

The Philosophical Relationship Between the Origin of English and Chinese Affixes and Their Word Format

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Abstract—Western scholars believe that the difference between Chinese and Western languages is a conceptual gap in their traditions, apply the Western phonetic-centered language philosophy theory to study Chinese and Chinese characters, and put forward a series of ideas and views on the comparison of Chinese characters and Western languages, believing that Chinese characters as a thinking tool are far inferior to languages with perfect grammatical forms, and that Chinese remains in the childhood stage of human language development. This paper aims to reveal how Western scholars based on phonetic centrism and logocentrism ignore the particularity of Chinese characters, and should not copy the western language philosophy theory when understanding the nature of Chinese characters, but should pay attention to the characteristics and advantages of Chinese characters in the process of historical development.

Index Terms—phonetic centrism and logocentrism, philosophical relationship, English and Chinese affixes, word formation

I. INTRODUCTION

Hegel (1831), a famous German philosopher and one of the representatives of German idealist philosophy in the 19th century, wrote his views on China at that time in his book *Historical Philosophy* according to the social reality of the Qing Dynasty, "Their writing is a big obstacle to the development of science. Or, on the contrary, because the Chinese people do not have a real interest in science, they do not get a better job to express and instill ideas" (Hegel, 1817, p.20).

His view can even be argued that it gave rise to the "New Culture Movement". Many Chinese scholars at that time believed that Chinese characters were the root of the tribulation that pushed China into the abyss. The abolition of Chinese characters is therefore a widespread claim of new cultural activists. Hegel also believed that hieroglyphs were empiricism that limited freedom of thought; and their phonetic script is the most rational and imaginative text. He divided the Chinese script into "oral writing" and "written writing", the latter not representing sound, but using symbols to represent ideas themselves, which he considered a disadvantage (Wen, 2017, p.10). The founder of structuralism and modern linguistic theory, Ferdinand de Saussure, believed that language is a science based on symbols and meaning. In his book *Introduction to Linguistics*, he divided the world's languages into two broad categories: ideographs and phonetic scripts (Saussure, 1966, p.26.), and classified Chinese as ideographs, he noted that "in the ideographic system every written symbol represents a word and the meaning expressed by the word (1968)". Saussure limited his linguistic research to the phonological system and the Western alphabet language. Saussure pointed out that as an ideograph, the visuality of Chinese characters distinguishes it from phonetic system scripts.

The American sinologist and poetry theorist Ernest Fenollosa (1968) had a major influence on the Imagist poetry movement represented by the famous poet Ezra Pound in the early 20th century. Pound not only published his foundational work on Chinese character poetics, *Chinese Characters as a Poetic Medium*, but also wrote a preface to it and included this article as part of the theory of image poetry. The school represented by Fenollosa and Pound exaggerated the visuality of Chinese characters into a theory of the essence of images.

Prevent. Du Ponceau misinterpreted the ideographicality of Chinese characters as "language is produced to cater to the script" and did not agree with the ideographic theory of Chinese characters at all. Among contemporary linguists, Du. Bonso's strongest advocates were Peter Boodburg, John DeFancis, and William Boltz, as prestigious sinologists who insisted that Chinese characters were no difference from Western languages .

Wilhelm von Humboldt, the German linguist, and statesman argued that "Chinese as a tool of thought is undoubtedly far inferior to a language with a well-established grammatical form." "In Chinese, there is no grammatical form at all." In his book *On the Universality of Grammatical Forms and the Characteristics of the Chinese Language*, he believed that the Chinese language developed in the childhood stage of human language, which roughly represented his overall view of Chinese.

Friedrich Max Muller, an English Chinese and founder of Western religious studies, used Chinese as a representative of the isolated language. He believes that ancient Chinese has no traces of grammar. In Chinese, a prescriptive root itself can be used as a noun, verb, adjective, or adverb, such as "da(大)" without any form of change, and can be great, greatness, to be great. "Chinese as a tool of thinking is undoubtedly far inferior to languages with perfect grammatical forms." Chinese lacks inflection, does not adapt words to fit the use of sentences, and cannot guide their meaning. Thus, this feature "limits the possibility of Chinese constructing sentences, forcing Chinese to cut off long sentences, and thus preventing thought from developing freely along a longer string of propositions."

Derrida's Treatise on Philology argues that the civilization of the alphabet establishes the privilege of a language and his logocentrism. Logos is a rationality based on the language of the alphabet, the essence of which is based on hearing. Compared with ideographic hieroglyphs, there is a high degree of consistency between the listening-speaking-writing of alphabetic languages. By its very nature, the alphabetic language appeals to formal logic to the exclusion of images, and it is in this sense that the phonetics of the alphabetical language follow a linear or continuous formal norm as soon as they are opened, establishing a unique conceptual form of writing, which in effect is what people usually say: pinyin script is more precise, rigorous, and more logical than hieroglyphs (Shang, 2018).

It is true that there are no inflection changes in Chinese, no end-of-word changes, no verb changes; it does not mark the various parts of speech, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, etc. Is there such a bottle neck in Chinese? That is, thinking cannot be expressed in Chinese? Is Chinese an image language? In the following, we will discuss the self-derived nature of English and Chinese word formation and its source analysis.

II. FORMATION OF ENGLISH AND CHINESE AFFIXES

In recent decades, there have been a large number of monographs, papers and modern Chinese textbooks involving affixes, affix is a topic that scholars have been discussing endlessly, comparing various sayings, using the name or name as "mark", or "word beginning (end)", or "front (back) affix", or "front (back) additional element ", or "front (back) component" and so on. Additive lexical method is one of the ways in which Chinese synthetic words are constructed, which is a linguistic fact that is unanimously recognized by the grammatical community. In many languages in the world, many basic meanings are represented by two or more symbols, one is a word or root word that can be used alone, and the other is a side or glued morpheme that cannot be used alone. In terms of word-building ability, the former is very limited, while the latter has a very active word-building ability (Wang, 1995). In the treatises of Gao Mingkai (1944), Zhao Yuanren (1948), Lü Shuxiang (1944), and Zhang Zhigong (1984), some are divided into "purer pre(post)plus elements " and "quasi-pre (post) plus elements", some are divided into "typical affixes" and "morphemes with a wide front (post)", some are divided into "suffixes" and "quasi-affixes", and some are divided into "virtualized unfree morphemes" and "semi-virtualized unfree morphemes".

Zhu Hongjie (1991) gave a unified name to the common additional components of word construction: typical affixes are called "affixes", which can be divided into 'prefixes' and "suffixes": the other type is called "class components", or "class affixes", of which can be divided into "prefix' and end of words" ('prefix" that is, "prefix", "prefix", that is, "end of words").

In Chinese, the word "water" has very limited word-building ability, only about 20, while "氵" can constitute about 600 Chinese characters. The English word water is just a word, and there are a dozen compound words made up of water. The adhesive word hydro, which represents the meaning of water, can form more than 300 words.

The following table is a comparison of the English and Chinese parts of the corresponding side and morphemes:

CHINESE CHARACTERS		ENGLISH WORDS	
CHINESE CHARACTERS USED ALONE	RADICALS	ROOT	STICKY MORPHEME
人 (PERSON)	亻	MAN	ANTHROP-
水 (WATER)	氵, 冫	WATER	HYDRO-
心 (HEART)	忄	HEART	CORD
足 (FOOT)	足	FOOT	PED,POD
走 (WALK)	辶	GO	CEED,GRESS
言 (LANGUAGE)	讠	SPEAK	LOG(UE)
手 (HAND)	扌	HAND	MAN(U),CHIRO
病 (ILL)	疒	DISEASE	PATH(O)
金 (IRON)	钅	METAL	-IUM

English is a morphological language, and there are many ways to construct words in English, but they are mainly conjugated by root and word conjugation, so English affixes are very rich. Affixes tend to be a single morpheme; Affixes are sticky, can only be attached to one base, change their meaning or grammatical function, and often cannot be used alone. English words are composed of a certain amount of morphemes, which can be seen through contrast, which are equivalent to the partial radicals in Chinese characters (Wang, 1995).

The different scripts in the world can be divided into two main categories according to the genetic criteria: self-sourced or endogeneity and borrowed or exogeneity. The so-called self-origin script refers to the independent

development of the script from the beginning of the production of the script, which is its own original in the shape and system of the text, and has a long history, such as: Chinese characters, Sumerian cuneiform script in western Asia, and Maya script in Central America. Non-native script refers to the text that is borrowed or established by reference to other writing forms or systems, such as Japanese is borrowed from Chinese characters, English, French, etc. are borrowed from the Latin alphabet and Greek alphabet, and the Greek alphabet is borrowed from ancient Egyptian. Non-native script has an adaptive relationship with the language that is associated with, while at the same time having a certain degree of independence (Li, 1988).

III. THE SELF-DERIVED NATURE OF ENGLISH AFFIXES AND ITS ORIGIN

Nowadays, similar derivative word construction methods are becoming more and more common, and English affixes are mostly its source affixes (affixes from other national languages), mainly from Latin (such as super-, sub-, mai-, ab-, de-, dis-, ante-, pre-, etc.), Greek (such as hyper-, hypo-, poly-, etc.), and Anglo-Saxon (such as over-, under-, mis-, fore-, etc.). These other source affixes account for a large proportion and have strong word-building ability. Only a small number of affixes in English are English auto-origin affixes (affixes from ancient languages of their own people). This is also the main reason why there are many synonyms in English (such as semi- and hemi-, sub- and under-, etc.).

Most of the characteristics of English prefixes only change the meaning of the word without changing the part of speech. Therefore, the classification of English prefixes is mainly based on meaning. Quirk classifies affixation in *The Complete Grammar of Contemporary English* (Quirk et al. 1985, p.1539-1557). Stem- the main part of a word that stays the same when endings are added to it. Such as: man, person, abattoir, rhinoceros and so on. The stem 'Writ' is the stem of the forms 'writes', 'writing' and 'written'. writ is the stem of the three words writes, writing and written. The division of affixes is not universal, and Quirk believes (1985, p.1557) that many stems are debatable, such as: reservoir (natural or artificial lake where water is stored before it is taken by pipes to houses, etc.); Reservoir, but has little to do with the verb form "serve" of the same part of reserve, preserve, deserve.

A. Prefixation

1. Negative prefixes: a-, dis-, in- (variants il-, ir-, im-), un-, non-;
2. Reversative or privative prefixes: de-, dis-, un-
3. Pejorative prefixes: mal-, mis-, pseudo-
4. Prefixes of degree or size: arch-, co-, extra-, hyper-, macro-, micro-, mini-, out-, over-, sub-, super-, ultra-, under;
5. Prefixes of orientation and attitude: anti-, contra-, counter-, pro-;
6. Locative prefixes: extra-, fore-, inter-, intra-, super-, tele-, trans-;
7. Prefixes of time and order: ex-, fore-, post-, pre-, re-;
8. Neo-classical items: (1) number prefixes, (2) Miscellaneous neo-classical prefixes of other types: auto-, neo-, pan-, proto-, vice-.
- 9 Conversion prefixes: a-, be-, en-;

B. Suffixation

1. The new word constituted is the suffix of the noun (i.e., the noun suffix) a. The suffixes added after the noun to mean "person" or "thing" are -eel, -er, -ess, -ette, -let, -ster
2. The suffixes added after the verb to indicate "person" or "thing" are -ant, -ee, -ent, -er, etc
3. The suffixes added after the noun to indicate "people, people" or "language, belief" are -ese, -an, -ist, -ite, etc
4. plus the noun after the "nature, state" of the following level are, -age, -dom, -ery(ry), -ful, -hood, -ing, -ism, -ship, etc
5. The appendages that are added to the verb to indicate "nature, state" are -age, -alice, -ation(-tion, -sion), -ence, -ing, -ment, etc.
6. The suffixes added to the table after the adjective "state of nature" are -ity, -ness, etc
7. The new word constituted is the suffix of the adjective (i.e., the adjective suffix). There are two types of such suffixes, one is added after the noun to form an adjective -ed, -ful, -ish, -less, -like, -ly, -y, -al (-ial, -ical), -esque, -ic, -ous(-eous, -ous) and the other is added after the verb to form the adjective suffix -able, (-ible), -ative (-sive, -ive) and so on.
8. The new word constituted is the adverb level (that is, the adverb level), such a suffix has three main types, one is added to the adjective to form an adverb suffix -ly; One is a post-level ward that forms an adverb after a noun or adjective, -wards; The other is the suffix wise, that is added to the noun to form an adverb, to form a new word that is suffixed to the verb (i.e., the verb suffix), which has two main types, one is added to the noun to form the verb's suffix atc and (-), and the other is the suffixes that form the verb after the adjective - cn and iy.

IV. ENDOGENEITY AND EXOGENEITY OF CHINESE AFFIXES AND THEIR ORIGIN

Chinese morphemes are a combination of sound, shape, and semantics, and a word represents a morpheme. Chinese morpheme is generally more active in word construction, and the combination of morphemes and morphemes are the

main way of Chinese word construction (Dong,2005). The affixes in modern Chinese were produced in the Wei and Jin dynasties (300AD), and have been added from generation to generation.

A. *Self-Derived Intrinsic Morphemes*

Most of the Chinese affixes are self-derived intrinsic morphemes, and its derivation mechanism is the result of the virtualization and formalization of real words in ancient Chinese from a diachronic point of view, from an original independent real word prime to non-morpheme, attached to the real morpheme, thus becoming affix in modern Chinese (Li, 2013).

The vocabulary in the ancient books before the Pre-Qin Dynasty (about 20BC) was mainly monosyllabic, but the development of Chinese to the Han and Tang Dynasties (about 600-900AD), the number of polysyllabic words increased greatly, the vocabulary was greatly enriched, and the affixes of A(阿), Zi (子), Head (头), and Primary (初) were formed, and many additional two-syllable words appeared. Other common suffixes are “-然”、“-子”、“-者”、“-自”、“-尔”、“-而”、“-若”、“-之”、“-当”、“-头”、“-得”、“-著”、“-却”、“-地”、“-了”、“-其”、“-将”、“-生”、“-复”、“-可”etc. These suffixes are basically unequivocal, the meaning of the whole word is on the previous morpheme, and the main function of the suffix is to make up the syllables.

B. *Subordinate Chinese Characters that Indicate the Parts of Speech*

In Chinese, there are also some subordinate Chinese characters that indicate the parts of speech, such as the post-level "匠", "生", "工" or "长" of the noun indicating professionalism, etc., and add the root word to form "石匠 stonemason", "漆匠 lacquer craftsman", "学生 student"; "医生 Doctor", "电工 Electrician", "军长 Commander", etc. Adjectives or verb nounized suffixes are also available, such as "聋子 the deaf", "瘦子 a thin person", "矮子 a short person", etc. are nouns composed of suffix "sub" after the adjectives "thin", "short", etc. Chinese suffixes are much more than prefixes, Chinese suffixes constitute nouns on the base, of course, Chinese also has suffixes that make up other word classes, but not as simple and stable as English suffixes. Zhang Yunqiu (2002) took "Xhua" as an example, and showed that the words composed of Chinese suffixes are unstable in word class performance, and there are different sub-categories within them, showing a phenomenon of gradual weakening of verbs and gradual enhancement of nounity.

Related to a certain class of words, Chinese suffixes are generally divided by semantic types, mainly in the following six categories (Zhang, 2007, p. 38; Dong, 2005, p. 14):

1. The suffix that represents a person:

(1) A suffix that represents a job title, occupation, or position: 士、工、长、生、家、师、夫、员 etc.

(2) A suffix that represents a relative or honorific title: 父、子、亲、夫、爷 etc.

(3) A suffix that represents emotion: 族、霸、头、者、生、汉、丁、郎、鬼、概、迷、徒、贩、犯 etc.

2. A suffix that represents a unit of measure: 斤、两、口、群、间、座、朵、粒、本、幅、卷、册、匹 etc.

3. A suffix that represents an abstract concept: 性、派、学、论、度、法、化、主义 etc.

4. A suffix that represents premises: 厂、站、室、场、馆、院 etc.

5. A suffix that represents a machine: 台、床、仪、机 etc.

6. Two-tone suffix: 子、儿、头、然 etc.

Compared with modern Chinese, contemporary Chinese has a tendency to affix to class words, which is manifested in two aspects, one is the phenomenon of internal assimilation: the virtualization of root morphemes into class affixes.

The second is the phenomenon of external inverse assimilation: the foreign pure phonetic component is realized into exogenous affixes with word-constructing meaning, and then the exogenous affixes are conjugated into exogenous affixes.

V. THE PHILOSOPHICAL RELEVANCE OF CHINESE AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND WRITINGS

During the Wei and Jin dynasties (about 300AD), people discussed the essence of linguistic expression, and Wang Bi emphasized the semantic expression of symbols and language. In his book *Zhou Yi Sketch Example*, Wang Bi began by discussing the relationship between image (image), meaning (thought) and speech (language). His expression clearly shows that the Theory of Chinese language is very different from the Western theory of alphabetic language, which emphasizes speech. Wang Bi borrowed Zhuangzi's fables in "MingXiang" to further emphasize the semantic orientation of Chinese symbol reproduction. Zhuangzi's fables and further interpretations by Wang Bi and other scholars suggest that in the philosophy of Chinese language, ideas, and meanings are emphasized rather than sounds in Western languages (Gu, 2013). Scholars who oppose literal ideography ignore the meaning-oriented tradition proposed by Zhuangzi and Chinese thinkers, who emphasize colloquialism over concepts.

Some scholars (Gao, 1944; Zhao, 1948; Lü, 1944; Zhang, 1984) believe that the surface construction of the first sequence of Chinese characters is the logical order of strokes, the inner layer construction is the logical order of meaning in etymology, and the deep construction is the dynamic system of traditional philosophical thought, this dynamic system, from concrete to abstract, and from abstract to concrete. Combining astronomical, geological, and

humanistic views, it reveals the deep philosophical implications of "Bushou (a Chinese character component; a radical on one side of a character: a traditionally recognized component (or radical) of a Chinese character)" (Ji, 1999).

Therefore, from the perspective of the generation of Chinese characters, some Chinese characters have pictographic and referential functions, and Ferdinand de Saussure (1966) is correct in believing that Chinese characters are visual. Rousseau's view that pictorial writing belongs to primitive people, symbolic or ideographic characters belong to obscurantist people, and alphabetic writing belongs to civilized people is more one-sided. Fenorosa (1968) and Pound's Chinese character images are essentially the result of a lack of deep understanding of Chinese characters.

Gu Mingdong (2013) believes that Western scholars have put forward a series of ideas and views on the comparison of Chinese characters with Western languages and characters based on metaphysical phonetic centrism and logocentrism. Western epistemology and methodology ignore the particularity of Chinese characters, the Western language theory derived from pinyin characters is not a universal truth that is universally applicable, and when understanding the nature of Chinese characters, western language theories should not be copied, but more attention should be paid to the characteristics of Chinese characters that are different from Western pinyin characters in the process of historical development.

VI. CONCLUSION

The components and functions of Chinese characters are the basis for constituting the synchronic system, and the combination of shapes, functions, and configuration levels of components are all based on components and their functions. The generation and full realization of the ideographic function and the indication function are the basis for promoting the development of the entire Chinese character system, which is determined by the identity of Chinese characters as the symbols of the phonetic meanings of recorded words. The ideographic function and the indication function of the component are produced at the same time, and both of them play an important role in the development of Chinese characters. Hieroglyphs are not only the depiction of the image, but also the transformation of the image, the selection and grasp of the typical characteristics and structure of the image, and it is the advanced stage of development from concrete to abstract.

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