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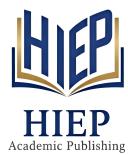
Journal of Language Situation and Language Service

JLSLS, Vol. 1, No.2, 2025, pp.365-372.

Print ISSN: 3078-3755; Online ISSN: 3104-5065

Journal homepage: <https://www.lslsjournal.com>

DOI: [Https://doi.org/10.64058/JLSLS.25.2.16](https://doi.org/10.64058/JLSLS.25.2.16)



New Paradigms in Internet Language Research for the Digital Age

—A Review of *Interactive Research between New Media and Internet Language*

Xiang Chengru

Abstract: *Research on the Interaction between New Media and Internet Language* is grounded in the theoretical perspective of “language-media interaction”, breaking through the limitations of traditional linguistic research by constructing a methodological system that dialectically unifies “detachment” and “immersion”. Through case studies, the book conducts a multidimensional investigation into the synchronic representation and diachronic evolution of new words and expressions, the conceptual meaning construction and multimodal collaboration of online emojis, as well as the development trends and governance systems of language life, systematically revealing the mechanisms and motivations through which new media influence internet language. On this basis, it integrates multidisciplinary perspectives to explore issues in language life in the mobile internet era, examines youth social mentality through the lens of online buzzwords, and establishes “community” as a key unit in internet language governance, thereby constructing a three-level governance framework and a language security system. Finally, by analyzing the development of the internet language industry, it reveals the interactive relationship between new media and internet language, offering new paradigms and perspectives for research in this field.

Keywords: *Interactive Research between New Media and Internet Language*; internet language research; language-media interaction; online language life

Received: 01 Nov 2025 / Revised: 10 Nov 2025 / Accepted: 20 Nov 2025 / Published online: 30 Nov 2025 / Print published: 30 Dec 2025.

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标题: 数字时代的网络语言研究新范式——评《新媒体与网络语言的互动研究》

摘要:《新媒体与网络语言的互动研究》立足于“语言媒介互动”的理论视角,突破传统语言学研究的局限,构建了“抽离性”与“浸入性”辩证统一的方法论体系。书中通过案例研究,从新词新语的共时表征与历时演化、网络表情符号的概念建构与多模态协作,以及语言生活的发展态势与治理体系等方面展开多维考察,系统揭示新媒体影响网络语言的机制与动因。在此基础上,融合多学科视角,探讨移动互联网时代的语言生活问题,借助网络流行语关注青年社会心态,并将“社群”确立为网络语言治理的关键单元,进而构建三级治理框架与语言安全体系。最后,通过分析网络语言产业发展,揭示新媒体与网络语言之间的互动关系,为该领域研究提供了新的范式与视角。

关键词:《新媒体与网络语言的互动研究》; 网络语言研究; 语言媒介互动; 网络语言生活

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Introduction

According to the *56th Statistical Report on China's Internet Development Status (2025)* released by the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC), as of June 2025, the number of internet users in China reached 1.123 billion, with an internet penetration rate of 79.7%. This large number deeply reflects how the internet has become deeply integrated into people's lives. New media, as an important product of the internet era, is developing rapidly. From early email and BBS to current social media platforms like Weibo, WeChat, Douyin and various live streaming and short video applications, the forms and functions of new media continue to expand and innovate.

Language, as a basic tool of social interaction, is taking on a new look driven by new media. New words, expressions, and new forms of expression are emerging constantly, such as the internet buzzwords “dacall”, “Buddha-like” (fó xi), “lie flat” (tǎng píng), and the development of new symbolic representations like emoticons. Furthermore, with the emergence of digital media and multimodal media, the forms of internet language are no longer limited to traditional speech flow and written language, but also include multimodal language forms such as images, videos and memes. Although new media has made communication behavior more free and personalized, and language attitudes more open and inclusive, people's language concepts are also changing. Standardization awareness is constantly weakening. Some internet language contains vulgar and crude content, such as offensive and insulting words like “nima” and “TMD”, which seriously pollute the online language ecological environment.

Faced with these language phenomena and problems, previous academic research on internet language has formed multi-layered exploratory paths. Ontological language research analyzes from multiple dimensions such as vocabulary, grammar, semantics, and pragmatics, while applied research focuses on the standardized governance and industrial development of internet language. Research perspectives continue to expand, proposing many constructive opinions on the new progress and directions of internet language research from an interdisciplinary perspective. In summary, the current research results are considerable in number, but many existing studies focus on scattered typical cases, lack sufficient attention to the holistic development of internet language, and seldom study internet language phenomena and language life from the perspective of the interaction between new media and internet language.

In this context, the publication of *Research on the Interaction between New Media and Internet Language* completed by Professor Xie Xiaoming and Dr. Cheng Runfeng, is particularly significant. Grounded in the theoretical perspective of “language-media” collaborative construction, it provides a new and systematic research framework for understanding linguistic phenomena in the digital age. The book not only delves into the generation mechanisms, evolutionary paths, and social effects of internet language but also proposes effective solutions for its governance from a multidisciplinary perspective. It offers highly valuable insights and methods for addressing current challenges related to internet language, playing an important role in promoting the healthy development of linguistic life in the digital era.

Content Overview

The book is divided into six chapters, with the logic of each chapter progressing step by step to form a complete research system. Chapter 1 is the introduction, systematically sorting out the academic context of new media and internet language research, clarifying the theoretical value and practical significance of language-media interaction research, and further expanding methodological reflections on this field based on a review of domestic and international internet language research methods. Chapters 2 to 5 focus on empirical research, providing a large number of analysis cases from practical applications, such as ontological studies of new words and expressions, research on internet grammaticalization, pragmatic variation, and research on internet emoticons. Chapter 6 focuses on the application level, discussing the social governance paths and industrial development directions of internet language. It is both an extension of the previous theoretical and case studies and provides practical guidance for the standardized development and value transformation of internet language.

1. Theoretical Foundation: The Interactive Perspective of “Language-Media” and Paradigm Innovation (Chapter 1)

The axiological and methodological reflections conducted by the authors in the introduction lay a solid academic foundation for the entire book. The book argues from the perspective of human communication history the inevitability of “language relying on media”, from sound waves in the oral age, to light waves and writing carriers in the written age, to mass media in the electronic age, and up to the internet and new media in the digital age. Every major change in media form has profoundly changed the way language exists,

spreads, and evolves. On this basis, the book clearly proposes that there is a “collaborative mutual construction” relationship between new media and internet language. New media give rise to new language representations and speech means, construct new forms of communication, and shape new language concepts, while internet language, as content and data, in turn promotes the innovation of new media.

Regarding the methodology of internet language research, the authors believe the key lies in whether the methods used can reflect the nature of internet language and the characteristics of online language life. Therefore, the authors define internet language as having two media characteristics: “visual determinacy” and “mobile connectivity”. Drawing on theories and methods from other disciplines, they then propose a research path that dialectically unifies “detachment” and “immersion”. The former uses complex systems theory, phenomenology, etc., for theoretical construction; the latter uses methods like network archaeology and ethnography to delve into the digital scene, such as showing the solidification process of language components through the evolution of the modal particle “wei”. This methodological system emphasizes the synergy of multiple methods, achieving a connection between macro theory and micro practice.

2. Empirical Exploration: A Multidimensional Map of the Language Ecology (Chapters 2–5)

Through systematic empirical research, the book reveals the core characteristics and evolution mechanisms of internet language as a functional variant from multiple dimensions. In the study of new words and expressions, a multidimensional analysis of the emerging modal particle “re” reveals how visually dominant online communication gives rise to a compensatory mechanism for modal particles, and the innovation mechanism driven by netizens’ playful psychology and identity needs. Through a “network archaeology” of “wei”, tracing its evolution from a call word to an interrogative modal particle, and then to expressing complex modalities like shock and dissatisfaction, it clearly outlines a trajectory of how meaning is constantly “assigned value” and “transformed” in a specific media environment. The analysis of the popular “VVV” structure reveals the influence of new media on its emergence.

Regarding the study of internet language evolution, the analysis of the mechanism and motivation behind the adverbialization of “shiming” (real name) is conducted from the perspective of language-media interaction, confirming that the emergence and popularity of language phenomena are closely related to new media platforms. “The main feature of internet language grammaticalization is the prominence of ‘synchronic intensity’, which complements the prominence of ‘diachronic depth’ in real-world language grammaticalization.” (Chu Zexiang, 2014) Looking at the development trajectory, the adverbial usage of “shiming” initially appeared only as sporadic individual instances, while new media platforms provided the necessary pragmatic context and dissemination conditions, enabling its high-frequency use among netizens and ultimately completing the functional evolution of adverbialization. In the study of internet emoticons, the authors use the conceptual blending theory of cognitive linguistics to reveal the deep reason why the “facepalm and cry” emoticon presents a negative tone. Furthermore, the authors introduce the Natural Semantic Metalanguage theory and, through a cross-cultural comparison of the “folded hands” emoticon, explain the differences in understanding between China and the US, indicating that differences in social variables such as gender, region, and age also affect the interpretation of internet emoticons. Through a

diachronic analysis of the “N1 might have V-ed a fake N2” construction, it points out that the generation of contemporary buzzwords is no longer solely guided by internal language rules, but is deeply integrated with external factors such as visual communication and platform characteristics.

These empirical studies collectively show that the characteristics and evolution of internet language are the result of the complex interaction between the language system, media characteristics, and socio-cultural factors, providing a multi-dimensional analytical perspective for understanding language innovation in the digital age.

3. Application and Countermeasures: Internet Language Life and Governance (Chapter 6)

The book’s final focus is on language life and governance filled with practical concern. Chapter 6 systematically integrates the previous research findings and, starting from the practical problems of language life, proposes forward-looking governance solutions.

First, through the analysis of buzzwords like “guanxuan” (official announcement), it reveals the profound impact of mobile internet characteristics on language life, summarizes eight dimensions of change, and innovatively proposes a comprehensive governance path integrating regulatory supervision, technological governance, and language education innovation. Second, based on diachronic corpora from 2008-2018, it constructs an analysis framework for youth social mentality from three dimensions: grammar, semantics, and pragmatics, revealing the dual attributes of internet language as both a “barometer” and a “construction site” of social mentality, and proposes a cultivation plan centered on the “positive” education concept. Third, it precisely defines the phenomenon of internet language communization, establishes a four-dimensional classification system of “interest, relationship, fantasy, transaction”, and deeply explains its internal logic of formation and dissemination through three mechanisms: symbol, media, and relationship. Based on deep insight into the trend of internet language communization, the book proposes a highly operable three-level governance framework: using “community self-governance” to activate netizens’ agency, relying on “cross-community co-governance” to build weak connection bridges, and ensuring the bottom line of national language security through “super-community governance”. Language life in the mobile internet era presents many new trends, and communization is one of the evolutionary trends shown by internet language. This research not only establishes the “community” itself as a key unit for internet language governance, but the analytical framework and research methods it constructs also have significant paradigmatic meaning and theoretical value for understanding other language evolution trends in the digital age.

Fourth, by analyzing the conceptual changes and connotation expansion of language security itself, the book elaborates in detail on a three-level language security system and accurately applies it to the analysis of internet language security. It points out three major security challenges faced by modern society: the erosion of ontological security by internet language pollution, the damage to communicative security by language violence, and the threat to strategic security by information warfare. Based on this, the book proposes corresponding layered governance paths. Finally, this research breaks through the disciplinary boundaries of traditional linguistics, incorporating language governance into the overall framework of national governance

modernization. By systematically explaining the triple economic attributes of language and the four forms of production factors, it innovatively divides language into seven product types and two industrial formats, providing a new perspective for understanding the economic value of language in the digital age.

Main Contributions

1. Theoretical Paradigm Innovation

The most significant contribution of this book lies in establishing and consistently applying the “language-media” collaborative co-construction research perspective. Grounded in complex adaptive systems theory, this perspective breaks away from the traditional view of media’s influence on language as a unidirectional process. Instead, it regards media and language as two interdependent, mutually influential, and balancing elements within a social complex system. Based on this understanding of their interactive relationship, the book positions new media as a crucial window for observing and managing contemporary language practices. When studying online linguistic phenomena, it does not confine itself to the scope of traditional linguistics or focus solely on language itself. Rather, it involves media, society, and technology, examining the interactive realization between media changes and online language.

2. Research Method Reconstruction

Based on a systematic review of domestic and international internet language research methods, this book proposes a methodological system that dialectically unifies “detachment” and “immersion”. The former uses complex adaptive systems, phenomenology, etc., for theoretical refinement; the latter uses methods like network knowledge archaeology and network ethnography to delve into the digital scene. The entire book conducts empirical research based on this methodology. For example, the diachronic archaeological study of the modal particle “wei”, by tracking its evolution trajectory on platforms like Baidu Tieba, vividly shows the complete process of internet language components from formal integration to functional solidification. This kind of micro-examination based on digital traces forms a sharp contrast with the “documentary research” of traditional historical linguistics, highlighting the unique methodological advantages of internet language research, while also providing replicable and expandable methodological paths for internet language research in the Chinese context.

3. Expansion of Disciplinary Boundaries

It breaks through the limitations of the single discipline of linguistics, integrating perspectives from sociology (analysis of youth social mentality), communication studies (media communication mechanisms), public administration (language governance), economics (language industry), and other fields. For example, by constructing a social mentality observation paradigm through a three-dimensional (grammar-semantics-pragmatics) analysis of internet buzzwords, the research possesses both linguistic depth and social science breadth; by outlining the three-dimensional landscape of the internet language industry, innovatively dividing product forms and industrial formats, and analyzing its five development characteristics, it organically integrates the linguistic perspective into the context of digital economic development, vividly interpreting the contemporary connotation of “language as a resource”, and demonstrating the practical

significance of serving the national digital economy strategy.

4. Practical Application and Transformation

This book demonstrates deep academic responsibility and humanistic concern, consciously integrating academic research into the process of national governance modernization. It focuses on practical issues such as youth social mentality, the communitization of internet language, language security, and the development of the internet language industry, closely linking multidisciplinary theory with governance practice, and providing systematic solutions with both theoretical height and practical value for building a healthy and clear cyberspace.

Conclusion

The book *Interactive Research between New Media and Internet Language* provides us with a practical methodological system for studying internet language. The book mainly uses a large number of practical paper cases to show us the specific application of the “language-media interaction” research path, providing research ideas and paradigms for future internet language research. In addition, the authors point out that internet language has shifted from mass communication to communal survival. In response to the opportunities and risks brought by communitization (such as circle barriers, language violence, information security), the book constructs a governance plan that combines top-down and bottom-up approaches, addressing both internal and external aspects. The work goes beyond the technical and regulatory levels, emphasizing the cultivation of people. It advocates promoting language education to return to the tradition of “speech first, writing second”, integrating positive concepts and language ethics, and consolidating teenagers’ language ability and normative awareness, thereby building the foundation for a healthy language ecology. In short, this is an excellent work that integrates theoretical innovation and practical concern, worthy of attention from both academia and industry.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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