

A Study of Chinese Loanwords Adopted from English Language

Khin Nyunt Yi¹

Abstract

Loanwords enter from one language to another from communicating by means of economy, politics and culture between the countries. Loanwords from English are learnt and compiled by reading books and the Internet. This article presents about Chinese loanwords adopted from English language. It is researched by using descriptive method. Loanwords directly taken from pronunciation of English Language, loanwords combined the pronunciations of English and Chinese languages, loanwords which are the same in meanings and their pronunciations are so close, and loanwords which are the same with English alphabet are studied. The research question is: How do Chinese words expand from English language? The data were collected from the Internet, Television, films, videos, and dictionaries. This study is done because of the use of English in daily communication. It aims to fulfill the need of learning and practising Chinese loanwords.

Keywords: Chinese Loanwords, Pronunciation, Meaning

Introduction

For the students learning Chinese Language, it is required not only to improve four language skills including Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing but also to possess the knowledge related with the target language. Thus, it is also required to understand “Borrowing” from lexical expansion of Chinese Language. It is found that there are a range of loanwords in Chinese Language borrowed from other languages. Chinese language learners learn loanwords as a mean of lexical proliferation.

Students learning Chinese language as a foreign language need to improve four skills namely: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Many loanwords can be seen in Chinese language. In the expansion of Chinese language, borrowing is required to understand. The loanwords are classified as follows: Loanwords directly taken from pronunciation of English Language, loanwords combined the pronunciations of English and Chinese languages, loanwords which are the same in meanings and their pronunciations are so close, and loanwords which are the same with English alphabet.

Aim

It is aimed for the Chinese Language Learners to learn easily the loanwords from English language and to possess the knowledge related with vocabulary.

Materials and Methods

Instrument

The data required for this research are collected from the Internet, Chinese-Myanmar Dictionary, and English-Chinese Dictionary by using Descriptive method.

¹Daw, Lecturer, Department of Chinese, Mandalay University of Foreign Languages

Research Methodology

The required data for this research is from previous researches, the Internet, websites, videos, dictionaries, and journals.

Research Questions

1. How did Chinese words expand from English language?
2. How can English loanwords be used effectively in daily conversations?

Literature Review

Htar Htar Wai (2010) conducted a research called “A Study of English Loan Words and Usages Currently Used in the Chinese Language”. The study areas are Direct Adaptation, Adaptation by Changing Meaning, and Adaption by Voice Change. This research is done from Different perspectives: loanwords directly taken from pronunciation of English Language, loanwords combining the pronunciations of English and Chinese languages, loanwords which have the same meaning and the pronunciations are so close, loanwords which are the same with English alphabet.

Meaning of Loanword

Loanword (Borrowing) means a language borrows words from another by the virtue of partially translation or borrowing without translation. Borrowing is so important among the various means of lexical proliferation, in which directly borrowing the pronunciation is common. Such words are words directly taken from English pronunciation (e.g. pizza) 比萨 (bǐsà) and words combined pronunciation of English and Chinese (e.g. DVD 机).

1. Loanwords directly taken from pronunciation of English Language

There are many loanwords in Chinese Language. However, most of them are borrowed from Western Countries. For example, the pronunciation of the word “Pudding” in English is pronounced in Chinese as 布丁 (bùdīng). It is borrowed by directly taking English pronunciation. So, it is written as 布丁 (bùdīng) and the meaning is “Pudding” snack.

Words that are under the same context are as follows:

Table 1: Loanwords directly taken from pronunciation of English Language

No	English word	Chinese word	Pronunciation	Meaning
1.	Pizza	比萨	bǐsà	ပီဇာ
2.	Nicotine	尼古丁	nígǔdīng	နစ်ကိုတင်း(ဆေးချေးဓာတ်)
3.	Pudding	布丁	bùdīng	ပူတင်းမုန့်
4.	Microphone	麦克风	màikèfēng	မိုက်ခရိုဖုန်း
5.	Coffee	咖啡	kāfēi	ကော်ဖီ
6.	Puff	泡芙	pàofu	ပတ်ဖ်
7.	Bus	巴士	bāshì	ဘတ်စ်ကား
8.	Taxi	的士	díshì	တက္ကစီ

No	English word	Chinese word	Pronunciation	Meaning
9.	Jazz	爵士	juéshì	ဂျက်ဇ်တေးဂီတ
10.	Jeep	吉普车	jípǔchē	ဂျစ်ကား
11.	Heroin	海洛因	hǎiruòyīn	ဟီးရိုင်းအင်း၊ဘန်းဗြူ
12.	Poker card game	扑克	Pūkè	ပိုကာကစားပွဲ၊ပိုကာစဲပိုင်း
13.	Buddha's tree	菩提	pútí	ဗောဓိပင်
14.	Sofa	沙发	shāfa	ဆိုဖာရုံ
15.	Olympic	奥林匹克	àolínpǐkè	အိုလံပစ်ပွဲတော်
16.	Marathon	马拉松	mǎlāsōng	မာရသွန်အပြေးပြိုင်ပွဲ
17.	Tank	坦克	tǎnkè	တင့်ကား
18.	Mandolin	曼德琳	màndélin	မယ်ဒလင်

Words in the Table (1) are translated according to the English pronunciation. The pronunciation is apparently close between two languages and the meaning does not deviate. However, some words have changed over time. For instance, the original word of “lane (里弄)” is (lǐ nong). In the course of time, 里弄 (lǐ nong) changes into 胡同 (hútong) .

2. Loanwords combined the pronunciations of English and Chinese Languages

“Beer” is called as “啤酒” (píjiǔ) in Chinese Language 啤 (pí) represents the Beer, “酒” (jiǔ) means “alcohol”. So, the meaning of “啤酒” (píjiǔ) is beer/alcohol.

Table 2

No	English Word	Chinese Word	Pronunciation	Meaning
1.	Card	卡片	kǎpiàn	အပြား၊အချပ်
2.	Beer	啤酒	píjiǔ	အရက်၊အရက်သေစာ
3.	Carbine gun	卡宾枪	kǎbīnqiāng	ကာဘိုင်သေနတ်
4.	Weapons	加农炮	jiānóngpào	အမြောက်ကြီး
5.	Georgette	乔其纱	qiáoqíshā	ဝိုးထည်၊စည်း
6.	Chauvinism	沙文主义	shāwénzhǔyì	အစွန်းရောက်မျိုးချစ်ဝါဒ
7.	Marxism	马克思主义	mǎkèsīzhǔyì	မတ်စ်ဝါဒ
8.	Romanticism	浪漫主义	làngmànzhǔyì	ရိုမန်တစ်ဝါဒ
9.	Champagne	香槟酒	xiāngbīnjiǔ	ရှန်ပီနီအရက်
10.	Ballet	芭蕾舞	bālěiwǔ	ဘဲလေးအက

The fact convinced from the above table (2) is English word “Card” is written as 卡片 as Chinese word 卡 (kǎ) is pronounced as “Card” but it is written as 片(piàn) according to the tradition of Chinese Language for “flatten shape”. Thus the English word “Card” is 卡片 (kǎpiàn) as Chinese word. Another example is English word “Ballet” means “Ballet dance”. It is written as 芭蕾舞 (bālěiwǔ) as in Chinese word. Chinese word for “Ballet” is 芭蕾 (bālěi) and Chinese word for “Dance” is 舞 (wǔ). So, although it is “Ballet” in English language, as in Chinese language, it is 芭蕾舞 (bālěiwǔ) just like the same word “champagne” is 香槟 (xiāngbīn) in Chinese language, and the meaning of 酒 (jiǔ) is “alcohol”. So when the word “champagne” is borrowed as Chinese one, it is called 香槟酒 (xiāngbīnjiǔ).

3. Loanwords which have the same meaning and their pronunciations are so close.

The following words are loanwords which have the same meaning, and their pronunciations are so close.

Table 3

No	English word	Chinese word	Pronunciation	Meaning
1	Gene	基因	jīyīn	မျိုးရိုးလိုက်ခြင်း၊ သွေးသားဗီဇ
2	Vitamin	维他命	wéitāmìng	ဗီတာမင်
3	Utopia	乌托邦	wūtūōbāng	စိတ်ကူးယဉ်မျှသာ၊ လက်တွေ့လုပ်ဆောင်၍မရ
4	Index	引得	yǐndé	အညွှန်း
5	Cartoon	卡通	kǎtōng	ကာတွန်း

What can be seen in the Table (3) is the pronunciation of English word “gene” and Chinese one 基因 (jīyīn) are so close. The meaning is also totally same. Moreover, the English word “Cartoon” and Chinese word “卡通” (kǎtōng) have so close in pronunciation. The meaning is also known as “Cartoon”.

4. Loanwords which are the same with English alphabet

In Chinese Language, there are words which have alphabets directly taken from English Language. For instance, in “DVD 机”, the meaning of “机” (jī) is “machine”. That word is combined with English word “DVD” and becomes “DVD 机”. Similar words are described in the following.

Table 4

No	Chinese Word	English Word
1	DVD 机	DVD
2	VCD 机	VCD
3	BP 机	Beeper
4	MTV 机	Music Television

No	Chinese Word	English Word
5	CT 盘	Compact disc (Computer)
6	ATM 机	Automated teller machine
7	DV 机	Digital Video Camera
8	B 超	Ultra sound
9	射线	Atomic nucleus
10	CT 检查	CT test
11	IC 卡	International call card
12	AA 制	American system
13	Basic 语言	Basic Language

5. English loanwords which are unsystematically used by some Chinese people

In the late 20th century, especially in the Chinese films, unsystematic English loanwords are used in communicating. By doing this, there were intense reflections from the viewpoint of development in English Language. It was assumed that the use of English language will be proliferating in the future. The common words are as follows:

Table 5

No	Chinese word	English word
1	丢面子	to lose face
2	不能做，干不了	cannot do
3	好久不见	Long time no see
4	好好学习，天天向上	Study well, and make progress everyday
5	无风不起浪	there are no waves without wind
6	人山人海	be filled with people
7	勿忘我	Forget me not
8	黄页	Yellow Pages
9	热线	Hot line
10	纸老虎	Paper tiger
11	超人	Superman
12	热键	Hot Key
13	老板	Boss
14	出发	go

Findings

The high impact of loanwords supports greatly to the Chinese Language. It is crucial to use pleasing word (catch word) or name in advertisement or distributing the commodity to the market.

“金利来” (Jīnlì lái) is the name of the brand which is favoured by Chinese people. The original name is “Gold Lion”, and the meaning is “金狮” (Jīnshī). From the point of view of Chinese people, its name gives the refreshing sense and the sound of “lion” 狮子 (shī) and “death” 死 (sǐ) are too close that leads to awful. So the auspicious new name called “金利来” (Jīnlì lái) was changed, which pleased the majority of the people.

It is found that there are two types: words borrowed from pronunciation of English language with changed meaning, and words borrowed from pronunciation of English language with unchanged meaning. The well-known soft drink “可口可乐” (Coca Cola)’s original name is the names of two plants “苦口苦辣” (kǔ kǒu kǔ là) which has close pronunciation with original one and it was translated to “可口可乐” (Coca Cola) in late 20th Century which has well response till now. Likewise, Coca Cola Company introduced a new product of hard drink and called “士必利” (shì bì lì) which has average response from the market. According to Analysts, that name was not favourable. So the company changed the name as “雪碧” “xuě bì” and it became well-known and popular as “Sprite” soft drink.

So it is vital to use words which should be accepted by the public, and popular in advertising while translating them from English to Chinese language. It is also found that most of the loanwords in Chinese Language come from Western countries. Moreover, most of the loanwords are nouns and verbs. It is recommended that further studies on Chinese loanwords in the academic field should be made.

Discussion

Language is always living; the words in that language are also proliferating in which borrowing from one language to another plays an important role which is the reason of intertwining in economic, social, and political affairs between countries. The majority of the loanwords in Chinese Language are borrowed from English language. Moreover, it is found that the words from English language are borrowed by making a change in pronunciation, and by adopting the pronunciation directly.

Conclusion

Since every language experiences lexical expansion, borrowing, and making loanwords from other language support from the important role. By learning loan- words, it supports to the students learning Chinese language, and tourist guides to acquire both languages. Therefore, in this paper common Chinese loanwords from English language are presented.

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