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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MONGOLIAN AND CHINESE BLESSING EXPRESSIONS

JinSe Zhao
International Education College, Inner Mongolia University, Hohhot 010021, Inner Mongolia, China.

Abstract: This paper conducts an in-depth exploration of the linguistic features, cultural connotations, historical changes and social functions of Mongolian and Chinese blessing expressions, as well as their inheritance and innovation in modern society. It analyzes the similarities and differences between Mongolian and Chinese blessings mainly from the perspectives of linguistics, cultural communication, historical evolution and their functions in social communication, festival celebrations and ethnic unity. In addition, the paper discusses the protection, inheritance and innovation of blessing expressions in modern society, and emphasizes the necessity of preserving and inheriting this cultural heritage.
Keywords: Mongolian and Chinese blessing expressions; Linguistic features; Cultural connotation; Historical evolution; Social function; Modern inheritance; Youth communication; Ethnic unity

1 INTRODUCTION

Cultural exchanges between the Mongolian and Han ethnic groups have a long history, which can be traced back to the Yuan Dynasty. According to historical records, Mongolian scholars learned Han literary forms and created works in Chinese during the Yuan Dynasty. This phenomenon reflects the initial integration of Mongolian and Han cultures in language and writing. As time went by, cultural communication between the two ethnic groups became further deepened in the Ming and Qing dynasties. The two cultures influenced each other not only in language, but also in literature, art, religion and many other fields. At present, Mongolian-Han cultural exchanges show a trend of greater dynamism and depth. With social development and technological progress, the channels and forms of cultural communication have also become more diversified.

2 LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF MONGOLIAN AND CHINESE BLESSING EXPRESSIONS

2.1 Comparison of Phonetic Features

There are remarkable phonetic differences between Mongolian and Chinese blessing expressions, mainly manifested in the pronunciation of vowels and consonants. The Mongolian language belongs to the Altaic language family while Chinese belongs to the Sino-Tibetan language family. The two languages have their own characteristics in syllable structure and tone system.

2.1.1 Vowel comparison

Mongolian has a relatively large number of vowels with a distinction between front and back vowels, whereas Chinese is famous for its unique four-tone system. For example, the Mongolian vowel [ʊ] is often pronounced as [ɔ] in Chinese-influenced speech. The word for “blessing” is originally pronounced [bʊjin] in Mongolian, and shifts to [bɔjin] under the influence of Chinese. Such changes reflect vowel adjustments in Mongolian resulting from language contact with Chinese.

2.1.2 Consonant comparison

Differences also exist in consonant pronunciation. The consonants of Mongolian are similar or identical to Chinese initials. When handling Chinese loanwords, Mongolian nasal codas [n] and [ŋ] are affected by Chinese. For instance, the pronunciations of the loanwords meaning “gate” and “alliance” both tend toward [ŋ] in Mongolian, demonstrating Chinese influence on Mongolian consonant pronunciation [1].

2.2 Lexical Composition

Affected by language contact, the vocabulary of Mongolian and Chinese blessing expressions features extensive loanwords and linguistic integration.

2.2.1 Chinese loanwords in Mongolian blessing expressions

The adoption of Chinese loanwords in Mongolian blessing expressions represents a notable phenomenon of linguistic integration. According to latest linguistic studies, the proportion of Chinese loanwords in Mongolian blessing expressions has been rising year by year. These loanwords enrich Mongolian expression and reflect the depth of cultural communication. Examples include Gong Xi Fa Cai (Wishing you prosperity) and Wan Shi Ru Yi (May all your wishes come true). They have become widely used blessing expressions for festivals, ceremonies and other important occasions among Mongolian people. The integration of such loanwords diversifies Mongolian blessing expressions and strengthens cultural ties between Mongolians and Hans [2].

2.2.2 Integration of Mongolian expressions into Chinese blessing expressions

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Corresponding to Chinese loanwords entering Mongolian blessing discourse, Mongolian expressions have also found their way into Chinese blessing expressions. This illustrates Mongolian cultural influence on Han culture as well as cross-ethnic cultural integration. For example, the Mongolian term Bayar Tai (баяртай, meaning congratulations) has been accepted by many Han people and used in daily communication. The incorporation of Mongolian expressions adds new cultural connotations to Chinese blessing language and creates opportunities for Han people to learn about Mongolian culture.

The above analysis shows that linguistic integration of Mongolian and Chinese blessing expressions is a two-way interactive process. The adoption of Chinese loanwords by Mongolians and the entry of Mongolian expressions into Chinese jointly promote linguistic and cultural exchange between the two ethnic groups. This linguistic integration enriches blessing expressions and provides a vivid case of Mongolian-Han cultural communication, demonstrating language's vital role as a cultural carrier.

2.3 Grammatical Structural Differences

Grammatical differences between Mongolian and Chinese blessing expressions are mainly reflected in word order and word-formation.

2.3.1 Word order differences

Mongolian follows the basic Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) word order, while Chinese adopts Subject-Verb-Object (SVO). In language contact scenarios, the Mongolian SOV pattern may occasionally appear in Chinese SVO sentences. A sentence such as "I clothes bought" sounds unnatural in standard Chinese but may occur in Chinese varieties influenced by Mongolian grammar, showing Mongolian grammatical influence on Chinese.

2.3.2 Word-formation differences

Mongolian is a morphologically rich language relying heavily on derivational suffixes, while Chinese is an isolating language with relatively simple word-formation. As Chinese influence on Mongolian intensifies, new rules emerge in Mongolian word-formation and the use of traditional derivational suffixes gradually decreases. For example, the Mongolian written expression for "shepherd" is formed as xɔni + ʧin = xɔnʧin, which is simplified to jaŋgoaːr in Chinese-influenced spoken Mongolian. This change demonstrates Chinese impacts on Mongolian word-formation [3].

3 CULTURAL CONNOTATIONS OF MONGOLIAN AND CHINESE BLESSING EXPRESSIONS

3.1 Cultural Elements in Mongolian Blessing Expressions

Mongolian blessing expressions constitute an important component of Mongolian culture. They are not merely linguistic phenomena but concentrated reflections of Mongolian people's life philosophy, religious beliefs and social customs.

3.1.1 Embodiment of life philosophy

Mongolian blessing expressions often embody reverence for nature and ancestors. Phrases such as "May your livestock multiply as stars in the sky" reflect Mongolians' dependence on nature and respect for ancestors. Such blessings carry the Mongolian life philosophy of harmony between human beings and nature as well as ancestor worship, and similar metaphorical thinking can also be observed in Mongolian-Chinese folk proverbs [4].

3.1.2 Reflection of religious beliefs

Mongolian blessing expressions incorporate elements of Shamanism and Tibetan Buddhism. "May Eternal Heaven protect you" refers to Eternal Heaven, the supreme deity in Mongolian Shamanism, while Tibetan Buddhist influences appear in invocations for blessings from Buddha.

3.1.3 Reflection of social customs

Many Mongolian blessing expressions are closely connected with traditional customs. "May your yurt stay warm throughout the four seasons" takes the traditional Mongolian dwelling, the yurt, as its core image. It conveys wishes for a comfortable home and reflects Mongolians' longing for family warmth and stable life [5].

3.2 Cultural Elements in Chinese Blessing Expressions

Chinese blessing expressions are deeply influenced by Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, embodying Han people's values and attitudes toward life.

3.2.1 Embodiment of Confucian culture

Classic blessings such as "May your fortune be as immense as the East Sea and your lifespan as long as the Southern Mountain" reflect the Confucian pursuit of longevity and happiness. These expressions convey personal good wishes as well as society's universal expectations for harmony, stability and longevity.

3.2.2 Influences of Taoism and Buddhism

Themes of immortality from Taoism and compassion from Buddhism frequently appear in Chinese blessing expressions. "Peace year after year, good fortune every year" integrates Taoist aspirations for peace and good luck and Buddhist blessings for all living beings.

3.2.3 Embodiment of social customs

Blessings such as Gong Xi Fa Cai (Wishing you prosperity) and Jin Bang Ti Ming (May you succeed in the imperial examination) directly reflect Han society's emphasis on wealth and academic achievement. Used widely at festivals and ceremonies, they deliver good wishes in daily interpersonal communication [6].

3.3 Cultural Integration of Mongolian and Chinese Blessing Expressions

Shared themes and similar expressions in Mongolian and Chinese blessing expressions, such as wishes for health, longevity and happiness, demonstrate mutual learning and integration of values between the two cultures. Such integration exists not only at the linguistic level, but also penetrates cultural psychology and behavioral patterns. As communication and cooperation between Mongolians and Hans deepen, shared values gradually take shape. Common wishes for family harmony, social stability and national prosperity within blessing expressions reflect both ethnic groups' pursuit of a better life and emphasis on ethnic unity [7].

4 HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF MONGOLIAN AND CHINESE BLESSING EXPRESSIONS

4.1 Origin and Development of Blessing Expressions

As a cultural phenomenon, the origin and evolution of blessing expressions are closely tied to social development. The evolution of Mongolian and Chinese blessing expressions records language contact, cultural exchange and social changes across the two peoples' long histories.

4.1.1 Origin stage

Mongolian blessing expressions originated from worship of nature and ancestors, while Chinese blessing expressions grew out of reverence and prayers to heaven, earth and ancestors. Early blessing expressions mostly took the form of prayers, expressing longing for a better life and awe toward unknown forces.

4.1.2 Development stage

With increasingly frequent Mongolian-Han communication, blessing expressions began to integrate. Mongolian blessings absorbed Han cultural elements including aspirations for longevity, wealth and social status; Chinese blessing expressions also incorporated Mongolian characteristics such as respect for natural harmony and family well-being.

4.1.3 Modern evolution

In modern society, globalization and informatization drive changes in Mongolian and Chinese blessing expressions. While retaining traditional elements, modern blessings also adopt contemporary linguistic forms. Blessings spread via social media and online platforms become more diversified and personalized.

4.2 Impacts of Mongolian-Han Cultural Communication on Blessing Expressions

Mongolian-Han cultural communication exerts multifaceted influences on blessing expressions, enriching their content and promoting integration and development of both languages.

Cultural exchanges enable mutual borrowing and integration of vocabulary and grammatical structures. For example, numerous Chinese loanwords such as Gong Xi Fa Cai and Wan Shi Ru Yi enter Mongolian blessing language, while Mongolian expressions are also adopted in Chinese blessings. Values and aesthetic tastes of the two cultures interact with each other through communication. Mongolian blessing expressions increasingly include wishes for personal achievement and social harmony, and Chinese blessings place greater emphasis on respect for nature and family. As social interaction intensifies, the social functions of blessing expressions also transform. Beyond conveying good wishes between individuals, blessing expressions serve as important tools to promote social harmony and strengthen ethnic unity.

To sum up, the historical evolution of Mongolian and Chinese blessing expressions is a dynamic process reflecting language contact, cultural communication, social transformation and cultural integration. Research on this historical evolution helps us better understand the two ethnic groups' cultural characteristics and interactions, and provides references for promoting ethnic unity and protecting cultural diversity.

5 SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF MONGOLIAN AND CHINESE BLESSING EXPRESSIONS

5.1 Roles in Social Communication

Mongolian and Chinese blessing expressions play an important role in social interaction. They are tools for emotional communication as well as bonds of cultural identity and social solidarity.

With social development and deepened Mongolian-Han cultural exchange, the social functions of blessing expressions have expanded from purely personal well-wishes toward social harmony and ethnic unity. Blessing expressions are no longer merely interpersonal communication tools; they become key media for promoting social harmony and consolidating ethnic unity.

In terms of ethnic unity, as cultural symbols, cross-ethnic use and dissemination of blessing expressions help enhance mutual understanding and respect among different ethnic groups. Mutual use of blessings such as the Han saying "A harmonious family guarantees prosperity in all undertakings" and the Mongolian Bayar Tai facilitates cultural exchange and deepens inter-ethnic friendship and cooperation.

As a cultural phenomenon, blessing expressions are increasingly prominent in promoting social harmony and ethnic unity and constitute an indispensable part of Mongolian-Han cultural communication.

5.2 Application in Festival Celebrations

The use of Mongolian and Chinese blessing expressions during festivals not only creates festive atmosphere but also strengthens inheritance of cultural traditions.

5.2.1 Creating festive atmosphere

Blessing expressions reach peak usage during major festivals including the Mongolian Tsagaan Sar (White Moon Festival) and the Chinese Spring Festival. Mongolian Tsain Jiya (good fate) and Chinese "Happy New Year" are indispensable festive expressions that build a joyful and peaceful celebratory atmosphere.

5.2.2 Inheriting cultural traditions

Using blessing expressions is also a way to carry forward cultural heritage. During festivals, elders' blessings for younger generations often convey expectations for traditional culture. Examples include the Mongolian Nasen Delger (longevity) and the Chinese "May your fortune be as immense as the East Sea", which deliver traditional wishes for health and long life.

6 MODERN INHERITANCE AND INNOVATION OF MONGOLIAN AND CHINESE BLESSING EXPRESSIONS

6.1 Protection and Inheritance of Traditional Blessing Expressions

Against the background of modernization, protection and inheritance of traditional Mongolian and Chinese blessing expressions are particularly important. These expressions carry abundant historical and cultural information and serve as important markers of ethnic identity and cultural diversity.

6.1.1 Protection measures

Cultural authorities and academic institutions have launched relevant protective actions, such as building language databases to collect and record traditional blessing expressions, and official recognition and protection via intangible cultural heritage lists.

6.1.2 Inheritance activities

Community- and school-based inheritance activities play a critical role. Workshops, lectures and festival celebrations encourage young people to learn and use traditional blessing expressions.

6.1.3 Cultural significance

Protecting and inheriting traditional blessing expressions is not merely about preserving language; it also transmits cultural identity and national spirit. The respect for nature, family and society embedded in these blessings is of great value for constructing a harmonious society and promoting ethnic unity.

6.2 Innovation of Blessing Expressions in Modern Media

With the development of modern media, the dissemination and usage of Mongolian and Chinese blessing expressions present new forms and characteristics.

6.2.1 Impacts of social media

Social media platforms become vital channels for spreading Mongolian and Chinese blessing expressions. Platforms such as WeChat and Weibo enable fast sharing of blessing content and revitalize these traditional cultural elements in modern society. Surveys show that more than 80% of internet users have used or seen Mongolian-Chinese blessing expressions on social media.

6.2.2 Innovative forms

Blessing expressions keep evolving under modern media. Animation, short videos and interactive applications make traditional blessings more vivid, attractive and accessible to younger generations. A survey of Mongolian and Han adolescents shows that roughly 60% of respondents prefer learning blessing expressions through modern media formats.

6.2.3 Commercial application

In commercial advertising and brand marketing, Mongolian and Chinese blessing expressions acquire new connotations and creative interpretations. Enterprises combine traditional blessings with modern design concepts to create new advertising slogans and brand images, strengthening brands' cultural appeal and boosting traditional cultural dissemination [8].

6.3 Dissemination of Blessing Expressions among Adolescents

Adolescents are key participants in cultural inheritance and play an important role in spreading Mongolian and Chinese blessing expressions.

6.3.1 Roles of the education system

School education integrates Mongolian and Chinese blessing expressions into Chinese, history and cultural courses to improve students' awareness and understanding of this traditional culture.

6.3.2 Cultural exchange activities

Mongolian-Han cultural exchange events such as language exchanges, cultural festivals and academic seminars create opportunities for adolescents to experience different cultures. These activities spark young people's interest in blessing expressions and enhance mutual understanding and respect between ethnic groups.

6.3.3 Application of technological tools

Modern information technology including online learning platforms and mobile applications provides convenient ways for adolescents to study Mongolian and Chinese blessing expressions, enabling anytime-anywhere learning and improving learning efficiency and motivation.

The above measures have achieved positive outcomes in disseminating Mongolian and Chinese blessing expressions among adolescents and laid a solid foundation for modern inheritance of traditional culture.

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 Far-reaching Impacts of Mongolian-Han Cultural Communication

Mongolian-Han cultural communication exerts multidimensional and profound influences on blessing expressions. From linguistic integration and interpenetration of values to expansion of social functions, the evolution of Mongolian and Chinese blessing expressions reflects close inter-ethnic communication as well as the dynamic and developmental nature of cultural exchange. Statistics on lexical borrowing and sociological research demonstrate cultural exchange's important role in promoting ethnic harmony and protecting cultural diversity.

7.2 Empirical Analysis of Linguistic Integration

Linguistic integration within Mongolian and Chinese blessing expressions is empirically evidenced by the growing number of Chinese loanwords in Mongolian blessings and the adoption of Mongolian expressions in Chinese blessings. Such linguistic interaction enriches expressive forms of blessing language and deepens cultural connection and identity between the two ethnic groups.

7.3 Integration of Values and Aesthetic Tastes

Mutual influences between Mongolian-Han cultures on values and aesthetic tastes diversify and deepen the content of blessing expressions. The appearance of wishes for personal achievement and social harmony in Mongolian blessings, as well as strengthened emphasis on respect for nature and family in Chinese blessings, jointly enhance cultural identity and social cohesion.

7.4 Expansion of Social Functions of Blessing Expressions

The social functions of blessing expressions have expanded from purely interpersonal well-wishes toward social harmony and ethnic unity. This functional expansion strengthens communication and understanding between Mongolians and Hans and provides strong cultural support for building a harmonious society and consolidating ethnic unity.

7.5 Enlightenment from the Historical Evolution of Blessing Expressions

The historical evolution of Mongolian and Chinese blessing expressions constitutes a dynamic process that reveals profound influences of language contact and cultural exchange. This process demonstrates cultural traits and interactions of the two ethnic groups and offers valuable experience and references for promoting ethnic unity and protecting cultural diversity.

Overall, Mongolian-Han cultural communication exerts comprehensive influences on blessing expressions. It promotes linguistic integration and deepens mutual understanding and respect for values and aesthetic tastes. In-depth research on Mongolian and Chinese blessing expressions helps us better understand cultural communication's vital role in facilitating ethnic harmony and social stability.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

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