

A Sociolinguistic Comparative Analysis of Weaponry Names between Chinese and American Military

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Abstract

The names of weaponry of Chinese and American military are with their own characteristics, but there are obvious differences. This paper selects representative weaponry names of the two military for sociolinguistic analysis and comparison, so as to reveal the cultural connotation and national memory behind the names of weapons.

Keywords

Weaponry; Sociolinguistics; Cultural Connotation.

1. Introduction

At the beginning of 2021, China's space rover has voted for names. A number of names with Chinese cultural characteristics such as "Nezha (哪吒)", "Kirin (麒麟)" and "Red Rabbit(赤兔)" were selected. Before, The United States has sent several rovers to Mars, including Spirit (2004), Opportunity (2004), Curiosity (2012) and Perseverance (2021). There is a marked difference between the names of the Chinese and American space equipment. What's more, China and the United States, as the two countries with the top military budgets in the world, have strong military strength and advanced weapons. Both the Chinese and American military have systematic and complete weaponry, but the names of each type of weaponry are obviously different and each has its own characteristics. Some of the weaponry has distinct national characteristics, such as the DF-41 intercontinental ballistic missile, whose name means "The east wind overwhelms the West wind", that contains typical Chinese elements. The USS Roosevelt, for example, which conducted exercises in the South China Sea, is with typical American style. Language is the indispensable carrier of culture, and culture is revealed using language. The differences in the names of military equipment between Chinese and American military reflect, to some extent, the two different cultures of the two nations. the purpose of this paper is to make a comparative analysis of the names of representative weaponry between Chinese and American military from the perspective of sociolinguistics and reveal the cultural connotation differences behind them. At present, China domestic scholars have carried out related studies on the names of weaponry in the fields of naming rules, applied linguistics, cognitive linguistics and so on. Such as Liu, M. B. & Hou, J. (2003). the American Weaponry Introduction on Naming Rules; Wang, H. J. & Zou, L. C. (1999). Chinese translation on Weaponry; Hua, Z. (2011). the Interpretation of Metaphor Element in Foreign Military Weaponry; Qin, K. (2013). Comparison of naming of Weaponry Between China and Russia; Zhang, H. Y. (2013). Metaphor Characteristics of Naming of Weaponry (Especially Nicknames) in Europe and America, etc.

2. The Comparison of the Representative Weaponry between the Chinese and American Military by Category

2.1. Aircraft Carrier

Aircraft carrier originated in the World War I, because of expensive cost and emergence of nuclear weapons, the status of aircraft carrier was questioned after the World War II. In the 1950s, in the Inchon Landing of the Korean War, the US military used the aircraft carrier to quickly reverse the situation of the war process. Aircraft carrier played an important role in the Korean War, Vietnam War, Falklands War, Gulf War, Iraq War and other regional wars after the World War II.

At present, a total of 11 aircraft carrier are in service in the U.S. military: they are "USS Nimitz CVN-68", "USS Dwight David Eisenhower CVN-69", "USS Carl Vinson CVN-70", "USS Theodore Roosevelt CVN-71", "USS Abraham Lincoln CVN-72", "USS George Washington CVN-73", "USS John C. Stennis CVN-74", "USS Harry S. Truman CVN-75", "USS Ronald Reagan CVN-76", "USS George H.W. Bush CVN-77", "USS Gerald R. Ford CVN-78". At the side of PLA, there are 2 aircraft carriers in active service, namely: the "Aircraft Carrier Liaoning" and "Aircraft Carrier Shandong".

The origin of the naming of aircraft carriers in the United States, one is from the Admiral ("Nimitz"), one is from the House of Representatives ("Carl Vinson"), and the other is from the Senator ("Stennis"), the rest of the 8 ships are all derived from the names of the President of the United States. And all the names of the U.S. aircraft carrier are named after the names of characters. These characters have made outstanding contributions to the development of the U.S. Navy in history and provided important support; China's aircraft carriers are named after the names of two provinces in China: Liaoning and Shandong. Liaoning and Shandong have two of the most important naval ports of the PLA Navy—Dalian Port and Qingdao Port. At the same time, Liaoning and Shandong also have a large amount of population, which reach 150 million, so they also represent the masses of the two places. The officers and soldiers of the troops who are born in the two places provide strong psychological support to the officers and soldiers in wartime and peacetime, and demonstrate the "people" connotation of the Chinese People's Liberation Army.

2.2. Transcontinental Ballistic Missile

The missile was born in the European battlefield in the latter part of the World War II. Nazi Germany used V1 and V2 missiles to fight stubbornly, caused great damage and deterrence to the Allied forces and civilians in Britain and Belgium in the depths. In many local conflicts and wars after World War II, missiles played an important offensive role. In peacetime, missiles can also play a huge deterrent effect, reaching the effect of defending the enemy from thousands of miles away and beating people without a fight.

Therefore, the Chinese and American military are equipped with numerous and different types of missile weaponry. This paper selects the most representative, deterrent and lethal intercontinental ballistic missiles for comparison. Among the "trinity" nuclear strikes, the deterrence is the highest and the total effect is the best. The most difficult to strike are mainly road-based intercontinental ballistic missiles and submarine-launched intercontinental ballistic missiles. This type of weaponry of the US military mainly includes the "Minuteman-3" land-based intercontinental ballistic missile and the "Trident-2" submarine-launched intercontinental ballistic missile mounted on the Ohio-Class nuclear submarine. The Minuteman series of missiles were first equipped in 1962. At that time, it was in the Cold War period. The U.S. and The Soviet Union camps were seriously opposed. It was only three years since the Cuban Missile Crisis. From the naming point of view, the meaning of the English "Minuteman" comes from the militia that was called up at any time during the American Revolution. The

naming of the "Minuteman" series of intercontinental ballistic missiles is intended to show that the missile has a rapid response time. It can be put into battle in a short time and cause serious damage to the enemy; the "Trident" series of submarine-launched intercontinental ballistic missiles were first installed in the US Navy in 1979, and successively have the two types of "Trident I" and "Trident II". From the naming point of view, "Trident" is derived from the weapon of the Sea God in ancient Greek and Roman mythology (Greek mythology: Poseidon; Roman mythology: Neptune). It is said that the weapon can set off huge waves in the sea, cause violent storms and tsunamis, making the sky and the earth torn apart, and everything was broken. The submarine-launched intercontinental ballistic missile launches from the submarine is named after the "Trident", which not only shows the meaning of launching from underwater, but also emphasizes the huge lethality of this heavy weight strategic nuclear weapon, therefore, it is very appropriate on the naming. Corresponding to the U.S. military. The Chinese People's Liberation Army also has the world's top ace weaponry in the land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles and the submarine-launched intercontinental ballistic missiles, such as "DF-41" intercontinental ballistic missiles and "JL-2" submarine-launched intercontinental ballistic missiles, etc. "DF" is the Chinese acronym of "Dongfeng", which literally means east wind. The "DF" series of missiles were first born in 1960 and own a history of more than 60 years. The series of missiles have multiple levels and types, such as short-range, medium-range, intercontinental, and hypersonic speeds. They are the most important weaponry of China and safeguard China's status as a major country. And are the cornerstone of national security by strategic supporting and status maintenance. The "DF-41" missile has a maximum range of 15,000 kilometers and could cover targets any location in the world, and with a powerful deterrent effect. In 1957, when Comrade Mao Zedong went to the Soviet Union to participate in the Moscow Meeting, he quoted a sentence in *A Dream in Red Mansions*, "As far as the family matters, either the east wind has suppressed the west wind, or the west wind has suppressed the east wind." to summarize the international situation at that time: "I think the current situation The characteristic of this is that the east wind prevails over the west wind, that is to say, the power of socialism has an overwhelming advantage over the power of imperialism." Accordingly, the first missile of New China in 1960 was officially named the "DF" missile. Therefore, the name "DF" has the meaning of defying power and bravely defending sovereignty. It also bears typical Chinese cultural characteristics and has a significant Chinese symbol. "JL" is the Chinese acronym of "Julang", which means huge wave. The "JL-2" submarine-launched intercontinental ballistic missile is China's second-generation intercontinental submarine-launched ballistic missile currently in service. In the future, the improved version of "JL-2" could be with a range of 10,000 to 12,000 kilometers and could carry 1 to 3 nuclear warheads. The next-generation "JL-3" submarine-launched intercontinental ballistic missile with a range of more than 12,000 kilometers, which is a significant part of China's "trinity" nuclear strike. China's submarine-launched intercontinental ballistic missiles named after "the huge waves", which are with metaphorical characteristics, and the deep meaning is to emphasize the huge lethality and destructive power of weaponry. To "stun the enemy and enhance one's confidence" (Tian Xianhui, 2011), because their launch point is located under the calm sea surface, but once launched, they would cause "huge waves" and cause irreparable damage to the enemy. Therefore, "JL" has the advantage of hiding the power behind a gentle appearance, which is a kind of typical Chinese cultural style.

2.3. Aircraft

The United States is the inventor of aircraft and the most advanced country on aircraft manufacturing industry in the world. Since World War II, the United States has always had the world's most powerful air force. In the Iraq War, the air force played an absolute dominant role and won the war initiative for the U.S. military on the battlefield. The aircraft of the U.S. military is currently the world's most advanced as well, and with the most categories and the widest

range of use. The more famous ones are F-22 "Raptor", F-35 "Lightning II" and so on. The F-22 "Raptor" is the world's first fifth-generation fighter to be equipped with troops. It is code-named "Raptor". The English "raptor" is derived from Latin. The original meaning of "raptor" is robber, looter, predator, etc. Raptor is a kind of fierce bird, the use of fierce birds to refer to the image of a fighter is appropriate, and it also shows that this fighter has excellent combat effectiveness and aggressiveness. From the perspective of English etymology, it shows at a deeper level that the Anglo-Saxon nation advocates the natural law of "natural selection, survival of the fittest", and praises the national culture of opening the territory. The F-35 "Lightning II" fighter is also an advanced fifth-generation fighter. Its code name "lightning" is a type of cultural scene, which usually occurs between clouds and clouds and between clouds and the ground, that generates a kind of strong electric discharge phenomenon. Named this fighter with "Lightning", it vividly demonstrated the stealth performance of F-35, and the characteristics of suddenly appearing from the clouds and then generating powerful destructive power. The etymology of the English code name "lightning" is derived from the Middle English "leht". This Middle English word not only means sunlight, but also has religious connotations, meaning "the radiance of Christ." It caters to the WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) values of the main American masses at a deeper level. It not only highlights the strong combat performance of F-35, but also demonstrates its justice at a deeper cultural level. The Chinese People's Liberation Army Air Force has been chasing by leaps and bounds, and now has more advanced aircraft in the world. The number of Chinese military aircraft ranks among the top three in the world. It has a number of independently developed and representative advanced models, such as: J-20 "Weilong", Y-20 "Kunpeng" and so on. The J-20, Chinese code-named "Weilong", is a fifth-generation stealth fighter independently developed by AVIC Chengdu Aircraft Industry Group Corporation. The Chinese word "Wei" means mighty and awe-inspiring; "Long" is the pinyin of "Chinese Dragon", it is a kind of magical animal in ancient Chinese cultural legends. It is the most representative totem of culture symbolizes the spirits of harmony, vigor, prosperity, and freedom. "Weilong" not only embodies the powerful attack capability of J-20, but also contains strong Chinese elements. Y-20, code-named "Kunpeng", is a large Chinese domestic transport aircraft with international advanced level, adaptable to complex environments, and with high reliability and safety performance. Its code name "Kunpeng" is a kind of animal, which is originally derived from Zhuangzi's famous work A Happy Excursion: "In the northern ocean there is a fish, called the Kun, I do not know how many thousand li in size. This Kun changes into a bird, called the Peng. Its back is I do not know how many thousand li in breadth." It is a huge beast in ancient Chinese myths and legends that can "Be capable of clasping the moon in the Ninth Heaven and seizing turtles deep down in the Five Seas." It endows Y-20 with appropriate and profound connotation of Chinese culture.

3. Conclusion

Through the sociolinguistic analysis of the representative weapons of the Chinese and American military, it can be found that the naming of the weaponry of the Chinese and American armed forces is inseparable from their own unique history, religion, mythology, values and other cultural factors, meanwhile, it represents the profoundness and connotation of their respective nations. The cultural accumulation and value inheritance of the weaponry names carry the memories and beliefs of the two powerful nations, and they also empower soldiers using the weaponry on the battlefield through the bonds of their own memories and beliefs in their gene of respective nationalities.

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