

Review Article

Different Images of Dog between Chinese and English

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Abstract: Animal vocabularies not only occur frequently in Chinese and English, but also rich connotations. Dog, as an animal vocabulary, is related to different expressions both in Chinese and English. This paper explores the general meaning, symbolic meaning, and cultural meaning of dogs in Chinese and English. Through the contrast analysis, it is intended to reveal the reasons behind the differences and feel the the rich cultural connotation of language.

Keywords: Dog, General Meaning, Symbolic Meaning, Cultural Meaning, Cultural Difference.

INTRODUCTION:

Animals are closely related to human life. There are a lot of animal-related words in any language. In addition to expressing basic concepts, these animal-related words are often endowed with rich cultural and symbolic meanings. Language is the carrier of culture. As the carrier of different languages between East and West, Chinese and English are culturally different to a certain extent. These animal-related words have different commendatory and derogatory colors in Chinese and English. This paper takes "dog" in Chinese and Western cultures as an example to see their symbolic meaning, cultural meaning and emotional color in their respective cultures.

1. The General Meaning of the Dog in China and Britain

As for the definition of "dog", Modern Chinese Dictionary interprets it as:

“哺乳动物，种类很多，嗅觉和听觉都很灵敏，毛有黄、白、黑等颜色。是一种家畜，有的可以训练成警犬，有的用来帮助打猎、牧羊等。”This is an objective explanation for dogs. Dogs in the Oxford Higher Dictionary is interpreted as an animal with four legs and a tail, often kept as a pet or trained for work, for example, hunting or guarding buildings. From this point of view, China and some western countries have the same general understanding of "dog".

2. Symbolic Meaning of Dogs in China and Britain

In China, on the whole, people regard dogs as lucky animals and symbols of wealth. Because dogs' barking "汪" is very similar to the pronunciation of "旺", which means prosperity. If a dog suddenly comes to one's house, it indicates the arrival of wealth. People often say that "猫来穷，狗来富", so dogs are generally adopted by people.

Chinese dogs also symbolize loyalty. They show no kindness to anyone except their own owners. They are willing to do a lot of things for their owners, even sacrifice themselves. For example, "狗马之心" was frequently used by the minister to express their loyalty to the emperor.

In addition, the dog symbolizes power. The word "犬" is very similar to the pronunciation of "权", so Chinese jades are often made into dog-shaped handlebars, implying that "power is in hand".

Besides, the Chinese dogs symbolize the exorcising evil spirits. As the saying goes, "狗通人言，尽知人心", the ancient believed that dogs were intelligent animals, which could foretell good luck, bad luck and disaster. Even according to the time of dogs barking, people can summarize some symbols of divination. For example, when people heard the dog of barking at 3-5 am, which means the god of wealth comes to the door. If the dog of barking at 5-7 am was

Quick Response Code



Journal homepage:

<http://www.easpublisher.com/easiehl/>

Article History

Received: 13.09.2019

Accepted: 28.09.2019

Published: 15.10.2019

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heard, which means people will have an infinitely bright future. When someone heard the dog of barking at 1-3 pm, which means his wife may be unfaithful to him. If the dog of barking at 3-5 pm, which means the child takes the risk of illness. When someone heard the dog of barking at 7-9 pm, which means thieves will come to his house.

Generally speaking, English dogs symbolize loyalty and friendliness. Westerners believe that dogs are loyal and lovely animals. Many foreigners like to keep dogs. If an American president does not have a dog in the White House, he will be regarded by voters as lacking in a loving heart. If an English gentleman does not hold a dog, the image will be incomplete.

British dogs also symbolize a firm character and an unconquerable spirit. As we all know, the bulldog was the symbol of British Prime Minister Churchill, representing the firm character of the British people, and it also symbolizes the "unbeatable" and "unconquerable" spirit of the British people during World War II.

In addition, British dogs symbolize friendliness, festival customs about dogs are also popular in many western countries and regions. For example, Canada's Arctic Bay has been covered with snow and ice all year round. Modern means of transportation are ineffective here, while dog sleds are powerful. Therefore, dogs there have become people's closest friends. So the second Sunday in October each year is designated as the dog festival. On this day, all dogs have a holiday to rest without pulling sledges. The owners also dress the dogs deliberately and elaboratively: they wear colorful cloth knitted flowers around their necks and red silk and green satin on their bodies, and they enjoy delicious food. Besides, the dog abuse is listed as a serious crime in many Nordic and North American countries.

3. Cultural meaning of Dogs in Chinese and English

Language is the carrier of culture. Because of the different cultures between China and Britain, dogs have different status in China and Britain. Dogs usually have commendatory meanings in English. (狗) Dogs are usually derogatory in Chinese culture. Of course, this is not absolute. There is also a cross phenomenon between these two words.

1) Cultural meaning of Dogs in Chinese

There are many expressions about dogs in Chinese, and their cultural connotations are also varied. Dog-related idioms are mostly used to refer to bad people and bad things. For example, "狗头军师" refers to a person who likes to make an idea but is not smart and cunning; "落水狗" refers to a person who is wrecked; "狗改不了吃屎" refers to a person who is nauseous and difficult to change; "走狗" refers to some

people who flatters their their leaders ; "疯狗,狗崽子" are used to insult other person; "狗眼看人低" refers to some people who are very arrogance; "狗急跳墙" refers to some extreme acts that people desperately take when they have no way to go; "狗嘴里吐不出象牙来" satirizes bad people without truth or only dirty words; "狗咬狗" describes bad people attacking each other; "狗脸不长毛" refers to people who pretend not to know old friends ; "狗血喷头" means that "to be scolded in a very humiliating fashion; "狗皮膏药" refers to some fake goods;

In these idioms, people's attitude toward dogs and the emotional colors of dogs are also varied. Generally speaking, the emotional color of Chinese people towards dogs is mostly negative. People often use words with the word "dog" to describe bad people and disdainful things, such as 狗腿子、狗娘养的、狼心狗肺、狗奴才、狗汉奸 and so on. It is not difficult to see that most of the idioms about dogs in Chinese culture are endowed with negative emotions. On the other hand, in traditional Chinese culture, people think that dogs are humble animals, but they are good for human health. For example, the works of 《礼记》 say“狗是至阳之物，吃狗肉可以壮阳气”。 In addition, Chinese ancient sacrificial offerings often used "cattle, sheep and pigs" instead of dogs, because dogs belong to humble animals and could not ascend to the elegant hall therefore they are free from death. At the same time, in Chinese feudal superstitions, unlike the emperor and the members of the Royal family, some ordinary people generally believed that the disdainful names can avoid the intrusion of the demon to make the child live longer. Therefore, in some of the more remote areas of China, the names of some newly born children are called “二狗儿”、“狗剩儿”、“狗娃儿”， and so on ”. Parents hope that their children will be as strong and healthy as dogs.

However, the cultural image of dogs in Chinese is not always negative, tracing back to the earliest ideology of dog culture, there must be a legend about the god dog Panhu. It is said that in ancient times, the Yellow Emperor, a legendary ruler, had a grandson named Gao Xin, who owned a five-color god dog named Panhu. Later, when General Wu rebelled in the west of China, Emperor Gao Xin offered a reward to the whole country. Whoever could calm the chaos and cut off the rebel's head, he will have the chance to marry the princess and get a fief. As a result, no one could accept this challenge. Instead, it was his dog Panhu who fought and bit General Wu's head. Emperor Gao Xin married his daughter to Panhu. And later Panhu became the ruler of the barbarians in the west of china, and also became the symbol of the totem culture of ethnic minorities in china. So there are also some

positive images of dog idioms in Chinese. For example ; “犬马之劳” It means that some people are willing to be driven by others and serve others; “犬不夜吠” refers to good social security; “犬马恋主” Refers to the courtier who loves his own monarch.

2) Cultural Meaning of Dogs in English

Because of the different cultures between the British and the Chinese, the emotional attitudes towards dogs are also different. In traditional Western culture, dogs are characterized by loyalty, diligence and companionship. English people regard dogs as good companions, so dog-related idioms are often used to refer to good people and good things, such as "clever dog" refers to wise people; "jolly dogs" refers to happy and interesting friends; "luck dog" refers to lucky man; "if an old barks, he gives real speech" refers to what a truly experienced person says is very reasonable; "top dog" refers to the successful person or authority in a certain field, especially the person who wins in a competition; "love me love my dog" means that if you treat me as your friend, you must also treat my friend as your friend ; "a gay dog" refers to a happy person; "work like a dog" refers to a person who works hard . "Help a dog over a still" means that help others through difficulties. "

As (like) a dog with two tails" refers to the people who are very happy; it is worth noting that the English phrase "old dogs" has a very different meaning from the Chinese phrase "老狗". The Chinese phrase "老狗" is disrespectful to others and insults others, while the English phrase "old dogs" refers to elderly people or people with rich experience and wisdom.

As the saying goes "gold can't be hundred percent pure". Dog is no perfect". Although dogs enjoy special status in Western countries, they do not always appear in a positive image. For example, in the Nordic mythology system, Tyr was killed by a vicious dog at the sacrificial ceremony in Scandinavia. In Greek mythology, Hecate, the Dark Goddess of ghosts and magic, always accompanies a group of evil dogs to patrol the night and use them to bite any traveler she sees. And Cerberus in Greek mythology is a big dog with three heads, poison dropping from his mouth, brutal temperament, guarding the door to hell. So there are also some negative images of dog idioms in English. For example, "go to the dog" means degeneration; "lead a dog's life" means to lead a poverty life; "The dog returns to his vomit" means that make an unnecessary move; "die like dogs" means a dishonorable death; "something is dog" means poor quality .

In this situation, we can know that the Chinese and the British people have the same emotional attitude on the aspects of the general meaning and symbolic meaning of dogs. The general meaning is an objective understanding of the dog. The symbolic meaning is a

perfect image of the dog being beautified in people's minds. Both the Chinese and British people believe that dogs symbolize good and fortunate things. However, their cultural significance is completely different. In Chinese culture, the words about dogs are mostly derogatory. Although a few words about dogs are commendatory, derogatory is in the majority. However, in Western culture, most of the words about dogs are commendatory. Although a small number of them are derogatory, the commendatory meanings about dogs dominate the mainstream.

4. Reasons for Different Attitudes towards "Dog" in Chinese and English

1) Influences of Geographical Location

China originates from the Yellow River Basin and is dominated by farming, with cattle and horses as the main productive forces. Dogs are less powerful than horses and cattle. They can neither help people to transport goods nor help people plough the fields, so they are less important than the horses and cattle. However, the British coastline is tortuous and there are many harbors. In addition, Britain is rich in grassland, the UK is dominated by animal husbandry and fishing. Cattle and sheep have become the main sources of meat, while dogs, like shepherds, are responsible for not only guarding farms to prevent cattle, sheep, horses and other livestock from escaping and losing, but also protecting livestock from bear or wolf attacks. So the dogs play an important role in British people's life.

2) The Influence of Traditional Customs

In China, cattle, sheep are preferred as sacrifices for festival worship, while the meat of dog is regarded inferior" and "defective" So it is difficult to be ascended to the place of refinement. However in the eyes of the British people, dogs are the most sincere friends of human beings. In English words, there are many words of animals as well as their meat. For example, there are cattle and beef, sheep and mutton, pig and pork, there is the word of dog but this is no word about "dog meat" in English, which shows the status of dogs in the hearts of Western people. Because Westerners do not have the tradition of eating dog meat.

3) The influence of value factors

The dominant idea in the Western world is "individualism." When a child reaches adulthood, he does not live with his parents, but lives with his or her partner. Parents rarely move to their children's homes. In Western countries, as people grow older and their spouses leave, people's hearts will feel lonely. Living with children is not a good choice, so the best choice is to raise a pet, and the best choice is the dog. Some people even call their own dogs "old friends", and we can see people fraternize with dogs. From this point of view, as a faithful companion of human beings, dogs have no reason not to enjoy superior status.

However Chinese people admire the reunion of the family. There is a saying in China that “父母在不远游” which reflects the relationship between parents and children in Chinese culture: children should always be with their parents. China advocates Confucian culture, and filial piety is something printed in the bones of Chinese people. Therefore, in China, parents usually live with their children. As mentioned above, the parents of Western countries are not with the adult children. In the past, China was absolutely not allowed. With the development of China's economy and the progress of modernization, there are also cases of children living separately from their parents after marriage in cities, but in most areas, living with parents is still the mainstream. Therefore, most people's later life is to help their children to take care of their families, that is to say to take care of their grandchildren, and with the companionship of their loved ones, the companion value of pets is relatively low.

4) The Influence of Different Cognitive Perspectives

The two different attitudes toward dogs between Chinese and British people are due to the different perspectives of the two peoples on objective things. The Chinese saw that dogs preferred to wag their heads and tails, falter and please people more than any other animal. Therefore, the ancient Chinese linked the dog's pleasant nature with those people who flattered their superiors. For example, 打狗看主, 狗傍人势, 摇尾乞怜 and so on. But the English people emphasize dogs' characteristics of loyalty and companionship, so most of the words about dogs are praised. For example love me love my dog, every dog has his day, lucky dog.

5) The Influence of Different Historical Allusions

There are many words with historical allusions in both Chinese and English. Dog-related allusions also exist. For example, the common "rains dogs and cats" come from Nordic mythology. In mythology, "dog" and "wolf" symbolize wind and "cat" symbolize rain. So in English, "dogs and cats" are used to describe storm. However, Chinese allusions such as "狗咬吕洞宾不识好人心" are used to satirize some people who can not tell the good from the bad.

5. CONCLUSION

Traditional directed thinking holds that the image and meaning of dogs in western culture are mainly positive, while in the Chinese world they are mainly negative. However, from this study, we find that the image and meaning of dogs are not perfect in the Western cultural world, but also have negative images and meanings. In the Chinese world, the image and meaning of dogs are not always negative, but also have many positive images and meanings.

Language has both synchronic and diachronic characteristics. Its causes are complex and changeable. No language is simple. From the Chinese and English languages of "狗" and "dog" mentioned above, we can not only see the subtleties of English and Chinese, but also understand the rich and colorful English and Chinese culture from one side. These animal-related languages and cultures are interesting highlights in language learning, which deserves our attention. Through learning, we can better grasp the English and Chinese languages, better understand the English and Chinese cultures, and better promote cultural exchanges. There are still many shortcomings, which need to be further discussed by scholars.

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