

The Review of Word of the Year of Oxford English Dictionary for the last Decade

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the word of the year of Oxford English Dictionary for the last ten years. Through the analysis of the vocabularies of these ten years, we find that the word of the year has undergone a shift from entertainment, to life, to seriousness and then to life. Through the study, this change is mainly influenced by the shift in the focus of young people, especially the post-95 generation. Language is the carrier of culture, and words are a part of language, so word reflects culture in some ways. To some extent, by studying these words in terms of the cultural characteristics which present, they can reflect the cultural attitude of young people as well as the characteristics of changes in aspects of life. And it has some significance for us new generation of young people to spread traditional Chinese culture.

Keywords

Oxford English Dictionary, Word of the Year.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The advent of the information age has brought great changes to society. With the increasing refinement of network technology, people's way of working, learning and other aspects have changed greatly. Many social softwares have gradually become platforms for people to work and study, especially during the home office period in 2023, schools and enterprises utilize softwares such as Nail and Tencent Meeting to carry out online work and study. For foreign language learners, as the popularization of the Internet, the emergence of various types of online dictionaries has greatly improved the efficiency of learning, such as Netease Yuda, Baidu Translate, Sogou Dictionary. In addition, more authoritative and professional dictionaries such as Oxford English Dictionaries and Cambridge Dictionaries are always online. Through online dictionaries, we can quickly and easily find words and knowledge we need. At the same time, online dictionaries also use technical means to count the most searched words in a year, and then selected as the "word of the year".

1.2. Overview

Although it has been more than a decade since Oxford English Dictionaries published its word of the year, related literatures are not in the majority. First of all, they mainly focus on the word of the year for a specific year. For example, the word of the year in 2015 was an emoji, and some scholars have devoted specific studies to it. But this emoji is not the traditional meaning of word, the creation of this word is closely related to the rapid development of social software under the spread of the Internet. And there is also the use of the word of the year to study the changes brought by the Internet to our lives. In 2016, the Oxford English Dictionary announced the word of the year as "post-truth", and scholars have mainly explored the reasons for the origin of this word and its impact on certain aspects in this social context. Secondly, the creation of the word of the year is closely related to the creation of the Internet, in addition, there are also scholars who study the word of the year published by representative online dictionaries in a certain year,

such as the study of the Oxford English Dictionary's annual hot word "climate emergency" in 2019.

Thus, it can be shown that the research on the Oxford English Dictionary's word of the year is not in the majority, and most of the studies started from around 2015. Most of the perspectives are focused on the social background of word, or the characteristics of word, and the perspectives are focused on a certain year, which is also a certain limitation in time. So the paper chooses the word of the year since 2014 to 2023 as the research object for longitudinal comparison. The paper is mainly divided into two parts, the first part specifically introduces the word of the year from 2014 to 2023, and the second part mainly explores the characteristics of these words and then explores the social meaning behind them.

2. Word of the Year

2.1. Meaning of the Word of the Year

The main subject of this paper is the "Word of the Year", which refers to a word chosen by an online English dictionary at the end of December every year. The word of the year usually represents the focus of people's attention, like a popular topic, or a socio-cultural issue during that period of time. Words of the year are chosen in a variety of ways, some dictionaries choose the word of the year that has been commented on or accessed the most by users, while others show the word of the year in a list of words that are voted on by users. the Oxford English Dictionary's word of the year relies heavily on the latter, and when the chosen word is published, it becomes the word of the year for that year.

2.2. Word of the Year 2014 to 2023

The Word of the Year is "vape" in 2014, a word that first appeared in the 1980s as an abbreviation for vapour or vaporize, meaning "to vaporize" or "to vaporize". It was later used as a verb to describe the puffing of smoke when smoking an e-cigarette, and as a noun to refer to the device "e-water cigarette". The Oxford English Dictionary named "vape" - the word used for drawing on an electronic cigarette instead of a burning stick of tobacco - as its 2014 word of the year. "You are thirty times more likely to come across the word 'vape' than you were two years ago, and usage has more than doubled in the past year," Oxford staff editors said.

The word of the year for 2015 was an emoji, the "laughing and crying" emoji. Officially, the emoji is explained as "smiley face with tears of joy," which means face with tears of joy. because it was the most used emoji in the world in 2015, it became the word of the year. oxford languages also laughed at itself that year: "It's unprecedented that we've chosen an emoji. Languages also laughed at itself that year, "It's unprecedented that we've actually selected an emoji." The use of the word emoji and emojis also increased dramatically in 2015. According to the Oxford Dictionaries' website, data analyzed that among all emoji, the "crying with laughter" emoji was the most used emoji. Because of the high use of emoji, it is easy to imagine why the word of the year is emoji in the Oxford Dictionary's list of words.

The word of the year for 2016 is "post-truth", and it relates to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping political debate or public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief. The term post-truth has been around since 1992, though. But it became the word of the year in 2016 because, in the wake of two political events - Britain's exit from the European Union and the election of Donald Trump - post-truth saw an increase in usage of about 2,000 percent in 2016 over the previous year.

The word of the year for 2017 was "youthquake", which according to the Oxford Advanced Learner's English Dictionary means "an important change in culture, politics or society brought about by the actions or influence of young people ". (A significant cultural, political or social change that occurs because of the actions or influence of young people. Vreeland wrote: "The

year's in its youth, the youth in its year. [...] More dreamers. More doers. Here. Now. Youthquake 1965." "The year's in its youth, the youth in its year Here. Now. Youthquake 1965." "The year of youth, the year of the young. More dreamers. More doers. Here. Now. Youthquake 1965." a time when young people were emerging from the tumultuous changes of the post-war period and beginning to transform fashion and music with their own culture and reject traditional values. The term, which saw a surge in its use in the 2017 UK general election in June and the New Zealand general election in September, discusses young people's engagement in politics and raises awareness of young people's ability to drive political change.

In 2018, "toxic" was chosen as the word of the year. A popular saying in previous years was "You're toxic, aren't you?". The English word "toxic" is the word of the year 2018, toxic. toxic originates from the medieval Latin toxicus, meaning "poisoned" or "impregnated with poison", although it is derived from Latin toxicus. "Although it is derived from the Latin toxicum, it has its roots in the Greek toxikon pharmakon (a deadly poison used by the ancient Greeks to coat the tips of arrows). Interestingly, the word pharmakon, which really means "poison", was not borrowed from Latin, but rather toxon (Greek for "bow") became toxicum. has been generalized, for example toxic environment can refer not only to the natural level of "toxic environment", but also to people's existence, environment, work, and public places, etc. For example toxic relationship is a term used to describe a toxic relationship. For example, toxic relationship refers to unhealthy interpersonal relationships; toxic stress - although the right amount of stress can make a person feel better, it can also make a person feel better.

The word of the year 2019 is a complete reflection of the state of the environment. The word of the year is "climate emergency". The Oxford Advanced Learner's English Dictionary defines climate emergency as a situation in which immediate action is needed to reduce or stop climate change and prevent serious and permanent damage to the environment. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines climate emergency as a situation in which immediate action is needed to reduce or stop climate change and prevent serious and permanent damage to the environment. In 2019 climate became the most common word associated with emergency, three times more than health emergency, the second most used word. The inclusion of climate emergency, climate crisis and climate action in the list of words of the year is an indication of a dramatic shift in the choice of language in 2019, an intensification of consciousness and a more serious and direct approach to the discussion of "defining issues". This is an intensification of consciousness and a renewed discussion of the "defining issues" in a more serious and direct way. After counting and analyzing all the words, the researchers found that there is really no way to summarize 2020 in a single word of the year. Therefore, Oxford Languages used the term "unprecedented year" to describe the somewhat "panicked" year 2020. This includes COVID-19 (novel coronavirus pneumonia) and all its related words, as well as words related to telecommuting and more words related to new technologies, a list that represents the year's landmark events.

The word of the year 2021 is vax (vaccine; vaccination). Previously, the word vax was rarely used, but in September 2021, it was used 72 times more than at the same time last year. Not only do people use the word frequently, but they use it in a wide range of ways, from vax card, to fully-vaxxed, to the newly coined vax(i)cation. Tracking language development gives us a good idea of how vaccine rollouts are progressing. According to the Oxford Corpus, the most frequently used vaccine words were vaccine candidate, vaccine trial, vaccine distribution and vaccine development in December 2020, when vaccine preparation was still underway. Preparation was still underway. By March 2021, vaccine rollout and vaccine dose were at the top of the list, indicating the start of vaccine programs. By September, the terms vaccine mandate, vaccine passport, vaccine card and vaccine booster had appeared. vaccine hesitancy is still widely used. 2022's word of the year is "goblin mode". ". According to Oxford Languages, goblin mode describes behavior that is "unashamedly self-indulgent, lazy, sloppy, or greedy"

and is often "contrary to social norms or expectations" (a type of behaviour which is unapologetic). type of behaviour which is unapologetically self-indulgent, lazy, slovenly, or greedy, typically in a way that rejects social norms or expectations".) Based on the above definitions and explanations, goblin mode can be more commonly understood as "swinging mode" or "laying flat mentality".

2023's Word of the Year is the result of Oxford Languages first analyzing data based on 2023 language usage to select candidates that have seen a dramatic increase in usage this year and reflect the top concerns of 2023, and then inviting all English speakers around the globe to vote online for two weeks for their preferred word of the year. After a public vote and the votes of language experts, "rizz (glamor)" ended up being the Oxford 2023 Word of the Year, best representing the mood and ethos of 2023." -Emerging common Internet slang meaning "style, charm, attractiveness" or "the ability to attract an emotional partner." Derived from the word "charisma," "rizz" refers to a person's ability to attract a romantic partner through "style, charm or attractiveness," dictionary publisher Oxford University Press (OUP) said in its announcement Monday. The word received more than 32,000 votes from the public, OUP added.

3. Characteristics and significance of the annual vocabulary of the past ten years

3.1. Characteristics of the vocabulary of the year in the past decade

In 2014, the vocabulary of the year was more publicized, and the widespread use of "e-cigarettes" drove the discussion of public issues. 2015, the vocabulary of the year was more life-oriented and entertaining, and the vocabulary of the year 2016 and 2017 began to be more serious, and the use of post-truth and youthquake was also found in the discussion of social events. The use of post-truth, youthquake also appeared in the discussion of social events. From 2018 onwards, the focus on climate and the environment has led to the vocabulary of the year being characterized by a comment on the environment, and from 2019 to 2021, the vocabulary of the year is also related to all aspects of epidemics as they ripple across the globe. Until the beginning of 2022 to 2023, the official word of the year list is given with more diversified and lighter aspects, and the creativity and usage of the new words are increasing, and the richness of the vocabulary continues to be strengthened.

Thus, on the whole, the vocabulary of the year in the last ten years has, in general, been characterized by different features and has been in a state of fluctuation and change. The focus of attention has also become more pluralistic and the aspects involved more diverse.

3.2. The meaning studying the Word of the Year in the past ten years

Through the comparative study of the vocabulary of the year in the past ten years, what can we get from it? First of all, we have to make it clear that the main body of users of online dictionaries is mainly young people, especially the post-95 generation is the main body of using online dictionaries. As mentioned above, the word of the year of Oxford Internet Dictionary is voted by users, which means that the main body of voting is mostly these young people. The words of the year in this decade are closely related to the hot topics of the time, so it can be seen that young people pay more attention to new things, so the words before 2015 are more inclined to entertainment and life. As for the transformation of the vocabulary after 2015, as we mentioned above, the vocabulary of the year from 2016 onwards began to shift towards seriousness, with all kinds of issues gradually becoming the focus, and the color of entertainment and life-oriented decreasing. Since most of the users of online dictionaries are the young generation, this shift also shows the change of focus of the young generation. They have begun to pay attention to things of a serious nature, and their horizons have become more diversified, reflecting their concern for society. In other words, these words of the year reflect, to a certain

extent, the concerns and anxieties of the "English-speaking" people, especially the young people. In 2022, life will gradually return to normal, and we are full of hope for the future, so the words of the year in the past two years have become "colorful" again.

4. Conclusion

The word of the year can reflect to a certain extent the focus of public attention in a year, emotions, life and all aspects. By studying the word of the year in the past ten years, this paper finds that the focus of society has changed in these ten years, especially the change of young people's focus, which also reflects the change of young people's influence, and to a certain extent, the young generation's understanding of and concern for the world are increasing, and their sense of responsibility is also being strengthened. Therefore, through the study of the words of the year, it is found that these words of the year reflect, to a certain extent, the concerns and anxieties of the "English-speaking" people, especially the young people.

As a young generation of Chinese foreign language learners, if we can use our professional skills to tell a good story about China, and make Chinese cultural words have a place in the world, it may even be selected as the word of the year, which is also the significance of this paper.

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