will enhance the depth and academic value of the study.

Through the above methodology, this study aims to comprehensively and thoroughly analyze the Chinese-English Internet buzzwords of 2023 to reveal their sociolinguistic significance and impact. This methodology will not only provide a deep understanding of the buzzwords, but will also offer new perspectives for understanding contemporary social and cultural phenomena.

### 4. Data Presentation and Analysis Data Presentation

Chinese Internet buzzwords:

爱达未来;烟火气;数智生活;村 BA;特种兵式旅游;显眼包;主打一个;多巴胺穿搭;命运的齿轮开始转动;新职人。

English Internet buzzwords:

Authentic; Copycat Layoffs; Nepo Baby; Deepfake; Rizz; Quiet Hiring; Kenergy; Therapy Speak; Swiftie; Core; Bleisure; Era; Deadname; Situationship; Dystopian.

### 5. Content Analysis

This study carefully analyzes the popular Chinese Internet buzzwords in 2023. For example, the term "爱达未来" symbolizes a positive outlook on the future, reflecting the importance Chinese society attaches to international sports events and its optimistic attitude towards future development. This expression reveals the high value placed on international participation and positive development in Chinese society. Similarly, the term "fireworks" depicts the beauty of tradition and daily life, highlighting people's desire for a simpler life and reflecting nostalgia for traditional lifestyles. In addition, the buzzword "digital life" shows the integration of digitalization and smart technologies in modern life and their growing impact, demonstrating how technological advances have penetrated into people's daily lives.

In terms of English Internet buzzwords, we find that they reflect different social and cultural trends. For example, the word "Authentic" reflects the desire and importance of authenticity in the age of artificial intelligence and digitization. This focus reveals that authenticity has become a precious quality in an environment of virtual and digital proliferation. "Copycat Layoffs" reveals the phenomenon of followership in the corporate world, highlighting market dynamics and workplace uncertainty. "Nepo Baby", on the other hand, focuses on the privileged and familial influence of celebrity culture, reflecting society's preoccupation with celebrities and their backgrounds.

### 6. Comparative Analysis

In terms of comparative analysis, we find that Chinese Internet buzzwords tend to reflect collective social and cultural values, such as the traditional virtue of "烟火气", while English Internet buzzwords focus more on individualism and social phenomena, such as "Authentic"(个人真实). personal authenticity. This difference reveals the difference in values and social focus between Chinese and Western

cultures. Meanwhile, the buzzwords in both languages reflect the impact of technological development on life, but with different emphases. Chinese buzzwords such as "数智生活" emphasize the integration of technology with daily life, while English buzzwords such as "Deepfake" emphasize the potential risks of technology.

### 7. Thematic Coding

In terms of thematic coding, we identified several key themes. First, the interaction between technology and society is a prominent theme, with buzzwords in both languages showing how technology shapes social life. Second, cultural identity showed a different focus in the Chinese and English buzzwords: the Chinese buzzwords emphasized more on collective cultural identity, while the English buzzwords reflected individual identity and diversity. Finally, social

change is another important theme, with both reflecting social and economic change, especially in the workplace and consumer culture.

## 8. Case Study

Through case studies of buzzwords such as "digital life" and "authentic", this study provides further insights into the formation of these buzzwords in their respective cultural and social contexts, as well as the sociolinguistic trends they reflect. These case studies reveal the uniqueness and commonality of language use in different cultural contexts and provide an important perspective for understanding language and cultural dynamics in the context of globalization.

## 9. Main Findings

This study thoroughly analyzes Chinese and English Internet buzzwords in 2023, revealing their importance in terms of cultural reflection, social trends, technological influence and linguistic innovation.

In terms of cultural reflection, Chinese Internet buzzwords such as "爱达未来" and "烟火气" reflect the collective values of Chinese society and respect for tradition. These buzzwords depict nostalgia for traditional lifestyles and optimism for future development. In contrast, English Internet buzzwords, such as "Authentic", reflect more individualism and the pursuit of personal authenticity in Western societies, highlighting personal experience and identity in the digital age.

In terms of social trends and technological impact, the buzzwords in both languages reflect the profound impact of digitalization and artificial intelligence on daily life. The Chinese buzzword "数智生活" emphasizes the integration of technology and life, while the English buzzword "Deepfake" stresses the potential risks and ethical issues brought about by technological advancement.

In terms of language innovation, both Chinese and English buzzwords demonstrate the ability of language to innovate and evolve, reflecting the impact of social change on language use. For example, "village BA" and "Rizz" demonstrate the innovation and localization of popular languages in different cultural contexts.

## 10. Conclusion

This study employs a qualitative approach to provide an in-depth sociolinguistic analysis of Chinese and English Internet buzzwords in 2023. By comparatively analyzing Chinese and English Internet buzzwords, the study reveals how these buzzwords reflect the social dynamics, values, and technological developments of their respective cultures. Chinese buzzwords emphasize collective values and the importance of tradition, while English buzzwords reflect individualism and a focus on personal experiences. At the same time, both demonstrate the innovation and evolution of language and its response to current social and technological

trends.

From a theoretical perspective, this study provides examples of the application of sociolinguistic theories to actual language use, especially in the context of globalization and the digital age. This work emphasizes the importance of understanding cultural and social contexts in explaining linguistic phenomena, while providing new directions for future research in sociolinguistics.

At the practical level, this study has important implications for intercultural communication, language education and the media industry. By understanding popular languages in different cultures and the socio-cultural motivations behind them, deeper cultural exchange and communication can be facilitated. In addition, educators and media practitioners can utilize these insights to better adapt to language change and development.

Although this study provides valuable insights, there are some limitations. Future research could further extend these findings through quantitative methods and longitudinal studies. In addition, expanding the scope of the study to include Internet buzzwords from more diverse cultures and languages could provide a more comprehensive understanding of language and cultural dynamics in the context of globalization.

All in all, the Chinese-English Internet buzzwords of 2023 provide a unique perspective to observe and understand contemporary social and cultural changes. Through this study, we not only gain insight into the sociolinguistic significance of these buzzwords, but also provide valuable insights for cross-cultural understanding and global communication. In an ever-changing and interconnected world, it is crucial to understand the socio-cultural dimensions of language, which will help us better adapt and participate in this diverse global society.

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