

A Comparative Study of Common Chinese Words in Korean and Vietnamese

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Abstract: this paper studies the forms and meanings of Chinese words in Korean and Vietnamese, both of which belong to the Chinese character culture circle, investigate the Chinese words corresponding to each of the two languages and clarifies the commonalities and differences. The paper selects common Chinese words in Korean and the corresponding Chinese words in Vietnamese, and compares them based on their morphological and meaning characteristics. These words can be divided into “completely homomorphic synonyms”, “partially homomorphic synonyms”, “heteromorphic synonyms” and “homographs”. Moreover, the paper studies the content of them.

1. Introduction

South Korea and Vietnam are geographically separated by a long distance, but the two countries have formed impressive cooperative relations in politics, economy, culture, language and other fields. The two countries are as close as neighbors. With the expansion of mutual communication and the expansion of concern for the Korean society, the need for the Vietnamese with the ability to use Korean language is also increasing. Although South Korea and Vietnam have only established diplomatic relations for 26 years, the rapid development of bilateral relations in various fields is encouraging. The rapid development of relations between the two countries is based on their historical and cultural similarities. Both countries accept china's influence and belong to the Chinese character culture circle and the Confucian culture circle from the very early on. Such an influx of cultures is no exception to words used as a means of language expression. As a result, they adopted a large number of Chinese words in their languages. This paper compares the common Chinese words used in Korean and Vietnamese, clarifies the common points and differences of their meanings and word forms, and made basic statistics on their characteristics. Based on the perspective of foreign language learners and teachers, this paper starts from the confusion of feeling the meaning and differences in the use of the common Chinese words, and plays a role as the basic information to promote the local people in both South Korea and Vietnam to learn each other's languages.

At present, there are few comparative studies between Korean and Vietnamese. There is no systematic research on the characteristics of the meaning of Chinese words in the two languages. The Chinese words in Korean in this paper are based on Korean vocabulary selection results report written by namho cho. The words with different order of the constituent elements such as “通姦” and “姦通” are seen as the same words in this paper. This paper takes such Chinese words and expressions as the basis, and adopts the method of comparison with the corresponding Vietnamese words and expressions. The total number of Chinese words in Vietnamese used in this paper is more than those in Korean. This is because sometimes there is one Chinese word having more than two connections with Vietnamese in different ways. There are conditions that two or more Vietnamese words are related to a Korean word in different ways. In the process of vocabulary comparison between Chinese words in two languages, this paper treats the same Chinese words and the same number of Chinese characters as “completely homograph”. Even if the same Chinese character is used, it cannot be called a true homonym due to different pronunciation. This paper adopts the way of analyzing mainly with the convenient writing.

2. Comparative Analysis of Chinese Words between the Languages of the Two Countries

2.1 Completely Homomorphic Synonyms

The so-called “completely homomorphic synonyms” is a simple combination of the concept of complete homograph and the concept of complete synonymy. The concept of complete homograph means the shape, number and order of the Chinese are all the same. The concept of synonymy means the Chinese words have the same meaning.

Case 1:

가공(加工)- Gia Công(加工);

부분(部分)- Bộ Phần(部分).

The Meanings of the Two Groups of Words Are the Same, and the Number and Order of Chinese Characters Are the Same.

Case 2:

개국(開國)- Khai Quốc(開國),Mở Nước;

정오(正午)- chính Ngọ(正午),giữa trưa.

In this case, there are two Chinese words in Vietnamese to the Korean Chinese word, one Chinese word and one native word. The Chinese word is used in written language, while the native word is used in spoken language.

Case 3:

결국(結局)- kết cuộc(結局),kết cục (結局);

사명(使命)- sứ mạng(使命),sứ mệnh(使命).

In this case, part of the components of Vietnamese use two forms marked differently and pronounced differently. This difference is regional. One is for the south, the other one is for the north. They are two standard languages of north Vietnam and south Vietnam.

2.2 Partially Homomorphic Synonyms

Partially homomorphic synonym is a simple combination of the concept of partial homomorphic and the concept of synonym. Partial homographs refer to the case where the used Chinese characters are the same but the arrangement order of the constituent elements is different. It also refers to the case where the constituent elements of the words are partially the same (the Chinese characters used are only partially the same).

When the order of the constituent elements is different, the Chinese words used below are the same but the order is reversed. Among them, there are several differences that can be distinguished as follows:

Case 1:

간통(姦通),통간(通姦)- thông gian(通姦);

고통(苦痛),통고(痛苦)- thông khó(痛苦).

There are two sorting orders for Korean Chinese words, and Vietnamese Chinese words will always take one of them.

Case 2:

(簡單)- đơn giản(單簡),giản đơn(簡單);

(高度)- độ cao(度高),cao độ(高度)

There is only one order for Korean Chinese words, and there are two orders for Vietnamese Chinese words, both of which are used naturally in daily life.

Case 3:

(紹介)- giới thiệu(介紹);

(月經)- kinh nguyệt(經月).

Both Korean and Vietnamese Chinese words have a single order, but the order of the two

languages is reversed.

Case 4:

(感傷), (傷感)- thương cảm(傷感), cảm thương(感傷);
(告訴), (訴告)- tố cáo(訴告), cáo tố(告訴).

There are two orders for both Korean and Vietnamese Chinese words, but “傷感” and “訴告” are not often used in Korean, and both of them are used naturally in Vietnamese.

Case 5:

(客館)- quán khách(館客), nhà khách(nhà 客);
(輕減)- giảm khinh(減輕), giảm nhẹ(減 nhẹ).

In this case, some of the relevant vocabulary elements in Vietnamese are converted to native words. In this case, Chinese words are rarely used in daily life, but there are no obstacles in listening and understanding.

2.2.1 The Constituent Elements Are Partially Identical

When the constituent elements are the same, the number of words of the constituent elements may vary.

Case 1:

(都大體)- đại thể(大體);
(人間性)- nhân tính(人性).

In these two examples, the Korean ones have more constituent elements than the Vietnamese. The constituent elements in the Vietnamese Chinese words are only a part of the Korean ones, but for Koreans, “大體” and “人性” are familiar forms.

Case 2:

(無慮)- vô tư lự(無思慮);
(友情)- tình hữu nghị(情友誼).

In this case, Vietnamese Chinese words have more components than Korean Chinese words. The components of the Korean Chinese words are only part of the Vietnamese ones, which is the opposite of the above case. In addition, the components are arranged in different order.

Case 3:

(感氣)- cảm mạo(感冒);
(短點)- khuyết điểm(缺點).

These two sets of words have the same number of words, but only a part of the words is the same. “缺點” is a word that Koreans sometimes like to use, and meaning of “感冒” can only be guessed based on the meaning of Chinese characters.

2.3 Heteromorphic Synonyms

Heteromorphic synonyms refer to the situation where the Chinese words in these two languages have the same meanings but written differently.

Case 1:

(看板)- bang hiệu(榜號);
간호사(看護師)- y tá(醫佐).

Because these two sets of words are written in Chinese characters, they can be understood to some extent.

Case 2:

요리사(料理師)- đầu bếp(頭 bếp);
운동화(運動靴)- giày thể thao(giày 體操).

In this case, part of the constituent elements of Vietnamese Chinese words were replaced by native words. “bếp” is a native word for kitchen. “giày” is a native word for shoes. “體操” an native word for exercise.

2.4 Homographs

Homographs refer to the situations where Chinese words in two countries are the same, but the meanings are different.

For example, “銅錢” in Korean means change. In Vietnamese, it means money; “事業” in Korean means work. In Vietnamese, it means great events; “訪問” in Korean means visit. In Vietnamese, it means interview; “發達” in Korean means progress and development. In Vietnamese, it means Succeed in your career and become rich.

There is a correlation between the meanings of these four groups of Chinese words in Korean and Vietnamese, but the meanings of the words are enlarged or reduced or different.

Here is a set of examples where there is no correlation between the two.

For example: “博士” means “doctor degree” in Korean but “physician” in Vietnamese. “tiến sĩ(進士)” is the “doctor degree” in Vietnamese. This is very interesting. “學院” in Korean means training schools and cramming schools, while in Vietnamese it means technical colleges.

2.5 Chinese Words in Vietnamese Which Have Become Dead Words

Case:

부부(夫婦)- phu phụ(夫婦), vợ chồng;

상점(商店)- thương điểm(商店), cửa tiệm.

Of these two groups of Chinese words, Korean Chinese words are actively used in Korean, but almost dead in Vietnamese. The Chinese words are crowded out by the native words in Vietnamese. It is very prominent that the native words survived the competition between the Chinese words and the native words. It can be because Vietnamese reform of writing system.

3. Conclusion

This paper takes the forms and meanings of the Chinese words in Korean and Vietnamese, both of which belong to the Chinese character culture circle, as the starting point. Based on the commonly used Chinese words in Korean, it adopts a contrast with the corresponding Vietnamese Chinese words, and compares the forms and meaning characteristics. This paper divides the researched words into “completely homomorphic synonyms”, “partially homomorphic synonyms”, “heteromorphic synonyms” and “homographs”. In addition, this paper examines the phenomenon that Chinese words that are actively used in Korean are almost dead in Vietnamese. According to statistics, more than half of the Chinese words in Korean and Vietnamese are completely homomorphic synonyms. Partially homomorphic synonyms account for nearly 30%. In this way, more than 80% of the Chinese words in both languages are not difficult to understand by both of the people in two countries, which is worth paying attention to. This shows that the basis of the vocabulary of the two countries is that both belong to Chinese characters cultural circle. They have a very strong common cultural foundation.

The Word order structure differs between Korean and Vietnamese. Korean is in the order of “complementary words + core elements”, while Vietnamese is the opposite. The differences in the structure of articles, in the order of Chinese words, are partially homomorphic synonyms. It only accounts for 5% of the whole under the condition of different order of the constituent elements. It is not many. From the above, it can be roughly estimated the influence of the characteristics of article construction on the formation of vocabulary.

Korean people can roughly guess the meanings of the heteromorphic synonyms with different writing types but same meanings through explain each single character. It is also possible to understand the meanings of the heteromorphic synonyms with same writing types but different meanings because of the partial relevance. If this is taken into account, the cultural commonality in the vocabulary of the two languages is greater. The situation that Chinese words that are actively used in Korean are crowded away by the native words in Vietnamese and become dead is quite prominent. This can be seen as a huge impact due to the reform of Vietnamese writing system

which pays attention on getting rid of Chinese words.

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