



Applying Translation and Interpretation Technology in Teaching and Learning Chinese Slangs Using *Youdao* Online-Dictionary

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Abstract

In recent years, with the sweeping of economic globalization and cultural globalization, China has come up with the strategy of “Chinese culture going out”, so as to promote the spreading and communication of Chinese culture. As an indispensable part of Chinese culture, Chinese slang also deserves the attention of scholars. Slang, as colloquial spoken language, is vividly flavored with local color. In fact, it can be considered as a living part of the Chinese language. To a certain extent, it reveals various changes in the economy, culture, and standard of living part of a society. Youdao is a search engine released by Chinese Internet company NetEase in 2007, which develops mobile applications with big data technology. Youdao online dictionary provides a software and function to conduct a whole-paragraph translation. Translation was based on data from the search engine, along with web data generated that produced by data mining and natural language processing. Users use its search engine as a starting point to expand into the area of large-scale data storage. Youdao online dictionary as a tool for language learners to learn Chinese slangs independently is efficient and convenient, and it has created digital learning opportunity for learners to learn Chinese slangs online during the pandemic of Covid 19. The Youdao online dictionary provided us popular and high occurrence of Chinese slang spoken by the China people in their daily lives, using searching engine the output contains bilingual (Chinese-English) information such as explanation on Chinese slangs from different dictionaries, example sentences contained Chinese slangs, web interpretation about the context meanings of Chinese slangs, professional interpretation, English interpretation, collocation, synonym, conjugation, encyclopedia, translation, and vocabulary book. The study will illustrate the practical functions of the Youdao online dictionary and verify how it will improve the teaching and learning of Chinese slangs trough online and actual classroom learning.

Keywords: *Chinese slangs, digital learning, translation, technology, online dictionary*

1. Introduction

In recent decades, with the rapid development of Internet, the online dictionary gradually replaces the paper dictionary. Nowadays, online dictionary has already become a fundamental tool for language learners. According to Nielsen's research in 2012, *Youdao* Online-Dictionary ranked the first among seven online dictionaries (including PowerWord, Google, etc.), with 58% coverage among 16-45 years old Internet users in 10 cities in China. *Youdao* Online-Dictionary is a search engine released by Chinese Internet company NetEase in 2007, which develops mobile applications with big data technology. So far, there are more than two hundred million valid users. *Youdao* Online-Dictionary provides a software and function to conduct a whole-paragraph translation. Translation was based on data from the search engine, along with web data generated that produced by data mining and natural language processing. Users use its search engine as a starting point to expand into the area of large-scale data storage.

As an indispensable part of Chinese culture, Chinese slang also deserves the attention of scholars. Slang, as colloquial spoken language, is vividly flavored with local color. In fact, it can be considered as a living part of the Chinese language. To a certain extent, it reveals various changes in the economy, culture, and standard of living part of a society. *Youdao* Online-Dictionary as a tool for language learners to learn Chinese slangs independently is efficient and convenient, and it has created digital learning opportunity for learners to learn Chinese slangs online during the pandemic of Covid-19.

2. Literature Review



Yang (2017) studied effects on English learning of Online dictionary, taking Youdao Dictionary and Kingsoft Powerword for example. It exploited their merit and avoided their demerits then users can adjust and improve English learning strategies and methods. Li and Liu (2015) tried to find out the influence on translation study of online dictionary. Zhang and Lu (2014) reported inter-subjectivity approach to lexicon configuration in cyber dictionaries: with particular reference to Youdao Dictionary. It started from a brief account of the status quo of cyber dictionaries, and described the strengths and weaknesses of three types of lexicons, i.e. copyright-based, webpage-extraction-based and wiki-based ones, which were illustrated by Youdao Dictionary, and then investigated how compilers, technicians and users can take most advantage of their combined expertise to optimize the lexicon configuration of cyber dictionaries.

Overall, online dictionaries are preferred over other forms of dictionaries because they can quickly obtain word definitions and provide sample sentences. This form of dictionary allows language learners to learn without interruption, making it easier for them to recall words. They also promote learning autonomy since they value the usage of dictionaries in their studies and are eager to utilize them while learning a foreign language. However, the use of dictionaries in Chinese slangs learning has not been thoroughly studied.

The study will illustrate the practical functions of the Youdao online dictionary and verify how it will improve the teaching and learning of Chinese slangs trough online and actual classroom learning.

3. The Advantages of *Youdao* Online-Dictionary

3.1 Authoritative Data

Youdao Online-Dictionary has complete collection of three copyrighted dictionaries data: *The 21st Century Unabridged English-Chinese Dictionary*, *A New Chinese-English Dictionary*, and *Collins English-Chinese Dictionary*. Based on this giant database, users are able to do parallel comparison of the same Chinese slang, looking up the definitions and example sentences in different dictionaries, in order to better and deeper understand the pragmatic meaning in certain practical circumstances. For Chinese slangs, especially for those contain cultural elements, there is not always a consistent one-to-one match between its English translation and Chinese characters. By referring to the comparison of English definitions and example sentences from different dictionaries, the actual meaning of the Chinese slangs can be defined and the usage can be mastered accurately.

Taking Chinese slang “掌柜” for example, it is a Chinese slang with local colour in ancient Chinese society which indicated a shop owner served in the counter of a shop and his duty was deal with payment from customers. When searching Chinese slang “掌柜” (input Chinese characters) in *Youdao* Online-Dictionary, the Chinese spelling and English definition “shopkeeper; manager (of a shop)” is given from *A New Chinese-English Dictionary*. Then continue to input “shopkeeper”, the definition “A shopkeeper is a person who owns or manages a shop. 店主; 商店经理” is given both in English and Chinese (but not Chinese slang version). In this way, the semantic meaning of “掌柜” can be explored by the language learners.

3.2 Rich Definitions

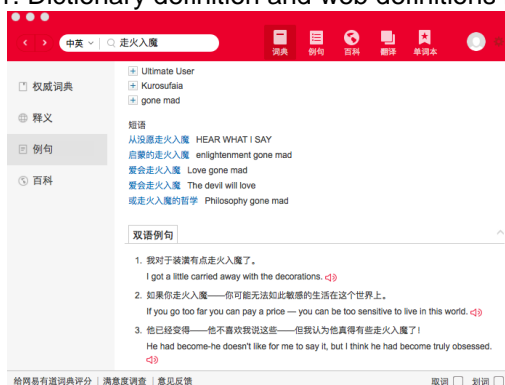
A distinguishing feature of *Youdao* Online-Dictionary is the webpage crawling lexicon, an automatically updated dynamic information resource system. Through the webpage crawling, more content can be explored, such as web definition, specialized definition, English to English definition, phrase, bilingual example sentence, authoritative example sentence, original example sentence.

For example, inputting “走火入魔”, the English definition “possessed by the Devil” is given from *A New Chinese-English Dictionary*. Besides, several web definitions are given: “Possessed by the Devil (based on 1016 websites), Ultimate User, Kurosufaia, gone mad”. Then follows the phrases, bilingual example sentences and encyclopedia.





Screenshot 1: Dictionary definition and web definitions for “走火入魔”



Screenshot 2: Phrases, bilingual example sentences and encyclopedia for “走火入魔”

3.3 Practical Functions

The rich information provided by *Youdao* Online-Dictionary is basically met the requirement for self-learning and e-learning users. When this electronic and online database and resource apply to inside classroom learning, students can try to understand the Chinese slangs by themselves before teachers' instruction. After teacher explaining the Chinese slangs, students get deeper understanding of the word.

Besides its powerful basic dictionary function mentioned above, *Youdao* Online-Dictionary provides users other practical functions like vocabulary book. After searching the new words, users can add them to vocabulary book for review. The vocabulary book helps users to recite the word by card learning. In this way, users are allowed to set their own plan, such as daily learning project and stick to it. It not only achieves learning and memorizing Chinese slangs whenever and wherever, but also allows to classify the vocabularies according to users' need, which highly promote the efficiency of learning.

4. Conclusion

For Chinese slangs learners, *Youdao* Online-Dictionary is comprehensive and user-friendly. First of all, it is free of charge. Secondly, it provides Chinese spelling, British and American English pronunciation, definitions from both authoritative dictionaries and websites, example sentences and encyclopedia. It allows learners to explore the literal meaning and semantic meaning of Chinese slangs with newly updated content. For translation learners, translation methods can be analyzed at the meantime. Also, the function of vocabulary book makes review work convenient. For language teaching, *Youdao* Online-Dictionary is a helpful tool for classroom teaching. Students can better understand the meaning of Chinese slangs especially through example sentences. However, there are still some Chinese slangs can't be found or not clearly explain in *Youdao* Online-Dictionary, especially for some cultural terms. For instance, the definition of Chinese slang “黄花闺女” in *Youdao* Online-Dictionary is “an untouched virgin; bread-and-butter miss; be still a virgin”. This definition doesn't explain the Chinese cultural elements in the slang, that is why yellow flower is used to describe virgin in ancient Chinese society. In this situation, teachers need to further illustrate the Chinese slangs in actual classroom learning.

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