

# Linguistic Characteristics and Cultural Connotations of Four-character Idioms in Northeast Dialect

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## Abstract

This paper takes the four-character idiomatic words of the Northeast dialect as the research object, and systematically discusses their language characteristics, cultural connotations and inheritance challenges. It is found that the four-character idiomatic language has AABB and ABAC structure and dialect suffix as the core characteristics, and strengthens regional expression through overlapping, repetition and prosody, which has the characteristics of derogatory tendency and strong semantic opacity. Its generative logic is rooted in the straightforward personality of Northeast people, the philosophy of survival in the cold zone and the comedy culture, and has both emotional catharsis and identity functions. However, this stage shows the dilemma of inheritance. To this end, this paper proposes corresponding solutions.

## Keywords

Northeast dialect; four-character idiomatic expression; language characteristics; cultural connotation.

## 1. Linguistic Characteristics of Four-Character Idioms

### 1.1. Structural fixity and rhythm

"Idioms are fixed phrases that have been long used by the people, with established meanings, a strong colloquial nature, and a concise form." [2]

The four-character idiomatic expressions of the Northeast dialect have distinct regularities in structure, which are mainly reflected in the use of "AABB", "ABAC" and dialect suffixes.

#### 1.1.1. "AABB" structure: By repeating words or roots, a symmetrical structure is formed, making the expression more rhythmic and vivid.

De Se (describing people frivolous and sloppy)

Ex(1) ample sentence: You'd better not get it there.

Fake fake coo (describing people who are hypocritical and pretending)

Example sentence: He is fake every day, I don't know what he is going to do?

#### 1.1.2. "ABAC" structure: The first word and the third word are the same, and the second word and the fourth word are different, forming a symmetrical rhythm with certain changes.

Tiger (describes people as stupid and reckless) Example sentence: This kid is a tiger and does things without going through his brain.

Example sentence: What's wrong with you, you can believe what this liar says?

#### 1.1.3. Dialect suffix enhances regional characteristics: Add a specific suffix after the adjective to make the expression more vivid and more Northeaster.

Black and not autumn" (derogatory or mocking) Example sentence: How are your clothes tidy? It's black!

Stupid (describes people who are stupid and slow to react) Example sentence: He stood there stupid and didn't know how to help.

## **1.2. Semantic non-transparency and emotional tendencies**

"Semantic opacity" [3], that is, its meaning cannot be simply derived through literal combinations, but needs to be understood in combination with context and cultural background. At the same time, this kind of expression generally has a strong emotional tendency, especially a derogatory color, reflecting the straightforward, humorous and even sharp language style of Northeast people.

### **1.2.1. Semantics are not transparent**

The idiomatic use of the four characters in the Northeast dialect often adopts metaphor, exaggeration or borrowing rhetoric, making its actual meaning far from the literal meaning.

Pig's mouth and monkey teeth: Pig's mouth and monkey teeth, Describes a person with an ugly appearance and improper facial features.

Example: "That man has a pig's mouth and monkey teeth, and he responds when he sees it."

The hairy neck is spiral: Hair stands up + neck turns, Describes people with eccentric personalities and difficult to get along with.

Example: "He has a prickly temper and a whirlwind neck, and no one likes to pay attention."

Donkeys are domineering: Donkey's temper + domineering, He described people as arrogant and unreasonable.

Example: "This person is domineering and doesn't lose at all."

Bullshit is pouring the stove: Dog fart + stove collapse, Describes something trivial and boring or inferior.

Example: "I'm busy with bullshit all day long, and I'm not serious."

### **1.2.2. Emotional tendencies**

The emotional tendencies of four-character idiomatic expressions in Northeast Chinese dialect are highly concentrated: most are derogatory, a small number are neutral or used in a teasing sense, and very few are used in a commendatory sense. [4] This distribution is closely related to the linguistic habit of Northeast Chinese people being "clear-cut in love and hatred".

Derogatory meaning (sarcasm, disgust, criticism)

Degrading appearance: shoehorn face, Luo Guo eight phases

Personality criticism: wilting and drooping

Negatively calling behavior: hanging children, nonsense

Neutral/ridicule (depending on the context)

Five confusions and three paths (confused, derogatory and ridiculous)

Example: He drank so much that he couldn't go straight. (Derogatory)

Example: This child sleeps in a daze and can't wake up. (Neutral)

Very few praises

Bright and generous (describes people who are bold, straightforward, informal, do things atmospherically, and do not care about gains and losses)

Iron buddy (refers to a very good friend)

## **2. Classification and Function of Four-character Idioms**

### **2.1. Visual expression of appearance characteristics**

The appearance idioms in the Northeast dialect transform character characteristics into vivid visual images with their unique concrete techniques. This type of expression often uses two typical rhetorical strategies:

#### **2.1.1. Animal metaphorical expressions**

such as the term "pig's mouth and monkey teeth" instantly outline an exaggerated close-up of the face in the listener's mind by comparing the characteristics of the human mouth with the arched mouth of a pig and the buck teeth of a monkey. This expression is not only vivid, but also implies a derogatory association of "animal characteristics".

#### **2.1.2. The metaphorical expression of objects**

expresses "pointed heads and brains", mapping human body parts with the morphological characteristics of sharp objects, so that the abstract appearance description is immediately concrete and perceptible. while "bone removal and exposure" exaggerated the degree of emaciation through the strong visual cue of "bone appearance".

### **2.2. Accurate portrait of character and conduct**

The Northeast dialect shows a unique language art in describing the character of the characters, and its four-character phrases can penetrate the appearance and hit the essence:

#### **2.2.1. The condensed expression of personality traits**

The word "false fake coo" strengthens the hypocritical and contrived character characteristics in the form of overlapping words, and the phonetic repetition suggests the capriciousness of behavior; "Mao Ding Sanguang" vividly outlines the contradictory image of clumsy but delusional through the contrast between "Mao" and "light".

#### **2.2.2. The particularity of pragmatic scenarios**

These personality idioms show unique contextual adaptability in practical use, showing the subtle proportion of Northeast dialects in interpersonal communication:

The reprimand of the elders of the "knife-mouthed tofu heart" in an intimate context is frizzy on the surface, but it is full of ardent expectations of "hoping that it will become a tool". This expression of "scolding in the mouth, hurting in the heart" just reflects the unique emotional expression mode of Northeast people - conveying the deepest love in the most straightforward language.

"Language is fast, accurate and ruthless" in conflict scenarios

When faced with character issues such as hypocrisy and cunning, these phrases immediately transform into precise linguistic scalpels. The four words "fake fake coo" can tear the mask of the pretender. In this context, the lethality of the phrase not only comes from the literal meaning, but also from the value recognition of "true temperament" by the entire Northeast culture behind it.

### **2.3. Sensory depiction of the form of things**

The Northeast dialect shows unique linguistic expressiveness in the portrayal of the shape and state of things, and its idiomatic expressions make static descriptions glow with dynamic charm through multi-sensory linkage expressions:

#### **2.3.1. Concrete expression of audiovisual synesthesia**

The word "slippery and bright" constructs a three-dimensional texture experience through the tactile smoothness of "slippery" and the visual reflection of "slippery"; "Pimple Autumn"

contrasts with the tactile "pimple" protrusion and the visual "pimple" unevenness, vividly reproducing the irregular state of the surface of the object.

### **2.3.2. Dynamic state depiction**

Through the exaggerated use of the numbers "seven" and "eight", "Seven Cracks and Eight Petals" concretizes the crushing process into a dynamic picture that explodes instantly, which is far more visually impactful than simply saying "completely broken".

## **3. Cultural Connotation and Social Function**

### **3.1. The logic of generation of derogatory tendencies**

The phenomenon of semantic degradation of the four-character idiomatic language of the Northeast dialect is essentially a concrete projection of regional cultural genes and survival strategies at the level of linguistic symbols.

#### **3.1.1. The image projection of the group character**

In the Northeast culture, the communication concept of "open people" and the straightforwardness and boldness of the group break the ambiguity of language expression, which makes the four-character idiomatic language like a prism, which can directly penetrate the surface of social phenomena and directly reflect the essence of social phenomena.

#### **3.1.2. Interpretation strategies of narrative style**

The people's comedy represented by the two-person transformation transforms popular language into a cultural breakthrough weapon. Through self-deprecating expressions such as "sucking and heer" and "five confuses and three paths", the real dilemma is sublimated into a joking language style. This discourse strategy of "using derogation as a shield" not only dissolves the pressure of life, but also completes the soft deconstruction of authoritative discourse in laughter, forming a unique folk discourse wisdom.

### **3.2. The language construction mechanism of social relations**

As a symbolic medium of social interaction, the four-character idiomatic language of the Northeast dialect builds a unique communication ecosystem through the synergy of semantic coding and pragmatic strategy, and its function realization presents three dimensions:

#### **3.2.1. The pressure relief valve of emotional regulation**

forms an explosive channel for emotional release with expressions with great sensory impact such as "crying and crying" and "fart rolling and urine flow". This kind of expression externalizes psychological depression through exaggerated body imagery, and realizes the instantaneous dissolution of negative energy in the collision of rough and straightforward language.

#### **3.2.2. The cultural code of community boundaries**

Dialect-specific words such as "bald rebellion" and "horn and horn" build a cognitive barrier of regional culture in the dual alienation of phonetic characteristics and semantic structure. Its acoustic characteristics are transformed into biomarkers for identification, making the group a silent authentication of cultural belonging, and strengthening the sense of separation between "us" and "others".

## **4. Challenges in the Inheritance of The Language Ecological Environment**

### **4.1. The triple dilemma faced by the four-character idiomatic words of the Northeast dialect**

#### **4.1.1. Communication alienation: semantic shrinkage and symbolization**

The de-regionalization of short videos stripped away the original context of the four-character idiomatic language, such as "dancing horses and spears" lost the core of "criticism and publicity" and became an eye-catching label; Algorithm-driven "performative use" alienates it into a consumption symbol, and the cultural depth is dissolved.

#### **4.1.2. Inheritance fault: intergenerational transmission and lack of education**

Urbanization has led to the disappearance of local exchange scenes, and the younger generation has less contact with idiomatic language; Basic education is mainly Mandarin, dialect education is lacking, young people avoid or even despise it, and the inheritance chain is broken.

#### **4.1.3. Contextual dissolution: Under the integration of cultural soil and weakened**

uniqueness globalization, common Mandarin words replace idiomatic expressions (such as "carelessness" instead of "Mao Zuo Sanguang"), losing the color of regional emotions; Regional cultural symbolic consumption, idiomatic words have been reduced to "Northeast personality" decoration, and are separated from deep cultural associations.

### **4.2. The living inheritance system of the four-character idiomatic language of the Northeast dialect**

#### **4.2.1. Educational inheritance and practical activities:**

Organize students to carry out dialect culture research activities, and encourage them to collect and sort out the four-character idioms of the Northeast dialect around them.

Interest groups: Set up dialect interest groups to enhance students' interest and ability to use dialects through recitation and performance.

#### **4.2.2. Media communication:**

Television media: produce programs with the theme of the four-character idiomatic words of the Northeast dialect, such as dialect sketches, talk shows, and documentaries.

Online platforms: Publish interesting dialect content through short videos, live broadcasts, social media, etc., to attract more young people's attention and learning.

Column reporting: Set up a dialect column and invite experts or folk artists to tell the historical origin and cultural connotation of dialects.

#### **4.2.3. Cultural industry**

Literary and artistic works: Appropriately use the four-character idiomatic expressions of the Northeast dialect in literary and artistic works such as film and television dramas, sketches, and songs to enhance the regional characteristics of the works.

Cultural and creative products: Develop cultural and creative products with the theme of the four-character idiomatic words of the Northeast dialect, such as postcards, notebooks, T-shirts, etc., and promote dialect culture through market-oriented methods.

Cultural brand: Build a dialect culture brand, hold dialect culture festivals, dialect competitions and other activities to enhance the influence of dialect culture.

#### **4.2.4. Academic research**

Language protection: Carry out field research on the four-character idiomatic words of the Northeast dialect, record and sort out the vocabulary of endangered dialects, and establish a dialect database.

Academic exchanges: Organize dialect academic seminars to promote theoretical research and practical experience sharing on dialect protection and inheritance.

Published works: Publish dialect dictionaries, cultural books, etc., to provide academic support for dialect inheritance.

## 5. Conclusion

The four-character idiomatic language of the Northeast dialect is a deep combination of language form and cultural connotation, and its fixed structure, semantic opacity and concentration of derogatory tendencies are not only a mirror image of the straightforward character of Northeast people, but also the linguistic crystallization of survival wisdom and comedy culture in the cold zone. As living carriers of regional culture, these habits build a unique communication ecosystem. However, at this stage, it is also facing the challenge of inheriting the language ecological environment. To this end, a living inheritance system of the four-character idiomatic language of the Northeast dialect has been established, and only by upgrading the four-character idiomatic language from a communication tool to a flowing cultural gene can it continue to be rejuvenated in technological civilization.

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