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FROM CYBERSPACE TO SOCIETY: EXPLORING THE PHENOMENON OF THE CHINESE INTERNET LANGUAGE

Abstract. This study aims to explore the development and influencing factors of Chinese Internet language. With the continuous development of information technology, the Internet is changing the way media outlets, influencing social media and online environments, and further shaping Chinese Internet language. The author utilizes literature review and descriptive research method to summarize the transformation of Chinese Internet users from passive audiences to active participants, as well as the positive role of the Chinese Internet environment in shaping Internet language. Furthermore, the author emphasizes the diversity and creativity of Chinese Internet language and how it caters to the sociocultural needs, enriching the culture of Chinese society. Through a questionnaire survey of more than 50 Chinese students' use of Chinese social media and Internet buzzwords, the study demonstrates the significant role of Internet language in the evolution of Chinese society, contributing a unique linguistic and cultural wealth to the future development of China. This research can offer valuable insights into the role of Internet language in expressing social and cultural sentiments, can contribute to a deeper understanding of how language adapts and transforms within the context of online communication.

Keywords: Chinese, Internet language, Internet buzzwords, social media, social culture, social psychology, language attitude.

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Қытайдағы интернет тілі:
әлеуметтік медиа дәуіріндегі әлеуметтік психология туралы ойлар

Аңдатпа. Бұл мақалада Қытайдағы интернет тілінің дамуы және оған әсер ететін факторлар зерделенеді. Ақпараттық технологияның үздіксіз дамуына байланысты әлеуметтік желілерде мәліметтер беру тәсілі өзгерді. Сол арқылы ақпараттық кеңістікке әсер етіп, қытай интернет тілін одан әрі жетілдіре түсті. Мақала авторлары зерттеу тақырыбына қатысты әдебиеттерге шолу жасай отырып, мазмұнды талдау әдістерін қолданады.

Сонымен қатар Қытайдағы интернет пайдаланушылардың белсенділігінің арту трансформациясы сараланады. ҚХР ғаламтор желілері қоғамдағы интернет тілінің белсенді дамуына оң әсерін тигізуде. Сондай-ақ осы елдегі интернет тілінің алуан түрлілігі мен креативтілігі қарастырылып, оның Қытай мәдениетін байытудағы рөлі мен әлеуметтік-мәдени қажеттіліктерді кеңінен қолданатыны туралы баяндалған.

Бұдан бөлек, мақалада Қытай студенттері арасында әлеуметтік желілер мен интернет сленгтерін пайдалануына қатысты сауалнама жүргізілді. Соның нәтижесінде қытай тілінің дамуына лингвистикалық әрі мәдени тұрғыдан үлес қоса отырып, интернет тілінің маңызды рөлін көрсетеді. Бұл зерттеу жұмысынан әлеуметтік және мәдени көңіл-күйді білдірудегі интернет тілінің рөлі туралы құнды түсінік алуға болады және тілдің онлайн-коммуникацияға қалай бейімделетінін және өзгеретінін тереңірек түсінуге ықпал етеді.

Кілт сөздер: қытай тілі, интернет тілі, интернет-сленгтері, әлеуметтік желілер, әлеуметтік мәдениет, әлеуметтік психология, тілдік көзқарас.

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Язык китайского интернета:
отражение социальной психологии в эпоху социальных медиа

Аннотация. В данной статье рассматривается развитие китайского языка на просторах интернета и факторы, влияющие на него. В связи с постоянным развитием информационных технологий изменился способ предоставления информации в социальных сетях. Таким образом, это повлияло на информационное пространство и еще больше улучшило китайский интернет-язык. Авторы статьи проводят литературный обзор, связанный с темой исследования, а также используют методы контент-анализа.

Вместе с тем, анализируется трансформация возрастающей активности интернет-пользователей в Китае. Интернет-сети КНР положительно влияют на активное развитие интернет-языка в обществе. Также рассматриваются разнообразие и креативность языка Интернета в этой стране, сообщается о его роли в обогащении китайской культуры и его широком использовании для социокультурных нужд.

Помимо всего вышеуказанного, в статье указаны данные по проведенному опросу среди китайских студентов касательно использования социальных сетей и интернет-языка. В результате это показывает важную роль интернет-языка, вносящего лингвистический и культурный вклад в развитие китайского языка. Эта исследовательская работа дает ценную

информацию о роли языка на просторах интернета в выражении социальных и культурных настроений и способствует более глубокому пониманию того, как язык адаптируется и меняется в онлайн-коммуникации.

Ключевые слова: китайский язык, интернет-язык, интернет-сленг, социальные сети, социальная культура, социальная психология, языковое отношение.

Introduction

In 1994, the Internet era officially began in China. This "fourth media", following newspapers, radio and television, not only brought great influence to the society, but also provided a new field of study for the academic world. With the popularization of the Internet, an unprecedented Internet language has also developed. Among them, some words with strong spreading ability and high frequency of use have become the current Internet buzzwords. The evolution of Chinese Internet language demonstrates the profound impact of digital connectivity on contemporary society. From its inception in the early days of internet proliferation to its ubiquitous presence today, Chinese Internet language has undergone an extraordinary journey, reflecting changes in societal, cultural, and political dynamics. The core of this linguistic evolution lies in the transformative impact of social media platforms. Forums, blogs, microblogs, and instant messaging services not only democratize the dissemination of information but also enable users to actively engage in public discourse, providing a platform for online dialogue and expression.

The existing excellent research on Chinese Internet language largely originates from Chinese scholars, not only due to their inherent linguistic advantages but also because of China's relatively closed Internet environment. Due to strict Internet regulation in China, social media platforms widely embraced by international audiences are banned in mainland China, making domestic social media platforms the base for Chinese netizens. On one hand, the increasingly stringent Chinese government censorship imposes restrictions on online speech through internet regulation, challenging the development of Chinese Internet language. On the other hand, it also stimulates continuous innovation in Chinese Internet language as netizens employ innovative strategies to circumvent censorship and uphold freedom of speech.

This article provides a comprehensive exploration of the multifaceted nature of Chinese internet language, utilizing survey data and scholarly insights. By examining usage patterns, attitudes, and societal impacts, the authors delve into the rich characteristics of linguistic innovation in contemporary Chinese online communication. Through an analysis of the intricate interplay among language, technology, and culture, the study elucidates how Chinese internet language has evolved from merely serving as a tool for social commentary to actively fostering cultural resonance and reflecting linguistic diversity. It underscores the pivotal role of Chinese internet language in shaping digital discourse and facilitating societal interaction.

The goal of this article is to emphasize that internet language is not only a linguistic phenomenon but also a social and cultural phenomenon, by examining its development, changes, and reflection of social psychology. Furthermore, it aims to enable Chinese language learners and teachers in Kazakhstan to gain a deeper understanding of the Chinese language and Chinese social culture.

Research methods and materials

Some researchers have studied Internet language from the perspective of sociolinguistics. For example, Kang Zhongde published the paper "A Sociolinguistic Investigation of Internet Language" in 2011, "Sociological Analysis of Internet Slang" by Zhang Qian in 2022, Meng Junyang's Analysis of the Production Mechanism and Social Functions of Internet Slang in 2022, and so on. However, similar papers just have emphasized the linguistic features of web languages. In the paper

of Alexandra Valery Draggeim in 2013 "Registration and Influence: Internet Slang and Chinese Social Culture", the author cites Halliday's register theory to explain the relationship between the unique characteristics of Internet language and normative issues, and discusses the use of Internet popular language by netizens, the reasons behind it, as well as explore the popularity of Internet terms and how they reflect the socio-cultural characteristics of contemporary China.

The research materials for this article were all derived from published academic articles and works related to Internet language and Internet buzzwords, the collected data was sourced from social media platforms. During the research, the author primarily employed literature review, descriptive research method. In the initial stages of the research, the author reviewed a substantial amount of existing research findings, organized and analyzed the collected relevant materials to establish a theoretical foundation. Subsequently, a significant number of instances of Internet buzzwords were obtained from social media platforms for analysis. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the social and cultural significance of Internet buzzwords, as well as to achieve an integration of theory and practical application, the author employed a questionnaire survey. The survey was conducted among 50 undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students from China who were studying in Kazakhstan. The choice of international students as the target group was primarily because they all originate from China, are familiar with and understand Chinese Internet language, and are frequent Internet users who are more sensitive to Internet buzzwords. The questionnaire consisted of three parts: students' background information, their usage of Internet language, and their attitudes toward Internet language.

Analysis and results

With the continuous development of information technology, the Internet, with its capacity for information creation and dissemination, is driving a significant transformation in communication media, ranging from form to content to the mode of transmission. According to KAWO's 2023 China Social Media Platform Guide, as of December 2022, Chinese social media users accounted for 95.13% of the total Internet users (based on the data at that time, the number of Chinese Internet users had surpassed 1.067 billion, with an Internet penetration rate of 75.6%). The era of "universal socialization" is driving transformations in social media platforms and content forms. Internet users spend an average of 26.7 hours online per week, with 99.8% using their mobile phones to access the Internet, signifying a rapid change lifestyle habits [1, p.3]. The Internet is exerting unprecedented power, continually impacting and even disrupting the existing social ecosystem, altering people's lifestyles, and opening up another world coexisting with human reality – the online society. On the one hand, the online society provides a platform and means for the free expression of public discourse. On the other hand, it forms new discourse spaces and unique rhetorical modes through social media platforms such as forums and blogs. The public discourse field derived from the online space presents the intuitive experiences and expressions of the public regarding contemporary social life. This is a relatively open, free, and shared space for discourse media [2, p. 42-43].

The act of personal presentation and personal expression in online media have become the daily life style of the public nowadays. The rise of forums, chat rooms, search engines, instant messaging, blogs, microblogs, social networking sites, and many other interactive Internet information platforms has transformed people from media "audiences" to "users". People not only receive information, but also express themselves, create content and share it with each other. People have shifted from passively consuming media content, watching media events, and submitting to mainstream social ideologies to actively creating and sharing information, personally participating in public discussions, and taking part in the social development process. People present themselves in a more open and personalized way, constantly sharing with each other to achieve large-scale knowledge sharing. Every Internet user can make his or her voice heard and express his or her own

opinions and attitudes, and everyone can build a self-owned "We Media" with the help of Internet tools.

Throughout the history of Internet development in China, from 1989 when the Internet officially entered mainland China, and April 1994 when China officially joined the Internet, since then, the increasing number of network users often sit in front of the computer screen to communicate with each other. Like any new language medium, at the beginning, words were always inaccurate, and there were a lot of misunderstandings. Gradually, as netizens have become more and more familiar with the conventions of the Internet, Internet users have gradually found their own voices and modes of expression on the networking platform, which has directly led to the emergence of unique language variations, the Internet language that we are discussing [3, p. 4]. In 2005, the number of Chinese netizens exceeded 100 million, Internet Language began to become an independent variant; in the next six or seven years, the phenomenon of Internet buzzwords reflecting public opinion was escalated from a linguistic fact to a social fact. Reality changes and even conceptual conflicts caused by the transition were promptly presented in Internet buzzwords.

For example, Internet buzzwords from earlier years, such as the term "被就业 [bèi jiù yè]," exposed the irregularities in employment statistics work, where the focus was on presenting attractive data rather than reflecting the facts. This fraudulent behavior not only hurt people's emotions but also hindered the formulation and implementation of national economic plans.

"巨婴 [jù yīng]" originally referred to an infant of enormous size. In recent years, people have used the term to refer to adults who are mentally stuck in infancy. These people are self-centered, lack a sense of rules, have no moral constraints, and when a situation exceeds their expectations, they lose control of their emotions and behave aggressively, using babyish ways to protest to others and even the surrounding environment [4].

Terms like "蜗居[wō jū]" and "蚁族[yǐ zú]" revealed a series of issues related to housing, especially the job and survival pressures faced by college graduates and young people in society.

The popularity of "拼爹[pīn diē]" and its implications reflected the life attitude of the younger generation. This attitude involves abandoning personal struggle and effort, indulging in enjoyment and consumption, particularly the ostentatious displays of wealth that prompted Chinese people to reflect on the changing social psychology.

Similarly, in recent years, the term "内卷[nèi juǎn]" describes excessive competition within a specific field, leading to individuals competing and undermining each other.

"割韭菜[gē jiǔ cài]" is a metaphor for the exploitation of the lower class by those in power and privilege.

"佛系[fó xì]" represents an attitude towards life characterized by having no desires or attachments, experiencing neither extreme happiness nor sadness, and seeking inner peace.

"天选打工人 [tiān xuǎn dǎ gōng rén]" emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic and refers to a situation where conditions favorable for laborers persist, regardless of the circumstances.

These various terms continue to emerge, documenting the phenomena and focal points in the fields of politics, economics, culture, society, law, ethics, and daily life, each in their own unique way and characteristics, reflecting the spirit of the times.

Social media as a network application not only supports users to communicate with each other, but also allows users to produce their own content. In recent years, along with the development of mobile Internet, social media has enjoyed explosive growth. According to Chinese scholars Chen Lidan and others, the purpose of the use of social media by the public is personal socialization and image construction, while social media have the ability to satisfy the psychological needs of users to be "discovered" and "admired", as well as to satisfy the needs of users to "establish relationships" and "exert influence" [5]. The survey indicates Chinese Internet users are mostly teenagers between the ages of 18 and 30. They are no longer satisfied with the

conventional way of communication, but want to have fun and express their individuality through online communication, as well as to gain the recognition of other netizens [3, p. 6].

According to the 52nd Statistical Report on Internet Development in China released by China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) on August 28, 2023 in Beijing, up to June 2023, the scale of Chinese Internet users reached 1.079 billion, and the Internet penetration rate reached 76.4%. In terms of the development of Internet applications, the user scale of instant messaging, online video and short video still ranked in the top three, with a user scale of 1.047 billion, 1.044 billion and 1.026 billion respectively, and a user utilization rate of 97.1%, 96.8% and 95.2% respectively [6]. These figures highlight the huge influence of social media in the Chinese online ecosystem.

At the same time, the Internet has provided a brand new space for human beings to live and develop, and the contemporary social groups who are increasingly dependent on the Internet society have gradually formed a new way of thinking and lifestyle. Ordering takeout for dinner, booking a car on the Internet, sharing food photos on social media, ordering daily necessities on Taobao, purchasing online courses on video websites, sharing learning experiences with others through social media, using social media as a platform for product sales, becoming Internet celebrities and bloggers, and actively engaging in social media interactions have all become a part of our lives. These social media interactions have not only changed our living habits, but also shaped our social relationships and personal identities, changed our language habits, further demonstrating the extensive influence of social media in contemporary society.

In recent years, the government of mainland China has become more and more strict in censoring the Internet, which has also caused the public to rack their brains in order to be able to make comments that are not permitted by the government, and come up with more and more ways to avoid the regulation and blocking of websites, and even utilize harmonic characters for flirting and satire. At the same time, due to the Internet regulation, some internationally popular social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and other foreign Internet products are banned in mainland China. This has led to the emergence of similar localized Internet products, such as Youku.com for watching videos, Sina Weibo for sharing instant messages, and WeChat for instant messaging. Social media has played an important role in this context, becoming not only a platform for people to share their views and build social relationships, but also an important battleground between freedom of expression and government censorship. Social media users often find innovative ways to bypass censorship restrictions, thus making the Internet an important channel for free expression.

The relatively centralized and closed Internet environment in China has, on the one hand, aroused to a certain extent the rebellious mentality of netizens, who want to speak freely to achieve the freedom of speech, and on the other hand, it also provides a more nourishing environment for the emergence and development of Chinese Internet language[3, p.5]. Due to the increasingly strict censorship system in China, some of the key words and sensitive words for the most interesting public events are banned, so netizens racked their brains to come up with some alternatives, which were widely circulated because they gained the hearts and minds of the people, thus avoiding the censorship of the Internet and allowing them to vent their opinions in a single breath.

For example, the term "大白[dà bái]" refers to epidemic prevention workers in mainland China who wear white one-piece protective suits. It frequently appears in online discussions. During the epidemic, China's particularly strict epidemic prevention measures led to public discontent. Many public events during the epidemic period also garnered public attention. When netizens express their dissatisfaction with the epidemic prevention system and workers, they use the term "大白[dà bái]" as an indirect reference.

Similarly, "小阳人[xiǎo yáng rén]" originally referred to lively and energetic people, but during the epidemic, it came to denote individuals who had contracted the novel coronavirus and tested positive for nucleic acid.

"河蟹[hé xiè]" is a Mandarin homophone for "和谐[hé xié]" (harmony), a term that frequently appears in mainland Chinese internet language. The Chinese Communist Party promotes a "harmonious society" policy and, alongside blocking pornographic and violent content, it also forcibly removes or blocks information deemed detrimental to the party's interests under the pretext of maintaining social harmony and stability. In some mainland Chinese forums, the term "和谐[hé xié]" itself has become a banned keyword. To bypass censorship, netizens use "河蟹[hé xiè]" or other homophones as substitutes.

Further more, "ZF" stands for government (政府[zhèng fǔ]), "JC" represents police (警察[jǐng chá]), "ZZZQ" signifies political correctness (政治正确 [zhèng zhì zhèng què]). Such usages have emerged as a way to evade sensitive keywords, in a context where firewalls and internet censorship systems are prevalent.

The survey questionnaire investigated the social media usage patterns of 50 respondents, and we can observe an interesting fact: even when studying abroad, Chinese international students still tend to use Chinese domestic internet products.

The data shows that 92% of the respondents use WeChat, which is an instant messaging application developed by Tencent. It features text messaging, voice messaging, voice input, voice and video calls, photo and video sharing, location sharing, WeChat red envelopes (digital money gifting), and money transfers. However, instant communication is only possible between users who are connected as WeChat contacts.

76% of the respondents use the Chinese version of TikTok, known as Douyin.

68% of respondents use Xiaohongshu (Little Red Book), a Chinese social e-commerce platform that presents information in a Pinterest-style layout and integrates video and live-streaming features. Users can also share product reviews and travel destination descriptions in their "interest notes". This app is often considered as a Chinese version of Instagram, attracting relatively young and educated users.

62% of the respondents use Sina Weibo, a social media website introduced by Sina.com, offering microblogging services. Users can post updates, upload images and videos, or conduct live video streaming for instant sharing and interaction. Currently, it's often referred to as the Chinese counterpart to Twitter.

As for some of the foreign social media platforms that are more popular among local students, the respondents appear to be less interested. Instagram has the highest usage rate at 58%, followed by Facebook at 16%, TikTok at 26%, and Twitter at 10%.

It can be seen that the Internet censorship in China has had a profound impact on the social media choices of Chinese Internet users. Despite the widespread popularity of foreign social media platforms, overseas students still insist on using Chinese platforms. This highlights the impact of Internet censorship in China and the role of social media in shaping individual social interactions and Internet language.

The Chinese language is a language rich in creativity, through a variety of flexible combinations of characters and words, words and words, and changes in the order of speech can express unlimited meaning, this feature makes the creativity of the Chinese Internet language especially prominent. The venting of dissatisfaction by netizens, through the spontaneous avoidance of sensitive vocabulary, maximizes the use of the unique features of the Chinese language and the strengths of the keyboard to convey emotions and ideas, resulting in different internet buzzwords every year. These have become contemporary societal records originating from the grassroots, documenting the human feelings and livelihood [7, p. 20-21].

In this questionnaire survey, the author selected 28 of the most popular Internet buzzwords to investigate the familiarity and usage of these terms among the respondents. The survey results indicate that the majority of respondents (58%) are familiar with over 20 of these terms, while 14% of students are familiar with 10-20 terms, and 22% of students are familiar with less than 10 of the mentioned terms. However, relatively few respondents actively use Internet buzzwords. 60% of the respondents stated that they use fewer than 10 of the 28 terms in their regular communication. In other words, they may only use the most popular terms, limiting the range of vocabulary they use.

Regarding the reasons for using Internet language, in addition to most students believing that it allows them to express their sense of humor, making their communication more interesting and playful, some students also feel it allows them to stand out and be unique. Furthermore, some students provided additional reasons, such as being able to better express their current emotions and thoughts, the concise nature of Internet language, being influenced by those around them, and meeting the current language demands.

An open-ended question in the questionnaire survey asked respondents to write down the Internet vocabulary they use most frequently. To better understand the preferences of the respondents in terms of vocabulary, the author categorized the emotions conveyed by these words into several types, including expressions of dissatisfaction and sadness, expressions of compliance or helplessness, indications of negative social phenomena, words used to convey positive affirmation or surprise, simple abbreviations, and others. According to the statistics, the most frequently used Internet buzzwords include words like "摆烂 [bǎi làn]", "躺平 [tǎng píng]", "卷 [juǎn]", "割韭菜 [gē jiǔ cài]" and "凡尔赛 [fán ěr sài]", among others. These words encompass negative or dissatisfied meanings and are used to vent emotions related to negative social phenomena.

Hence, it is evident that although respondents perceive the main reason for using Internet language as "fun" and "humor", there are deeper underlying reasons, such as expressing their dissatisfaction or venting emotions related to negative social phenomena. Contemporary Chinese society is undergoing a period of transition, where people's behaviors, lifestyles, and value systems are changing. As the pace of life accelerates, young people living in this transitional period are deeply affected by the pressures of their social environment.

If the spread of Internet buzzwords remains only at the internet level, its societal impact is relatively limited. To garner widespread social attention, penetrate the daily lives of the populace, and gain their acceptance, internet slang cannot do without the official discourse system and the use of traditional media [8, p. 77].

For instance, there are school clubs named "YYDS (永远的神 [yǒng yuǎn de shén])", and restaurants and shops with names based on internet slang, such as "饭跑跑快餐 [fàn pǎo pǎo kuài cān]" (Fan Pao Pao Fast Food), "欢乐送快餐 [huān lè sòng kuài cān]" (Happy Delivery Fast Food), "偶卖糕的[ǒu mài gāo de] (oh my god)" cake shop, and "鸭梨山大烤鸭店 [yā lí shān dà kǎo yā diàn]" (Duck Mountain Roast Duck Shop). Even in some mainstream media reports, in order to attract public attention, titles containing internet slang are frequently used. For example, the official WeChat account of the People's Daily used the title "YYDS! 中国举重梦之队 [zhōngguó jǔzhòng mèng zhī duì]" (YYDS! China's Dream Weightlifting Team) to report on China's weightlifting team's performance at the Tokyo Olympics; another example is the Chinese version of BBC News, which reported on the phenomenon of China's economic downturn in the wake of the epidemic leading to an increase in youth unemployment and thus a shift to the online car industry, under the headline "三个月新增 40 万人：中国经济低迷下"内卷"的网约车司机 [sān ge yuè xīn zēng 40 wàn rén：zhōng guó jīng jì dī mí xià "nèi juǎn" de wǎng yuē chē sī jī] (Three months, 400,000 new

additions: China's economy slump leads to intensified competition among online ride-hailing drivers.)".

Similarly, the survey indicates that among the 50 students surveyed, 86% of the students use Internet language in situations other than social media. For instance, 38% of the students use Internet language when chatting face-to-face with friends, 10% of them employ Internet language while conversing with their parents, and even 4% of students use them when doing homework and presentations. It is evident that the use of Internet language is no longer confined to the online realm but has permeated various aspects of people's lives.

People's attitudes towards Internet language play a crucial role in its development. Internet language is a form of expression created by online communities and embraced by netizens, so attitudes directly influence the way it evolves and its scope. A positive attitude can stimulate innovation and dissemination. When netizens are receptive to new forms of Internet language, they are more likely to experiment with and spread these fresh modes of expression. This encourages netizens to continuously innovate on the Internet, driving the ongoing evolution of Internet language.

Secondly, people's attitudes are also reflected in the social acceptance of Internet language. When netizens find a particular form interesting, useful, or aligned with their social groups, they are more inclined to accept and use it. This social acceptance further promotes the dissemination and evolution of the Internet language.

Negative attitudes can potentially hinder the development of certain aspects of Internet language. At times, some Internet slang or expressions may face criticism or be perceived as vulgar and uncivilized. This aversion may restrict or gradually lead to the decline of certain vocabulary.

Through survey data, we can draw some interesting conclusions about attitudes towards Internet language and its impact. First, regarding the acceptance of Internet language, 46% of respondents stated that they somewhat accept the existence of Internet slang, with 18% expressing very positive attitudes. This indicates that the majority of people hold a positive view of Internet language, with no one expressing disapproval. This suggests that Internet language has been to some extent socially accepted.

However, attitudes toward the impact of Internet language on the Chinese language are more diverse. 26% of respondents believe that Internet language has a positive impact on the Chinese language, while 22% think it has a negative impact, and 52% remain neutral. This indicates that some people see Internet language as bringing innovation and richness, while others are concerned about its potential negative effects on language quality.

In the context of whether Internet language affects writing skills, 44% of people hold a positive view, believing that it indeed affects writing, while 56% reject this view. This once again underscores the divergence in attitudes towards Internet language, with some perceiving potential negative impacts and others seeing no significant influence on writing skills.

The reactions of individuals to people around them frequently using Internet language can also reflect their views on Internet slang and their own use of it. In the survey, a majority of respondents (74%) expressed an attitude of "indifference – it is someone's freedom to say whatever they want", while 14% found it "interesting". This illustrates the tolerance towards Internet Language and freedom of expression. In the ideology of Internet users, online platforms serve as a space for free expression, and the Internet is a platform for public discourse. Moreover, the non-conformity and flexibility of Internet language make it particularly suitable for satire, making it easy to capture others' attention. Therefore, Internet slang plays a crucial role in Chinese social and cultural psychology. In a context where freedom of speech is limited, the Chinese people use Internet slang to express their intentions, reflecting their pursuit of the right to free speech. This, in essence, is a universal human pursuit of freedom and self-expression.

In contrast to the development of Kazakhstani Kazakh Internet slang, the Chinese Internet language has spread widely in China. This brings us back to the very basic question: what made Internet buzzwords so prevalent and instantly popular in Chinese society? First of all, in addition to the development of the Internet and the advancement of information technology, which are the "solid conditions", the unique Internet environment as well as Chinese society and culture have played a key role. Many examples of Internet vocabulary mentioned above are related to a certain social phenomenon in China, some of which are associated with specific events, and some of which are popular and favored by the public only because of their rich expressive ability and their ability to summarize and describe the event and the phenomenon.

Furthermore, popular Internet slang satisfies Chinese-style sociopsychological needs. Many experts argue that China is currently undergoing a transitional phase, resulting in a transformation of the fundamental nature of Chinese society. This period has given rise to distinctive sociocultural psychological characteristics among its populace. With the increasing number of people going online, these netizens seek novelty, excitement, and a desire for acceptance among their online peers. They readily engage in humor and may voice grievances about societal or political issues in the online sphere. Internet slang that resonates with the sociocultural needs of the people is more likely to gain popularity [9, p. 144-146].

Moreover, the sociocultural psychological needs of netizens are influenced by traditional Chinese beliefs, particularly in the context of Confucianism. Contemporary Chinese society represents a semi-open system that blends Confucian ideals with Western liberalism. Consequently, the sociocultural psychology of Chinese netizens differs somewhat from their Western counterparts, although they share certain elements related to individualism and freedom [10].

Chinese Internet language exhibits a diverse nature. This diversity is evident not only in the variety of vocabulary, which includes new words, reimagined usage of existing terms, abbreviations, numerals, and letters, but also encompasses various themes and concepts. These themes range from social phenomena to entertainment, current affairs, and politics. Humor is generated through techniques such as puns, homophones, and references to traditional culture. This creativity and humor, coupled with vast population and geographical diversity of China, lead to the creation and adoption of region-specific Internet language, further enhancing its diversity. The continuous emergence of new vocabulary and the gradual fading of older terms maintain the freshness. The diversity of Internet language plays a significant role in its popularity. Slang terms that fail to stand out have a lower likelihood of becoming popular.

Finally, many scholars contend that Chinese Internet language is enriching the cultural depth of Chinese society. From a linguistic perspective, Internet language provides new cultural references to contemporary Mandarin, making the language more lively, expressive, and vibrant. In the process of coining Internet language, netizens reintroduce certain characteristics of traditional language, such as incorporating elements of classical Chinese or reusing older Chinese characters in novel ways. These aspects imbue Internet language with greater cultural significance and make it more appealing to the general public.

In summary, the widespread dissemination and distinctive development of Chinese Internet language are closely tied to the unique Internet environment and socioculture in China. These expressions are linked to social phenomena, cater to Chinese social psychological needs, the diversity and creativity allow them to cover various topics and concepts while adapting to the demands of different regions and groups, ensuring their novelty. Additionally, Internet language enriches the cultural essence of Chinese society by introducing new language elements, making the Chinese language more vibrant and colorful. This phenomenon not only reflects the development and transformation of Chinese society but also underscores the significant role of Internet language within Chinese society and how it fulfills and shapes the socio-cultural needs of public. Chinese Internet language is an integral part of Chinese social evolution, representing a product of the

diversity of Chinese culture. Its development and influence are expected to continue expanding, contributing a unique linguistic and cultural wealth to the future development of Chinese society.

Conclusion

Social media has become an important part of our daily lives. Chinese Internet language is unique not only in its creativity and diversity, but also in the importance of using Internet language to preserve freedom of expression due to the Chinese government's strict censorship. Censorship restrictions have not only allowed netizens to give full play to their imagination to cleverly avoid sensitive words and create a batch of Internet buzzwords that are popular and express public opinion, but have also promoted the rise of localized social media platforms. Although Chinese netizens are in a limited online environment, the innovation and development of Internet language continues. The results of the questionnaire survey show that people's attitudes towards Internet language remain positive, although they are diverse. Positive attitudes can promote the innovation and popularity of Internet language, while negative attitudes may limit its development. The creativity of Chinese Internet language expresses emotions and thoughts through flexible combinations of words and vocabulary, reflects the spirit of the times, and records people's emotions and lives. Internet language has penetrated into all aspects of Chinese society and is widely used not only in the online domain but also in face-to-face social interactions, which has had a profound impact on the development and influence of Internet language. Due to time and resource constraints, there is still room for further improvement in this paper, such as adding examples to the argumentation and expanding the scope and content of the questionnaire survey in order to obtain more comprehensive research results.
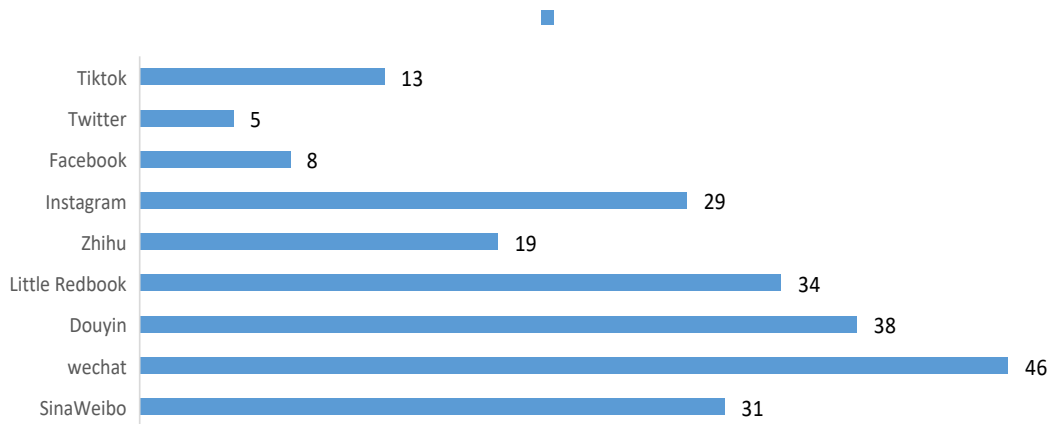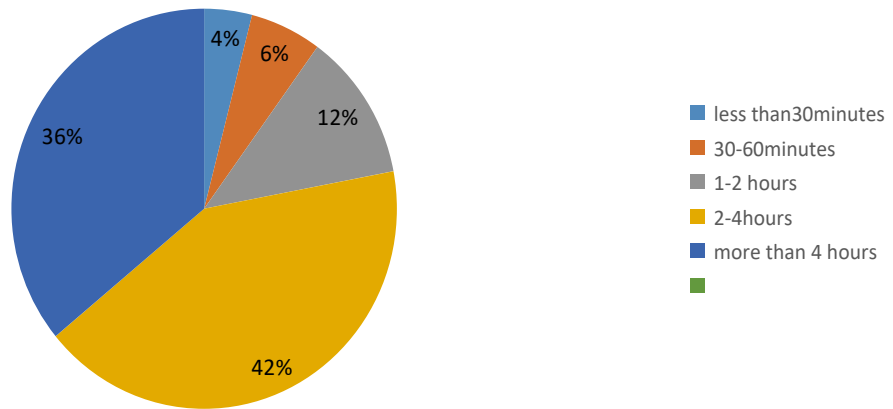
Appendix

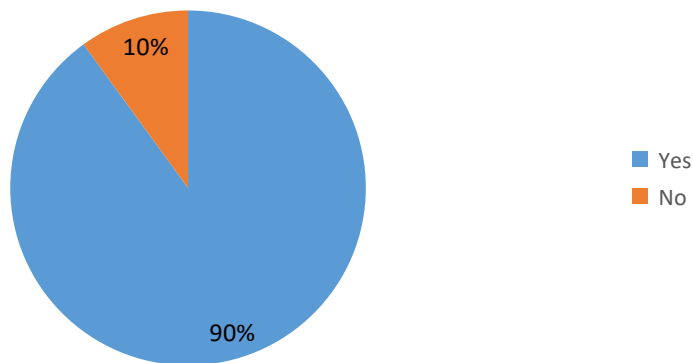**Questionnaire results**

How old are you？
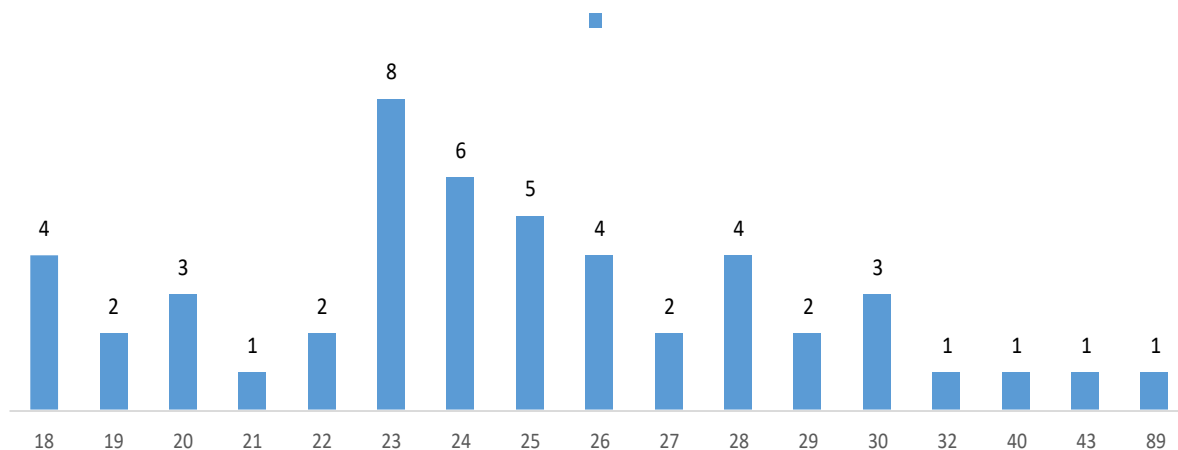
Which social media platforms do you use?

The average amount of time you spend using social media each day


- less than30minutes
- 30-60minutes
- 1-2 hours
- 2-4hours
- more than 4 hours

Do you use online terms (e.g., acronyms, emoticons, internet slang, etc.) to interact with others on social media?
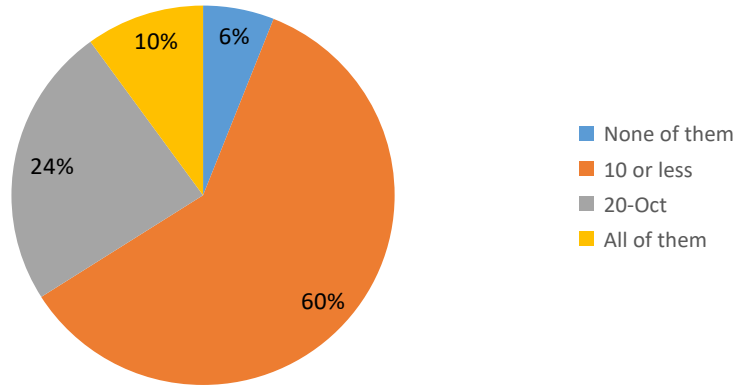

- Yes
- No

28 of the most popular Internet buzzwords

YYDS [yǒng yuǎn de shén]

摆烂 [bǎi làn]

卷 [juǎn]

躺平 [tǎng píng]

凡尔赛 [fán ěr sài]

割韭菜 [gē jiǔ cài]

芭比 Q [bā bǐ Q]

栓 Q [shuān Q]

上头 [shàng tóu]

大冤种 [dà yuān zhǒng]

爷青回 [yé qīng huí]

天选打工人 [tiān xuǎn dǎ gōng rén]

一整个 x 住 [yī zhěng gè x zhù]

xswl [xiào sǐ wǒ le]

显眼包 [xiǎn yǎn bāo]

种草 [zhòng cǎo]

尊嘟假嘟 [zūn dū jiǎ dū]

佛系 [fó xì]

巨婴 [jù yīng]

沉浸式 xx [chén jìn shì xx]

精神内耗 [jīng shén nèi háo]

emo

天花板 [tiān huā bǎn]

冰墩墩 [bīng dūn dūn]

主打一个 xx [zhǔ dǎ yī gè xx]

家人们谁懂啊 [jiā rén men shéi dǒng ā]
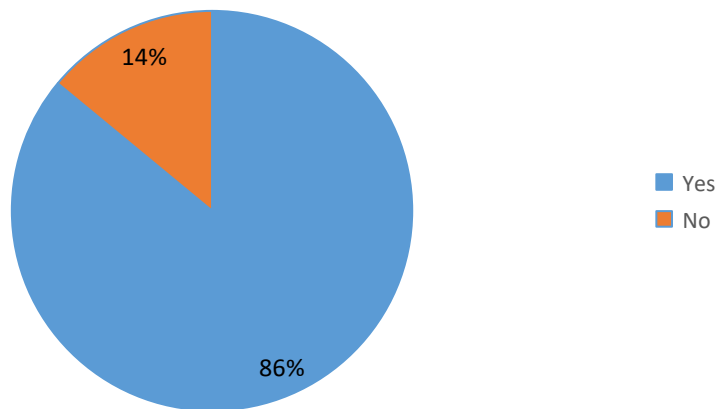
i 人和 e 人 [i rén hé e rén]

CPU 你 [CPU nǐ]

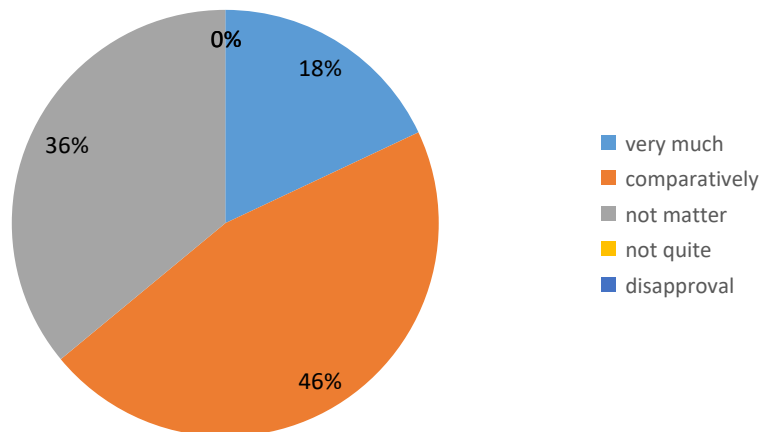**How many of the above Internet terms do you recognize?**

6%	None of them
22%	10 or less
14%	20-Oct
58%	more than 20
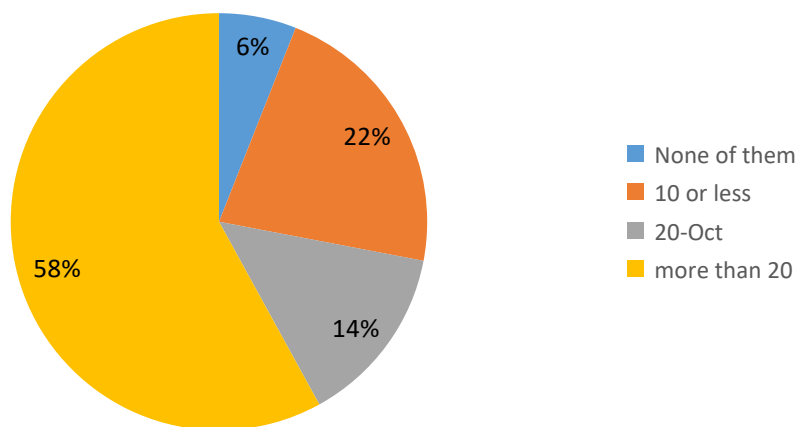
How many of the above Internet terms do you use frequently?

- None of them
- 10 or less
- 20-Oct
- All of them

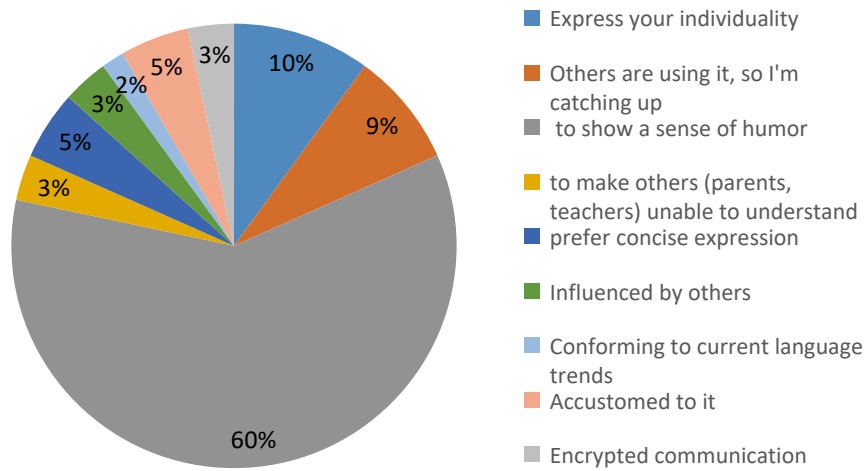### Have you ever used any of the above online terms in contexts other than social media?

- Yes
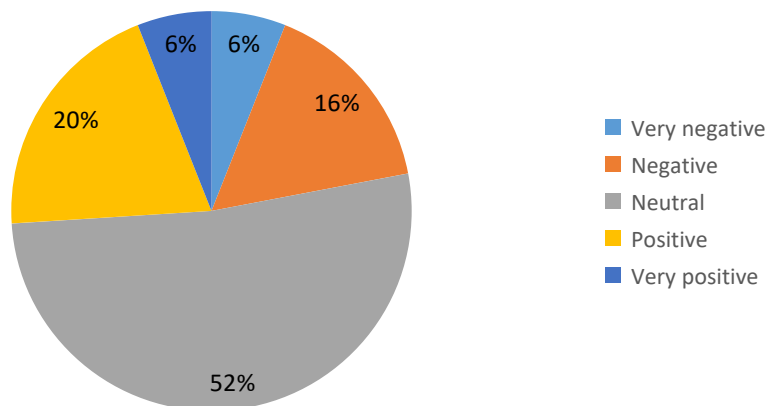- No

Do you accpet the existence of internet terms?

- very much
- comparatively
- not matter
- not quite
- disapproval

Your main reason for using internet terms is

- Express your individuality
- Others are using it, so I'm catching up
- to show a sense of humor
- to make others (parents, teachers) unable to understand
- prefer concise expression
- Influenced by others
- Conforming to current language trends
- Accustomed to it
- Encrypted communication

In which of the following situations do you use Internet terms?

Situation	Value
Leaving a comment	1
Playing games	1
Chatting with friends on the Internet	3
when doing homework at home	3
When posting instant messages online	24
While giving a presentation at the school	1
When talk to parents	10
Chatting with friends face to face	38
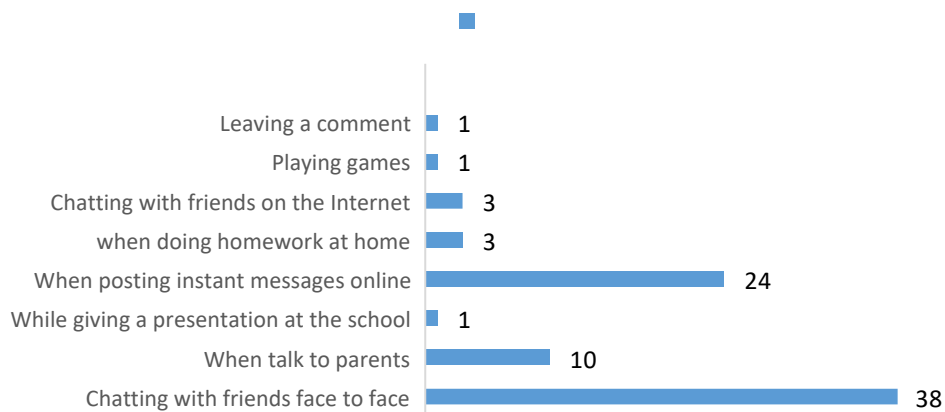
Do you think the influence of Internet terms on the Chinese language is positive or negative?

- Very negative
- Negative
- Neutral
- Positive
- Very positive

What is your attitude if people around you often use internet terms?

- Disgusted. Why can't we talk properly?
- Cannot understand what they mean
- It doesn't matter. It's their freedom to say what they want.
- I think it's interesting

10% 2% 14% 74%
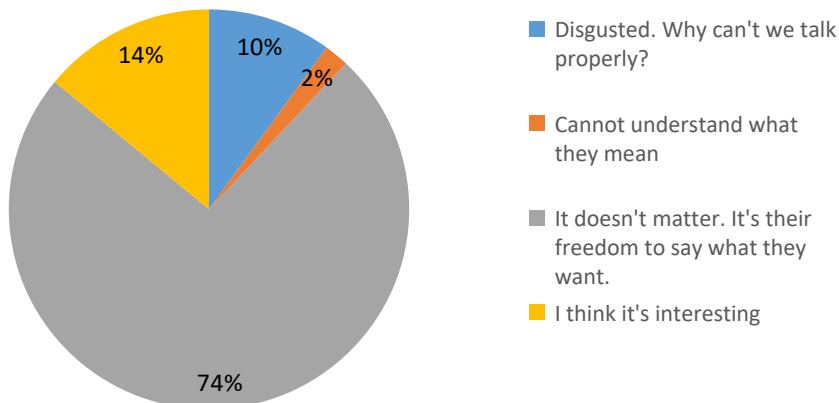
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