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Thesis for the Degree of Master of English

A Comparative Study of Euphemism in Chinese and English



by

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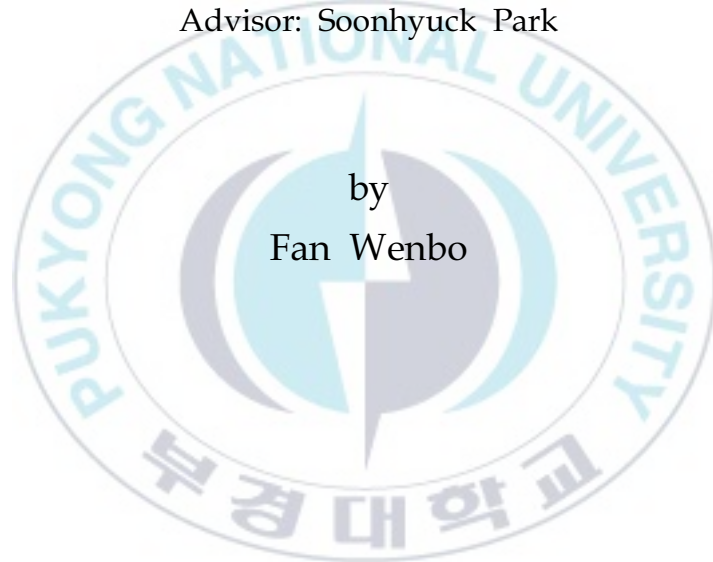
The Graduate School

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February 2020

영어와 중국어의 완곡어법에 대한 비교 분석

Advisor: Soonhyuck Park



by
Fan Wenbo

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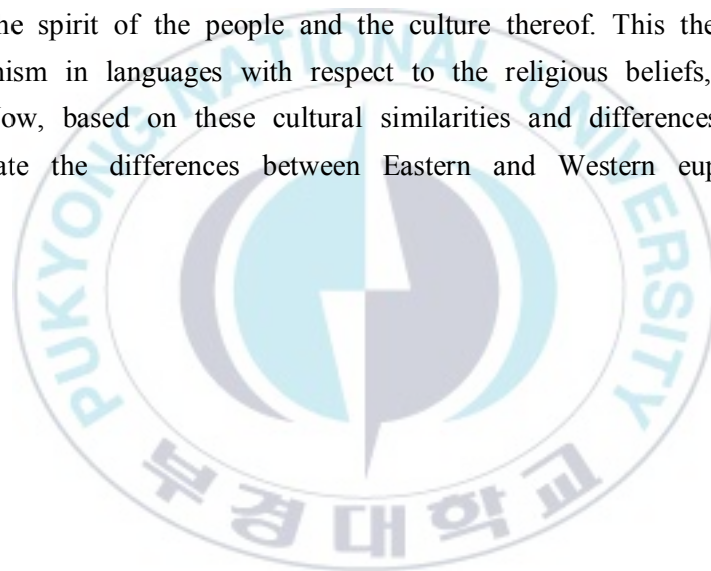
Abstract

Euphemism is a typical and common cultural phenomenon which has a long standing history in languages. Death particularly is an important component of euphemism and plays a vital role in linguistics. This thesis analyzes the expressions of euphemism in English and Chinese which differ absolutely in culture, to see how euphemism is used in these languages, and to explore the deep cultural connotations underlying the language expressions.

For all people, death is the most terrible thing because it represents the end of life, which is the most terrible event to human beings. In any culture, death has caused people an unpleasant mood or fear as a taboo. There are many euphemisms for the word 'death,' in order to avoid directly talking about it. As a consequence, it is a forbidden area in every culture. Instead of mentioning the word 'death' directly, euphemisms are used to substitute for it. Death euphemism is a not only linguistic phenomenon, but also a cultural one. Euphemism can reflect the traditional value, religion, and social customs of the nations. In both Chinese and English, it is found that death euphemisms are often applied in the daily life. Paying attention to the various death euphemisms that are commonly used in the languages may improve our understanding euphemism about society's attitudes toward death.

Generally, death brings sad feelings. The greatest misfortune in life is death. People are afraid of death and are unwilling to mention the terrible and mysterious word "death" for fear, which is assumed to misfortune or disaster. However, it has to be mentioned in real speech communication, creating different death euphemisms in languages. When people are unwilling to say such taboos and have to specify the matter, they have to use pleasant words to imply what others do not want to hear, and have to use hidden words to imply what others do not want to say about "death", thus resulting in death euphemism.

Death euphemism are used differently depending on languages and cultures, reflecting the spirit of the people and the culture thereof. This thesis discusses the euphemism in languages with respect to the religious beliefs, values, and customs. Now, based on these cultural similarities and differences, this thesis will illustrate the differences between Eastern and Western euphemisms of death.



요약

완곡한 표현은 전형적이고 보편적인 문화현상으로 언어에서 오랜 역사를 가지고 있다. 죽음은 특히 완곡한 표현의 중요한 호서 언어학에서 많은 논의를 하여왔다. 본 논문은 영어와 중국어 두 언어에서 문화적 차이를 분석하는 완곡어의 표현 방식을 통해 두 언어의 사용 상황을 이해하고, 완곡한 언어의 표현 중의 깊은 문화적 내포를 검토하고 있다.

모든 사람에게 죽음은 가장 무서운 일이다. 삶의 종결을 나타내는 것은 인류의 가장 무서운 사건이기 때문이다. 어떤 문화에서도 죽음이 두려운 생각을 일으킬 수도 있고, 혹은 금기라고 할 수도 있다. '죽음'이라는 직접적인 이야기를 피하기 위해, '죽음'이라는 단어를 직접 언급하는 것이 아니라 완곡한 말로 대신한다. 죽음의 완곡한 말은 언어의 현상이자 일종의 문화현상이다. 완곡어는 민족의 전통 가치관, 종교 신앙과 사회 풍속을 반영할 수 있다. 언어 중 사망 완곡어가 일상생활에서 자주 사용된다. 언어에서 자주 사용하는 각종 사망 완곡어에 대해 죽음에 대한 사회적 사망 태도에 대한 이해를 높일 수 있다.

일반적으로 죽음은 슬픔을 가져온다. 인생의 가장 큰 불행은 죽음이다. 죽음이 두려워 무서워서 무섭고 신비한 죽음을 언급하지 않겠다는 말이 불행이나 재난으로 여겨진다. 그러나 진실한 언어 교제에서 언급이 불가피하게 언어에서 다른 죽음이 생기는 완곡한 말이 생겨났다. 사람들이 이런 금기를 말하고 싶지 않다면, 구체적인 설명을 해야 할 때, 듣기 싫은 언어로 다른 사람들이 듣고 싶지 않은 것을 암시하고, 숨겨야 하는 말로 '죽음'에 대해 암시하는 것을 암시하여 죽음의 완곡어가 생겨났다고 본다.

죽음의 완곡어는 언어와 문화의 다른 용법으로 사람들의 정신과 문화를 반영했다. 본문은 종교 신앙 가치관, 풍속 습관 등에서 언어의 완곡한 말을 탐구한다. 현재 이러한 문화상의 특성을 바탕으로 본 논문은 동서양의 죽음에 대한 완곡어의 차이를 논술한다.

I . Introduction

1.1 Purposes of Thesis

Language is a carrier of culture. Death euphemism is not only a linguistic phenomenon, but also a social and cultural phenomenon. It is influenced by the political system, religious beliefs, economy and culture of all ethnic groups.

This thesis aims at the analysis of the similarities and differences between Chinese and English death euphemisms. It first reveals the similar patterns of the death euphemism of the two languages based on the notion of departure physical activities, military lifes, diseases and suicide. It then focuses on the differences in the expressions of death euphemisms between the two nationalities, mostly depending upon the political system, China implements feudalism and a farming society in life, while the Western countries have achieved the high capitalist economy. In terms of customs and habits, China implements the burial system, while the Western implements the cremation system. For the religious beliefs, China believes in Buddhism and Taoism, while the West believes in Christianity.

Through the comparative study, it is expected that we can improve our understanding of how to use death euphemisms correctly in different situations, realizing the language accomplishment of Chinese and Western language taboos, and eventually better promote cross-cultural communication.

1.2 Organization

This thesis is composed of five chapters: chapter one, the introduction, presents a brief view of euphemism and death euphemism. Many previous researches of euphemism are stated and the definition of euphemism is provided. Chapter two, three and four are the main bodies of the whole thesis: chapter two provides the theoretical backgrounds and bases of death euphemism, mainly about “the theory of the context of culture.” Chapter three classifies Chinese death euphemism and English death euphemism, respectively. Chapter four makes a contrastive analysis of death euphemism in these languages, mainly from three aspects, namely, religions, social customs, and cultural patterns. The last chapter is a summary, reviewing the main ideas and the central ideas of this thesis.

II. Theoretical Background

2.1 Definition of Euphemism

Euphemism has long been discussed by scholars. Rawson (1981), Leech (1985), Zhang Gonggui (1996), Rawson, Neaman & Sliver (1983), Ayto (1993), and Liu Chunbao (1990). Investigated euphemism in their respective fields. The major concern of these scholars was to collect and categorize the expressions of euphemism for the publication of dictionaries. Their research mainly focused on or was restricted to the following areas: dictionary compiling, rhetoric, and semantics.

Their research, however, paid little attention to the context in which speech is embedded or to the conditions which the socio-cultural factors use. The systematic and contrastive analysis has not sufficiently been conducted with theoretical support. The brief review of euphemism, especially death euphemism, is that since death euphemism is a social-cultural language phenomenon, the study of death euphemism can't be done without considering its cultural context.

Language and culture, intrinsically dependent upon each other, have merged together through history. Language is a part of culture and plays a very important role in it. Some social scientists consider it the keystone of culture. Without language, the communication of culture would not be possible.

Culture, in a broad sense, represents the total way of life, including the patterns of belief, customs, objects, institutions, techniques, and language, which

characterizes the human life and influences predominantly people's behavior, including linguistic behavior. In a narrow sense, culture may refer to local or specific practice, beliefs, or customs.

A language not only expresses facts, ideas, or events which represent similar world knowledge by its people, but also reflects the people's attitudes, beliefs, world outlooks. (Weidong and Zhaoxiong 2007). The study of language helps people acquire a language-specific culture and become socialized in certain ways. As a system of signs with the cultural substances and values, language may be viewed as a symbol of social identity. People are identified via their use of language. In this sense, language symbolizes cultural reality.

On the other hand, people's language uses express the culture. To be more specific, as their community culture represented by its social conventions, norms and appropriateness, the culture both emancipates and constrains people socially, historically and metaphorically (Weidong and Zhaoxiong 2007). Sharing the same community culture, people can acquire common ways of viewing the world.

Euphemism is a phenomenon within and beyond language. That is to say, it is hardly possible to understand euphemism comprehensively merely from the linguistic perspective. Just as Rawson (1981) said, "*By tracing euphemisms, it is possible to see what has been going on in our language, our minds, and our culture*".(Rawson, 1981), euphemism is a universal linguistic and cultural phenomenon, which appears in different eras and different cultures. The term "euphemism" comes from the Greek *eu* meaning 'well' or 'sounding good,' and *pheme*, meaning 'speech' or saying' (Carroll 2000), thus the literal meaning of euphemism is 'speaking with good words or in a pleasant manner.'

It has been defined differently in different books, dictionaries by different scholars.

Some of the definitions are listed below:

- (1) *“an indirect word or phrase that people use to refer to something embarrassing or unpleasant, something to make it seem more acceptable than it really is”* (Burchfield 2003)
- (2) *“word, etc. used in place of one avoided as e.g. offensive, indecent, or alarming”* (Matthews 2003)
- (3) *a euphemism is used as an alternative to a dispreferred expression, in order to avoid possible loss of face: either one’s own face or through giving offences, that of the audience, or of some third party”* (Allen and Burridge 1992).
- (4) *“mild , agreeable , or roundabout words used in a place of coarse, painful or offensive ones”* (Neaman 1990).

Many linguists think that the definition of euphemism needs to be framed in a broader sense. In a word, however, euphemisms are used mainly because the things are too blunt. Euphemism originally appears as the substitution of taboos and then its connotation is widened and it becomes more of a rhetorical device.

Euphemism has been used and developing ever since ancient times. Neaman (1990) pointed out that the original subject of euphemism is undoubtedly religious. Euphemism is the appropriate expression to achieve the ideal communication task. It uses more implicit language to express all kinds of

strong and difficult words. This kind of euphemism is the result of people's choice of language in a certain context. It forms various rhetorical devices by intentionally deviating from conventions, or generates conversational implications by violating the cooperative principle. This enriches the way of language expression, realizes unique rhetoric meaning and produces unique linguistic effects. The following is a brief analysis of the important rhetorical significance and pragmatic value of euphemism in verbal communication through its embodiment in rhetoric and violation of the cooperative principle.

There are two popular definitions of euphemism:

- (5) To use an unspoken and pleasant ambiguous expression instead of an expression with unpleasant meanings that are not respected enough. (Stoke and Hartmann 2007)
- (6) Euphemism is the use of euphemism or gentle way to express certain facts or ideas, in order to reduce its vulgarity. (French edition 2008)

By definition, we can see that first, euphemism is a linguistic phenomenon and an important means of communication in certain occasions. People usually try to avoid using language that causes unhappiness or damages the relationship between the two sides, but use a tortuous language form to express ideas and exchange information. Second, euphemism is a social and cultural phenomenon, which has penetrated into people. Every aspect of daily life reflects a wide range of social phenomena or people's psychology, such as taking into account taboo issues, taboo issues, politeness issues and so on.

The euphemism used here is not exactly the same as the euphemism in rhetoric. Euphemism is not only a means of rhetoric, but also a means of semantics. It is a way of expressing people's thoughts. Euphemism is more an end than a means of rhetoric. There are a lot of ways in languages, such as metaphor, metonymy, pun, irony, parsing and so on, to achieve the goal of euphemism. Scholars have also found many rhetorical phenomena related to euphemism, so that in a specific context, the speaker can adopt appropriate euphemism to achieve language politeness and appropriateness. The hearer deduces the meaning of what the speaker wants to express through the cooperative principle based on the common knowledge information, and achieves the desired practical effect. Next, I will elaborate the relationship between euphemism and rhetoric and pragmatics from the aspects of rhetoric, cooperative principle and euphemism.

Rawson (1981) says:

- (7) Euphemism is society's basic lingua franca (通用交际语). As such, they are outward and visible signs of our inward anxieties, conflicts, fears and shames. They are like radioactive isotopes (放射性同位素). By tracing them, it is possible to see what has been and is going on in our language, our mind, our culture.

According to Allan and Burridge (1991), the definition of euphemism is:

- (8) A euphemism is used as an alternative to a dislike expression, in order to avoid possible loss of face: either one's own face or, through

giving offence, that of the audience, or of some third party.

2.2 Previous Studies

Death euphemism belongs to traditional euphemism. Traditional euphemisms are closely related to taboos. Language taboos exist in any culture and society. Because of the different historical development, customs and moral standards of different nationalities, the behaviors and words tabooed by people in different countries are not the same, and the use of euphemisms also presents different situations. However, death is the common destination of all mankind and the endpoint of life that no one can surpass. Anxiety and fear of death are the universal mentality of mankind, which makes death a taboo topic for all nations. In connection with this, euphemisms of death also appear in the languages of different nationalities.

The first reason for euphemism is thus of a psychological or expressive nature, and goes back to the inherent negativity of certain items and of the words used to name them. The individual speaker looks for a way of dealing with the discomfort they provoke, and euphemism emerges in this context as a means of dealing both with the subjects and with the emotions they cause.

For example, the terms *die* and *decease* denote the same fact, then why is the former tabooed, while the latter is acceptable for use. There is another important factor at work which inspires people's mind. The unfavorable emotions and attitudes attached to them are often shaped during the long period of cultural development.

Throughout history, death has been described in terms of every new belief, technology and pastime. Americans are even linguistically proud of their vast terms about death. Thus, euphemism is a psychological product as well as a social and cultural product.

There are times when more or less every one would agree that people should not mention the word death directly. For example, as to a couple whose child has just been killed in an accident, or a young man learning for the first time that he has only a few weeks to live, it would be peculiarly brutal to talk about death directly instead of doing one's best to soften the blow. A set of euphemism, at such moments, would defeat its own purpose. What are needed at that very time are words that would make the dreadful finality, if only for an instant. So people fall back on the most effective forms of euphemistic talk.

When talking about euphemism, we can not neglect taboo. Taboo is the original motivation of euphemism. In ancient times productivity was in a very low level, and the primitive men were often confronted with baffling and threatening situations, such as death, and they failed to understand the essence of them. To find a way out, they became superstitious about supernatural power, or the existence of devils and gods. In their mind, every thing was alive with spirit, capable of bringing down blessings and misfortunes, they have to shun them by using mild substitutes, to imply those things which people are reluctant to mention and to prompt something both speaker and listener know but refuse to say out by direct expressions.

Taboo means the prohibition of mentioning or talking about something either by religion and custom or by the general agreement of a society. The

taboos compromise both things that are considered holy and sacred and things that are dirty, dangerous and unpleasant. Some supernatural force is always invoked as authority for the sanction.

Death is an inevitable stage at the end of life's journey. It is a common experience of human beings, but it has been the source of fear—fear of the loss of loved ones, fear of the end of one's life, fear of what follows death, fear of the actual process of dying. Therefore, all these fears, worries, and unpleasant feelings combined lead to verbal taboo of death.

According to Malinowski (1923), context can be distinguished into three types: context of utterance, context of situation and context of culture. The context of utterance here is similar to the linguistic context that later scholars argue, which refers to the words and sentences in which a particular words or sentences embeds. Malinowski further argues that the concept of context has to be broadened and that the situation in which words are uttered can never be passed as irrelevant to the linguistic expression. Therefore, he put forth the term *"context of situation to refer to the wider idea of context or the general conditions under which a language is spoken."* (Malinowski 1923) And the context of culture, Malinowski observes that it is the reality of the culture, the life and the customs of a person in which language is essentially rooted. To sum up, Malinowski find that to understand the meaning of what is said, we should not only consider the particular context of utterances, but also take into account the cultural characteristics of the society.

III. Death Euphemism in Chinese and English

3.1 Death Euphemism in Chinese

Death is a taboo topic at all times in all over the world. But death and the things related to death actually exist in people's social life. With the same confusion and fear faced by the basically similar world and the primitive human beings, a large number of substitutes related to death have emerged in the languages of different nationalities. The three main aspects are religion, feudal system, and ordinary people. (Leech 1982)

3.1.1 Religious People

Taoism and Buddhism are playing important roles in Chinese culture. Different Chinese death euphemisms have different explanations. According to Zhuangzi (庄子), "death is nothing but a rest. When death befalls me, I begin my rest." "坐化" (tuihua) (lit. ecdysis) used as death is also like a circle to be shelled. Reincarnation is the dominant belief of Taoism.

Taoism is a religion born in China, which originates from Taoism as the fundamental belief, and regards Taoism as the highest realm pursuit. Taoism denies the difference between life and death. The so-called "sage's life is also heaven-bound, and his death is materialized" (Zhuangzi Deliberately). Therefore, people are euphemistically referred to as "materialization", as well as "seclusion". Taoism, developed from Taoist thought, further pursues immortality

and through the body, and calls human death “immortal death” or “immortal travel”, Taoism holds that, after a certain “practice”, the word can be reborn and transformed into immortality. These is need to wait until death to exceed the soul. Therefore, death euphemisms derived from Taoism are mostly related to immortality.

Taoism holds that the exuviation of a dead cicada is called “cicada exuviation” or “metamorphosis”, or “feathering” if a bird has wings flying up, or “riding a crane” or “transforming a crane” when it is said to be immortal. (Zhuangzi Deliberately). Since ancient times, China has had the concept of “immortality” and the theory of ghosts and gods. After Taoism’s pursuit of immortality, it has attracted the yearning of emperors and many dignitaries. Taoist immortal formulas were loved by the emperors of Qin and Han Dynasty: Qin Shihuang inspired the masses to seek immortals from the sea; Emperor of Han was fascinated by the immortal formulas advocated by immortal formers, who believed in them: Tang Dynasty, to later generations, believed in immortal formulas. Taoism divides immortals into three categories: immortals who can rise to heaven by clouds and resist the air, immortals who can roam freely in famous mountains and rivers, and the next one is the decomposition of corpses which are transformed into immortals. Those who acquire Tao and become immortals either ascend to the paradise outside the country or go to Penglai and other places. The death euphemism originated from Taoism reflects people’s desire to prolong life and immortality, as well as their desire to transcend death through their own efforts, and to seek the self-reliance of life.

Death is the ultimate destiny of all life. Human beings, who cannot

escape from vulgarity, are persistently longing for eternal life. Therefore, thinking about life and death forges the magnificence and magnificence of human philosophy. There are many wise people and wise people in ancient Chinese philosophy about life and death. Among them, Taoist philosophy of life and death, with its rich theoretical content, profound ideological connotation, extraordinary views from vulgarity and unique aesthetic artistic conception, is particularly conspicuous.

It has written an indispensable pen for the theoretical treasury of life and death philosophy in China and even in the world, and for future generations. It has had a tremendous and far-reaching impact. It is precisely because of the rich and profound thought of life and death of Taoism and its extraordinary and refined views, so although this thesis wants to exhaust the characteristics of Taoist philosophy of life and death, it is actually very difficult, so it can only be "simple analysis" of its characteristics. "Any ideological system does not descend from the sky. It emerges out of nothing and has its objective environment and subjective conditions on which it depends." Taoist philosophy of life and death is no exception.

Sanskrit "virvana" (death) was translated into Chinese "涅槃" (niepan) (lit. the state of being awake) and "圓寂" (yuanji) indicate that death is the best choice for him as he practices Buddhism to a perfect level. Buddhism to a successful end, he will pass away while sitting cross-legged, in a peaceful mind, which is named "坐化" (zuohua) (lit. be converted while sitting). The highest recognition for "death" in Buddhism is "登蓮台" (dengliantai) (lit. to step on a Buddha's seat in the form of a lotus flower.) If one tries one's best to contribute to the others and society will live a better life after his death

while if one is doing evil deeds, he will receive treatment after his death. So, benevolent people after death called “升天” (shengtian) (lit. to go to heaven), “到西天极乐世界” (daoxitianjileshijie) (lit. to go to the western world of happiness). On the other hand, evil people will “下地狱” (xiadiyu) (lit. to go to hell) or “见阎王” (jianyanwang) (lit. to meet the God of death). “十八层地狱” (shibacengdiyu) (lit. the hell which is divided into eighteen layers with different levels of tortures) is the most malicious ones where will suffer all kinds of miseries in. (Zhang 1996)

The highest realm of Buddhism, called Nirvana, means to enter a state of eternal silence. Its fundamental purpose is to guide people, exterminate the source of suffering, and enable people to live carefree and free. After Buddhism was introduced into China from India, it had a great influence on Chinese traditional culture after a long period of spread and infiltration.

Many words in today's Chinese originate from Buddhist words. However, most of the euphemisms of "death" originated from Buddhism that failed to go beyond the Buddhist gate, such as: round silence, return to silence. Buddhism advocates practice, and its highest realm is "all virtues are perfect and all evils are eliminated." He is also translated as "degree of extinction", "round silence", "silence", "entering silence" and "entering extinction". The Buddhist virtues are perfect, reaching the "four great emptiness". When he dies, his mind is calm and he sits cross-kneed like life, saying "sitting up." After that, he will "climb the lotus boundary."

This is the highest praise of Buddhism for "death." "All virtues are perfect and all evils are completely destroyed" is the highest realm that Buddhist practice can reach, an incredible realm of liberation, and a realm that ordinary

people can not reach. Therefore, the euphemism of "death" used in Buddhism is only used to refer to the death of monks and nuns.

If a Buddhist can reach the state of Nirvana, it means that he can transcend the world and become a Buddha. When many eminent monks are about to die, they bathe and change clothes, sit in harmony, control their bodies with their minds, reach the realm of "forgetting both things and me", and die painlessly and peacefully. This is sitting down. Buddhism interprets human life and death by karma, in fact, just as it interprets human life and death by soul and body, it finally endows human with the nature of transcending death to immortality.

According to the Buddhist Book of Life and Death in Tibet, there is life and there is death naturally. Everyone must face death sooner or later. When we are alive, we can deal with death in two ways. Ignore death, or face up to your own death, by thinking clearly about death, in order to reduce the pain that death may bring. But neither of these methods can really overcome death. From the Buddhist point of view, the actual experience of death is very important. Although how and where we will regenerate depends largely on karma, our state of mind at the moment of our death can affect the quality of our next life. Therefore, in the moment of death, although we have accumulated all kinds of careers, as long as we strive to produce a good mentality, we can strengthen and stimulate good karma, resulting in happy reincarnation.

On the issue of religious beliefs, the Chinese nation has always maintained a tolerant attitude towards polytheism. From their respective religious perspectives, different religions naturally have different views on the natural

phenomenon of death. Of course, different religions have some similarities in explaining “death.” For example, Taoists believe that death belongs to nature and returns to the original, so they call it “returning to the true” (Yuan) or “dengzhen.” Buddhists also believe that the soul returns to the true after death, so they call it “returning to the true”. At the same time, Islam also calls “death” as “returning to the true.”

It is worth noting here that there are far fewer euphemisms in Chinese than in English; moreover, due to the diversification of religion, most of these euphemisms originating from religion in Chinese fail to enter Modern Chinese Dictionary as the national language; besides Taoist “immortal death” and “materialization”. Most of them retain distinct register features besides “returning to the west of Buddhism”, such as “returning to the true” referring to the death of Buddhism and Islam, “feathering” referring to the death of Taoists, and “loneliness” referring to Buddhist terms. These register-marked additional annotations indicate that they are generally used only in religious circles, but not in religious circles. In modern China, theism is the dominant ideology, and it is difficult to be accepted and used.

3.1.2 Emperors and Ordinary People

Chinese people behave according to their status and positions. Therefore, there are many different death euphemisms for the death of different people. The death of emperor is “崩” (beng) has its explanation, “崩,山崩;也”. (“崩” is big sound produced by the explosion of mountains). The effect of the death of emperor is no less than that of the explosion of mountains. “弃朝” (qichao,)

“弃群臣” (qiqunchen), and “弃臣民” (qichenmin) also widely used.

Bintian allusions originated from the Yellow Emperor. According to legend, the Yellow Emperor finally returned to heaven by dragon and left the world, called "dragon controls Bintian," so Bintian has become a euphemism for the death of the Son of Heaven. Bintian can sometimes refer to the death of officials and dignitaries, not just to the Son of Heaven.

The reason why the ancient emperor died was that the emperor was called the leader of ten thousands people, who was supported by all the people and had the power to control the subjects to maintain the peace and stability of the rivers and mountains. It became a power of driving power. When he died, he could no longer exercise his power. When the spiritual pillar was gone, he described that the rivers and mountains would collapse if there were fewer pillars. The dead emperor is generally called Daxing Emperor.

The reason why the ancient emperor died was that the emperor was called "above ten thousand people" and was supported by all the people. He had the power to control and dominate his subjects to maintain peace and stability in the mountains and rivers. He became a kind of power of driving power and a kind of spiritual pillar. When he died, he could no longer exercise power and spiritual pillar was gone. “驾崩” (jia beng) means pillars will collapse.

“弃朝” (qichao) means that the emperor abandoned tomorrow morning. Euphemistically expressing the death of emperor. “弃群臣” (qiqunchen) means that the emperor abandoned his minister and people around him and left first. Refer to the minister who has lost his master. “弃臣民” (qichenmin) before the emperor died, he talked to his minister, and then they watched the emperor die. It also means that the emperor left his subjects of a feudal ruler and they

were not in the same world.

The word "death" has a large number of euphemisms in various languages. Because death is an irresistible physiological phenomenon, because it involves all members of society, it is also an inevitable social phenomenon.

Death is a kind of misfortune, a kind of disaster; people (especially in ancient society) feel that death has a mysterious feeling, so people feel an inextricable superhuman force in front of death. These euphemisms are sometimes used to honor the deceased, sometimes to remember the deceased, sometimes to praise the deceased, sometimes just to avoid repeating this terrible mysterious word. This may have become a social habit, which has been deeply rooted for thousands of years. In ancient times, the Chinese people had a distinct status, that is, the division of hierarchy.

In China's long feudal society, the death of emperors and generals and the death of the poor people were different from each other. There were many words describing "death" in ancient Chinese. These specific words with different semantics of "death" had different meanings. There is a strong class brand, or deep vestiges of feudalism. Members of this class die and members of that class die. They use different euphemisms. Even people of the same class who have different identities die. There are also Synonyms that correspond to their identities.

The commonest practice is to compare death to sleep. “睡着了” (shuizhaole), “安” (an) and “长” (chang) are two popular words that Chinese like to use when someone dead. “百年” (bainian) and “百岁” (baisui) are used to denote the meaning of death. “闭眼” (biyan) and “瞑目” (mingmu) are used to refer to the death without regret. (Chunbo 1990)

The husband is the pawn. Death before the age of 20 is called "殇" (Shang) for elderly. Influences, people think that death is only the destruction of the body, the soul is still alive, but from this world to the other world, life is the same as today, such as "去世" (qushi), "辞世" (cishi), "逝世" (shishi). It reflects the funeral customs of our country. For example, the Han nationality has long practiced the burial system, so in Chinese, the pronouns of death are "入土为安" (entering the earth for safety), "身赴黄泉" (returning to the Huangquan), "命染黄沙" (dying in the sand). The present cremation system is called "去火葬场" (going to the crematorium). Death euphemism embodies the humanistic landscape of a certain historical period. For example, during the Qing Dynasty, it became the common hairstyle of men of all ethnic groups in the Qing Dynasty. It is the unique humanistic landscape of the Qing Dynasty. Calling death "翘辫子" (Qiaobianzi) is the reflection of the unique humanistic landscape of the Qing Dynasty in this historical period.

The death euphemisms of ordinary people are more than those of emperors, and the types are more complicated. This is a summary of the types and explanations of death euphemisms of common people.

"睡着了" (shuizhaole) refers to people falling asleep forever, implying death. This is one of the most common statements about the death of ordinary people. It is a very vivid expression of death and a euphemistic expression of death.

"百年" (bainian) and "百岁" (baisui) are the euphemisms of death, meaning after one hundred years. Refer to the saying that the old people avoid death before they die. And old people's version of death.

"闭眼" (biyan) and "瞑目" (mingmu) means that close your eyes forever,

which are similar to “睡着了” (shuizhaole). When people die, they leave the world without concern.

“去世” (qushi), “辞世” (cishi), “逝世” (shishi) means leaving the world forever. But they have some differences. “去世” (qushi) does not have emotional color in general. But “辞世” (cishi) and “逝世” (shishi) have some differences. “逝世” (shishi) is generally used for people with certain status. It can be used for people with social status as well as for ordinary people. In addition, “逝世” (shishi) is generally used in more formal occasions or official documents, and “辞世” (cishi) is more personal. “逝世” (shishi) is more emotional and emphasizes identity. “逝世” (shishi) is an objective, comparatively written statement. For those who use it, I think we can say that as long as there is a place worthy of our respect for the deceased, we all can say “逝世” (shishi). “辞世” (cishi) is more emotional or grieved or regret.

“殇” (Shang) refers to the death of an infant or a national war. It is not normal death, but has great psychological pain. Initially, it means the death of a child, but later it was extended to mean the death of a national war or an abnormal death.

3.1.3 Others

There are also death euphemisms which express the death of loyal people, death of young, death of beauty and death of others. The death euphemism of literati, women's death euphemisms, derogatory death euphemisms will be summarized in this chapter.

Chinese culture are noble and immortal, Chinese scholars are indirect to

compare themselves to jade which is a kind of precious stone symbolizes constancy and nobility. So “玉折” (yuzhe), “玉催” (yucui), and “玉碎” (yusui) gradually became death euphemisms to express the death of Chinese scholars. “地下修文” (dixiaxiuwen) and “修文地下” (xiuwendixia) are used to express the scholars who regard writing as their lives, even after death, they continue to writing underground. “栋梁” (dongliang) is used to the people who has talents and devoted his or her talents to the nations. Thus, the destruction of pillars connote the death of such talents people as “梁催” (liangcui) and “梁坏” (lianghuai). (Liu 1990)

As filial piety is important in Chinese family, parents mean big wealth to children; they provide home and spiritual support to their children. So the death of parents means a lot to a family. The term “大故” (dagu) (lit. a big event) is used to express one of the most important events happened in one's life. Other death euphemisms as “见背” (jianbei), “弃背” (qibei), “弃养” (qiyang), “违养” (weiyang), “失恃” (shishi) (lit. death of mother) and “失怙” (shihu) (lit. Death of father) are used to express the death of parents which as a big blow to people living. A famous Chinese scholar 韩婴 once said: “树欲静而风不止, 子欲养而亲不待也”(lit. the trees want to stand still, but the wind blows; The children want to be filial, but the parents are no more). In the phrase, this comparison “风树” (fengshu) and “风枝” (fengzhi) became death euphemisms for parents. (Zhang 1990)

“佩兰” (peilan) and “蕙草” (huicao) are derived from “兰心蕙质” (lanxinhuizhi) symbolized beauty. The destruction of those plants are borrowed to refer to the death of beauty as “蕙损兰摧” (huisunlancui). Beauties are pure and precious as jade and pearls. Thus, there are death euphemisms as “珠残玉

碎” (zhucanyusui) and “玉碎珠沉” (yusuizhuchen) used to express the death of beauty. (Zhang 1996)

3.2 Death Euphemism in English

In any culture, one of the most taboo words is "death". When people have to mention it, they often use some more euphemistic and less harsh words to replace it. As a result, there are a lot of euphemisms about death. For example: to go to the heaven; to go to a better world; to go to another world; to pay one's debt to nature; to pass away; to be go to breathe one's last and so on. Death is an unpleasant thing for people. When euphemisms are used to state this fact, they mostly use metaphors to express people's good wishes, to go to heaven and to the world of bliss. In addition, we think that death is a kind of relief. When we finish the crime and pay off the debt, everything will be over.

3.2.1 Death of Religious People

Christianity is the largest religion in the world in terms of scale and influence. Christianity has always played an extremely important and irreplaceable key role and far-reaching influence in the history of human development. Up to now, the major developed countries, except Japan, are dominated by Christian culture. Especially in Europe, America, Africa, Asia and Oceania, Christianity has shaped all aspects of human civilization, regardless of

politics, economy, science, education, culture and art. China was also one of the fastest growing Christians in the 20th century, except South America, Africa, Asia and Korea.

Christianity has a dominant influence in English-speaking countries. There are many death euphemisms in Bible to show the respect of Christians to God. Sir Allan & Burridge (1991)'s "*sleep the sleep that knows not breaking*" has religious origin. "*Asleep*" performs the same function. "*Fall asleep*" is a common death euphemism carved on gravestones.

Other death euphemisms as "*asleep in the Arms of God*" and "*asleep in the Lord*" are also used by many people. Heaven in the Christian tradition is a place where the most people want to dwell after they died. So "*in heaven*" and "*with Jesus*" occurred. Heaven is the soul's true home and the world, and the dead called "*to be taken home*" or "*be called home.*" (Samovar 2000)

Some phrasal verbs incorporating "*over*" imply the spiritual existence of the soul after death, for instance, "*go over*", "*cross over the Great Divide*" or "*cross over the River Jordan.*" If someone is bereaved, the expressions to ease the pain are used as "*being at rest,*" "*of being laid to rest,*" "*to have found rest,*" "*at peace,*" or "*peace at last.*" Other widely used prepositional phrases brought out by religions as in "*God took her to himself*" or "*He was gathered to his father or ancestor.*"

"*Welcome back to heaven*" is the most basic appellation of Christians after their death. Unlike Eastern religions, Christianity does not shy away from death. We believe that everything is God's good will. We also believe that they can meet their relatives in God's place in the future and be with them forever. Therefore, the funeral etiquette of Christian families is different from

that of Common Folklore families, because most Christians have regular church meetings, and each church has priests or full-time elders and brothers who can help arrange follow-up matters and help their families deal with them after their congregation members are called by the Lord. When relatives and friends die or die, they will first inform the priests in the church. Therefore, the rest of Christian relatives is much less burdensome than that of non-Christians.

3.2.2 Hospital and Sea

Death is a common scene in hospital, medical workers created amount of death euphemisms to relief the pain of the relatives and friends of the dead. So “*to check out*” occurred. In western hospitals, patients who are “*out of pain or have breathed their last*” are described as “*to check out*”, which means to leave hospital. If one is checked out, he is no longer with us, or “*has gone under*” meaning gone under the level of consciousness or of measurable vital signs associated with life.

The term “*to pull the plug*” was popularized by the Karen Quinlan case (1925-1976), one in which a comatose patient’s vital functions were maintained by life support machines. Whether to turn off the machines----and thus perhaps permit her to die----was the agonizing ethical question of pulling the plug. The expression itself is an earlier one, which means to withdraw one’s support from or expose another person to danger or unhappiness. It implies the still earlier image of unplugging a bath or barrel and thus permitting “*the water of life to run out*”.

It is a euphemistic way of saying that a doctor who pulls out the plug

and checks out in a hospital, doctor can't face the family members of the patient. It is a way of euphemistically telling the patient that he is about to face death and avoiding saying death directly.

The death euphemism in English is mainly concerned with cremation and it reveals different costumes of burial .Cremation is popular in the west as inhumation is popular in China. " a beautiful memory picture, a slumber room, reposing rooms, viewing reflect the custom that the westerners will first get the dead dressed up in the funeral home, then make a farewell ceremony in the morgue, at last, the dead will be cremated. Around the tomb in the Britain or US, there is always daisies' blossoming. So there are some idioms concerned with daisies used by them to refer to death, such as "to push up the daisies, under the daisies, to count the daisies." (Wei 2004)

Many western countries are noted for their well-developed navigation. Therefore, death euphemism takes a significant part in people's daily language. Davy Jones locker is the nickname of the sea. When a sailor dies in the sea, it is unfortunately called he will just go to Davy Jones' locker. Other euphemisms as "*to slip off*", "*slip one's cable*", "*coiled up*", "*hit the rocks*" and "*the last voyage*" are also used nowadays in many English-speaking countries. (Rawson 1981)

3.2.3 Others

Many military death euphemisms and sporting euphemisms are used today. Soldiers must sacrifice their lives in pursuing of their goals that serve their cause and their country. If so, they have done their bit. A later expression "*to*

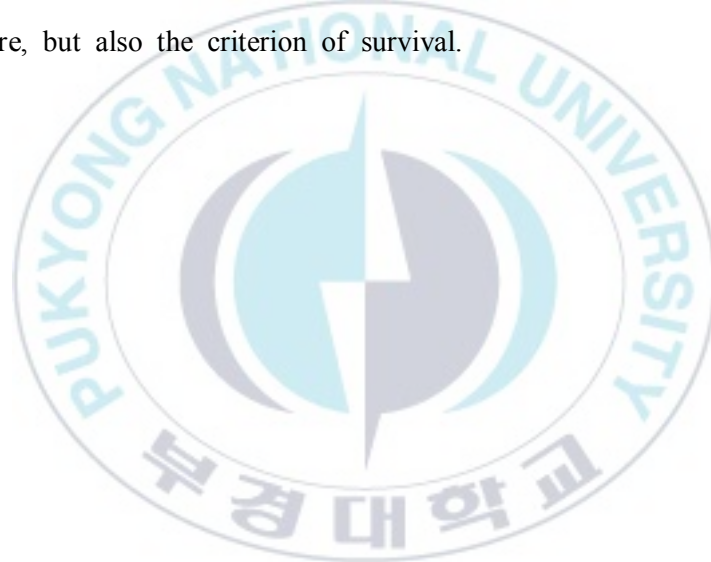
make the ultimate sacrifice” or *“the supreme sacrifice”*, *“fired his last shot”* indicate he would have to fight against the enemies with his life. As early as 1330, the poem Arthur and Merlin praised a knight because *“his life he laid there”*. Derived from this line *“to lay down one’s life”* came into being as a death euphemism. In 1862, this phrase was used in Temple Bar that recorded that a man might be *“ready to lay down fortune, free domand perhaps life itself...”* (Neaman & Silver 1983). Others as *“tap toe”*, *“turn off the taps”* and *“to be blown across the creek”* is still in use today.

Shakespeare compared life to a stage. The stage is as mirrors of daily life. Browning (1895) in *Christmas Eve and Easter Morn* wrote, *“If he blacked out in a blot thy brief life’s unpleasantness...”* Here *“black out”* has been reinforced and amplified by cinemas and theaters. Othello’s *“put out the light, and which lives are snuffed out”* was inherent the expression. So the phrase *“black out”* and *“switch out the lights”* are used as death euphemisms. It is natural to compare the end of life to the end of a play. *“The fall of the curtains and make the last bow, to bow off or to bow out”* are indicating the end of life. *“Out of the picture”*, *“to fade out”*, *“black out”* and *“fade away”* used as death euphemisms.

The baseball, steeplechase and football are entertainments. The baseball expression *“to strike out”* has been in use in America since the 1930s. It originally meant *“to be retired after failing to hit three pitches”*. In the 1950s, a medical professor followed the metaphor to its logical occlusion when he told his students *“sometimes, no matter what you do, the Great Umpire up above will call ‘strike three’.”* Expressions also coming from the steeplechase as *“to jump the last hurdle”*, the football *“the final kick off”* or simply *“kick*

off”, the rugby “*to be thrown for a loss*”, and the table-tennis “*to drop the cue*” all mean “*the end of the game*” and metaphorically the end of life. The defend will be “*out of game*”. All of them are later death euphemisms. (Ayto 1993)

People who die in sports often use death euphemism in their professional field. For example, for a runner, he often says he has finished his last life and reached the finish line. In fact, respect for the deceased, and avoid death. People don't want to face death, but they have to face it. This is not only the law of nature, but also the criterion of survival.



IV. Generalizations of Death Euphemism:

A Contrastive Analysis

4.1 Religion

A dictionary of Chinese Euphemisms says that Chinese death euphemisms amount to 481 items, (Robinson *A Dictionary of Euphemisms* 1981) But most of them are without religious origin. They are more often used within the religious circles as they take on register labels.

Both Taoism and Buddhism are playing important roles in China. According to Taoism, it uphold the belief that *“living beyond life and death is only mean for a spiritual state”* in the survival of the spirit after death. Taoists believe birth is not a beginning, and death is not an end. “Death” is just a change from life to another kind of existence, so death is called “驾返瑶池”, “忽返道山”, “蓬岛归真”. “仙” is an immortals words in China. “登仙” (dengxian) (lit. to go to the immortals), “仙逝” (xianshi) (lit. to pass away to be among the immortals), or “仙去” (xianqu) (lit. to go as immortals), “仙游” (xianyou) (lit. to travel as immortals) , which means that flesh and blood turns into immortal spirit. Crane was adopted as the symbol of longevity in China, so “化鹤” (huahe) (lit. to become the crane) and “跨鹤” (kuahe) (lit. to ride on a crane) occurred.

Buddhism is more familiar with us than Taoism. For Buddhism, death euphemism is a doorway through which one passes into a different nature

depend on one's attitude towards death. Buddhists believe in cyclical birth and rebirth, the significance of life is only to provide ground for the eternal happiness after one's death by means of doing good and removing evil in this world. If a Buddhist monk practices Buddhism to a successful end, he will pass away while sitting cross-legged, in a peaceful mind. There are many phrases to be used to express death in Buddhism, “坐化” (zuohua) (lit. to be converted while sitting), 圆寂” (yuanji). “升天” (shengtian) (lit. to go to heaven) “到极乐世界” (daojileshijie) (lit. to go to the world of happiness). These phrase are almost used by people who contribute to others during one's life. On the other hand, “见阎王” (jianyanwang) (lit. to meet the God of Death), “下地狱” (xiadiyu) (lit. to go to the hell) are used to express evil people will suffer malicious tortures after death. (Zhang 1996)

Christianity has a dominant influence on the English-speaking nations and Christianity creeds become the ethnical rules abided by the western communities. A huge amount of English death euphemisms are of religious origin, for instance. Sir Walter Scott's “*sleep the sleep that knows not breaking*” also has religious origin. “*Asleep*” performs the same function. The dead is “asleep in the Arms of God”, or “asleep in the Lord” and “*fall asleep*” is a favorite death euphemism carved on gravestones and in obituary notices. Human beings are significant because God created them, God made them by earth, thus after death, men will eventually returns to earth. God is the master of all creatures and men are bound to be called to God and answer the final summons. They hand in their account pending the last judgment make by God. A more peremptory attitude on the part of God and his agents is expressed by “*take*” and “*gather*,” both of which are widely used with

euphemism prepositional phrases as “ *God took her to himself,*” or “ *He was gathered to his fathers or ancestors.*”

Since most people practice Christianity, it is not surprising that those death euphemisms with religious hue have turned into the common core of English language and accepted by people even non-religious ones or non-Christians. As *Neaman & Silver (1983)* found that a group of parents with their children under sixteen who were questioned about how to break the news of somebody's death to a child, rather than half had used some form of euphemism.

The development of human religion has undergone a process from irrational witchcraft and superstition to mature and non-exclusive rational religious civilization. In irrational religion, mysterious witchcraft and unknown forces play a leading role. After rationalization, religion relies on the mysterious forces, that is, the combination of religious forms and secular theories, emphasizing the controllability of human activities. The factors of system. Because different cultures choose different scales in the process of development, the direction and track of religious development are different, so that they show different temperament.

In the attitude towards religion, Chinese culture embodies the love of real life, and has the value standard of humanism, while western culture shows a longing for the transcendent other world. It is God-based. The divergence of religion and culture between China and the West began in the process of human being's transition from primitive belief to civilized religion. In this process, the theory of "Axis Age" has emerged.

In western countries, the consciousness of Axis Age is opposed to that of

ancient mythology era. It is necessary to oppose mythology rationally. In religious theory, in Axis Age, the gods of primitive religion began to disappear, religion gradually became ethical, and primitive religion evolved into humanistic religion. (Zhuangzi Deliberately) In China, at the same time, it also experienced a great ideological prosperity. But it did not turn to the West like the West because it realized its own limitations and turned to the infinite of transcendence. Therefore, the rationalization of China's axis era is the rationalization of human practice, which is a humanized turn. The basic temperament of Chinese culture is embodied in Confucianism. Confucianism considers how to behave, namely the philosophy and practice of self-cultivation. In the West, people place the meaning of life and belief in God, and the spiritual joy beyond the world. Instead, they regard real life as a kind of pain.

As the core of Christian belief, "Jesus crucified" is the best symbol of this religious spirit of extreme self-restraint and sacrifice, which shows the pursuit of being with God. This religious spirit has played a certain role in promoting the progress of Western society.

In the process of the development of Western religious culture, it is a spiritual pillar that people can not live without. It plays an extremely important role and runs through all aspects of people's lives. It affects people's values, ways of thinking and behavior habits. God is external and supernatural, and people ask God with pious heart.

In Chinese culture, nature, heaven, and humanity are always integrated into one. The theory of harmonious traditional conception invades the heart and plays an important role in Chinese ideology. Chinese culture focuses on the inner world, advocating tranquility and elegance. Western culture focuses on the

external world, advocates advocating and making progress, and has its historical origins of religious culture. Religion is the soul of culture and culture is the form of religion.

4.2 Social Custom

Death is inevitable to anyone though anyone try to avoid it. Funeral is a kind of ritual for the dead to rest in peace and the living to be satisfied. Both physical and spiritual contacts between the living and the death are contained in the funeral customs. Belief in ancestor worship can not be separated from death ritual performance since from the Bronze Age.

The social value in the family-oriented Chinese society is the natural repayment for the care bestowed by parents. To some degree, Chinese funeral rites and burial customs are determined by the age of the deceased, the manner of his death, the position or status in society. The funeral usually starts with the encoffining ceremony. Encoffining ceremony is divided into “*small encoffining*” (小殓) and “*large encoffining*” (大殓). The “*small*” refers to clothing the dead and includes a ritualized bathing of the corpse, accompanying by a final change of clothing deemed to be suitable for the journey to the other world, moving the dead to lie on the bier in the coffin which refer to as “*return to the big hall*” in the Han folk custom. When the coffin has been sealed, it is ready for removed of the dead that is the last formal act in the sequence of the funeral. The process of funeral is the communication between the deceased and the living. (Allan & Burridge 1991)

In China the traditional way is burial, Burial means burying a coffin

directly into the ground after death. Cremation is the cremation of a person after death, and then the ashes are buried. The old people do not like cremation mainly because of the idea that people died in ancient China to leave their entire corpse. Chinese people attach great importance to the integrity of human body after death. Ancient people who were beheaded or beheaded had to find tailors to mend their bodies before they were buried. For thousands of years, the Chinese have always had such a tradition. It is unacceptable for the elderly to burn people to a heap of ash when they are cremated. Nowadays people receive modern education and their thinking has changed. But the old people, especially those in the countryside, are very persistent.

There are many reasons for the importance of burial in most ethnic groups, especially the Han people in China.

(10) It is related to the natural environment in which people live. In the vast areas of central China, the land is fertile, and the agricultural civilization is long. The people take the agriculture as the dominant factor and regard the land as the basis of life.

(11) The burial conforms to the living habits of the Han people and the ethical feelings of cautious pursuit. The concept of "life comes from the earth and back to the earth" is deeply rooted. Han people advocate yellow. Emperors of all dynasties regard yellow as their noble color. (Liqun 2005) Yellow is actually earth color. Among the five elements of Yin and Yang, earth is the most stable and reliable foundation. Therefore, burial conforms to Han people's living customs and traditional concepts.

(12) As far as the feudal system is concerned, burial can best show the difference between class and rank. Only burial can preserve the power and status of the deceased for a long time, such as majestic tombs, various tombstones, stone people, stone animals and other ancillary buildings. Only burial can often carry out various symbolic activities in front of the tomb to express the mourning of the living and the deceased, and to show the luxurious display and meet the needs of patriarchal politics.

Modern funeral customs in the western nations are held mainly due to geographic religion, religious affiliation, economic and social class. The first thing one will do when death occurs is to notify a physician or the police. Then, the cause of death is certified by a coroner or medical examiner. After the family people choose a funeral director, then removes the body to the funeral home where it is embalmed. After that, the family must choose a casket, the Funeral Directors are immediately called upon someone's death, and generally come to the home to direct the funeral and carry out the embalming. A basket flowers is hung on the front door. (Xiaohong 2006)

Religious services are held at home or in the church, and then conclude with a procession to the cemetery. Participatory worship is to be encouraged for Christian funeral. Black clothing does not necessary to worn. Before the casket is sealed, jewelry should be removed from the corpse so it can be passed down to the next generations. It is at this time that family members may place items inside the casket that they wish the deceased to be buried

with.

Western countries generally choose cremation, Cremation can save a lot of cemetery space. Some people choose cremation for personal reasons. But for some people, it is because they do not like traditional burials. In the long run, they feel that their decomposition process is slow. Some people feel that they prefer cremation, because their bodies can deal with immediately. Others argue that cremation can be used as a way to simplify their funeral rituals. These people believe that traditional funerals can make the process of funerals more complicated, so they choose cremation to make their services as simple as possible.

In addition, cost factors often make cremation more attractive. Generally speaking, cremation costs are lower than traditional burial services, especially direct cremation. As long as corpses are cremated as soon as possible according to law, there is no other form of service. However, the cost of cremation services can vary greatly, mainly based on how the deceased or their families wish to perform cremation ceremonies. Cremation can be carried out in traditional funeral services, which increases costs. The use of coffins also affects costs.

The ashes can be scattered or buried in crematorial plots or niches, etc. Usually, the cost is less than burial in cemeteries or mausoleum basements, and less space is needed. However, some religions, such as Catholicism in Rome, require burial or burying of ashes.

4.3 Cultural Patterns

The differences between Chinese and Western cultures include ways of thinking, value orientation, ethics and morality.

(13) Mode of thinking:

Westerners attach importance to the analysis of empirical reasoning, analysis of the whole and synthesis; in the view of Western philosophers, only speculative things are the most real, perfect and beautiful.

The traditional way of thinking in China is not through inductive reasoning, deductive derivation, but based on facts, with existing experience and knowledge, to identify, understand and judge the nature and regularity of objective things. In connection with the intuitive way of thinking, the Chinese way of knowing the world is "body knowing" rather than "cognition".

(14) Value orientation:

Westerners attach importance to self-centered, individual and competition; Westerners' values believe that the individual is the basis of human society.

Everyone's way of life and quality of life depend on their abilities. A person with ability has the whole society, and an individual is higher than the

whole society. Chinese focus on group, society and harmony. Chinese values emphasize group consciousness, social consciousness and personal interests should be subordinated to the interests of the whole society. Only when the whole society develops, can the greatest benefit be achieved.

(15) Ethics:

Westerners attach great importance to individual laissez-faire, innovative development and glory.

Westerners advocate individual struggle, especially for personal achievement and pride, and never conceal their self-confidence, sense of honor and the ecstasy of achievement. Western culture encourages individuals to innovate and do some outstanding and extraordinary undertakings that have not been done before. Westerners' family concept is relatively indifferent. The Chinese pay attention to modesty and prudence and impartiality. Chinese culture does not advocate flaunting personal honor while accomplishments, but advocates modesty and prudence. In interpersonal relationships, Chinese traditional culture requires people to be impartial, take the golden mean, maintain the status quo and maintain harmony.

From the phenomenal point of view, there are obvious differences between Eastern and Western cultures. Essentially, the East belongs to the whole culture, while the West belongs to the individual culture. However, the complementarity and integration of Eastern and Western cultures is also a long

and gradual process. Combined with the above reasons, the Chinese and Western cultures are different, which also leads to different understanding and attitudes towards death. This is the root cause.



V. Conclusion

Language is a constantly changing semiotic system. Language communication is the most important means with which people maintain their social relationship. Given that people will inevitably encounter unpleasant situations, using direct and definite language to talk about them will undoubtedly displease both sides and possibly affect their relations. Under such conditions, the use of euphemism may be the best way. (Wenjing 2006)

This thesis aims at analyzing death euphemism between Chinese and English. This contrastive analysis shows that the death euphemisms in Chinese and English are greatly different. Distinctive cultural patterns, religion difference and the social customs related to death and funerals are also the different reasons why to produce the death euphemisms. When people communicate with members of their own culture, they are able to communicate well without being aware of the cultural rules, but they will also face the misunderstanding without consciousness of those rules because such rules can shape the individual communication. (Fengzhen 2003) In western society, people take considerable efforts to avoid mentioning death directly which embarrasses them. So more death euphemisms are coming up and popularize. Comparatively speaking, both Christianity and Buddhism have the tendency of paying close attention to what will happen after man's death, and taking men's good or evil in life to decide the fate of man's hereafter.

The thesis supplies a contrastive analysis in this field and it may also improve people's awareness and understanding of other cultures as well as their

own, to minimize cultural conflicts and improve the ability of English to Chinese translation in the cross-cultural communication. (Fang 2007) Therefore, more and more attention should be drawn on the analysis of death euphemisms which are employed as both shields and weapons, to cover the unpleasant or distasteful aspects of mortality, or to apply the power of death to reinforce the significance of certain events among the living. The death euphemisms listed above are only some of them and there are still a lot to explore for people's attentions.



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