Economic Analysis of Chinese Characters from the Perspective of Social Components

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Abstract: Chinese character is a very ancient language. In its long history of development, it has been influenced by various principles of language economy. This paper will start with the economic principle of Chinese character parts, and analyze it from the perspective of social interaction.

Keywords: Chinese Character Components; Social Interaction; Culture; Chinese Character Structure

1. The meaning of economic principle in Chinese character parts

The economic principle in economics can refer to both the maximization of benefits under various constraints and the minimization of costs under established objectives. The economic principle of language is derived from economics, that is, to express the maximum amount of information in the least language. When it comes to Chinese characters, the principle of language is to use the least Chinese characters to express the most meaning, and Chinese characters belong to the ideographic system of directly expressing semantics with symbols. They are composed of one or more Chinese character parts, so individual Chinese characters can still be further divided into parts. Chinese characters can be divided into the component of Chinese characters according to the number of strokes. A character composed of one basic component is a single character, and a character composed of two or more basic components is a combined character. Components can represent the three meanings of form, sound and meaning in the individual Chinese characters in which they are located. First, with the development of history, the shape and structure of Chinese characters have changed, and the components have also experienced increase or deletion, so the meaning has also changed. Some form parts become sound parts, some sound parts become meaning parts, and so on. No matter how Chinese characters change, the economic principle of language always runs through all levels of Chinese characters. With a small volume, Chinese characters have had an important impact on the meaning of Chinese characters since ancient times. The existence of components increases the expressible meaning of a single Chinese character and reduces the use of characters, which is of great significance in Chinese communication.

2. Common manifestations of economic principle in Chinese character components

2.1 Simplification of components

Ancient Chinese characters can be traced back to the period of oracle bone inscriptions. Oracle bone inscriptions are a kind of characters engraved on tortoise shells and animal bones. Due to the limitations of early writing tools, oracle bone inscriptions are mostly square folded thin pens, while circular fat pens are rare. Moreover, the pictographic meaning of Oracle Bone Inscriptions is very heavy, the strokes are complex and simple, the components are not fixed, and there are many variant characters, which has the characteristics of early ideographic system characters. At the beginning of the Western Zhou Dynasty, the golden inscriptions used in its dynasty still had the shadow of the golden inscriptions of the Shang Dynasty, but then tended to be square. The most obvious manifestation was that the arc of the circular curve was gradually replaced by the straightened lines. The spring and Autumn period and the Warring States period is a period of great changes in China's history. During this period, the vassal regime was separated, resulting in a serious phenomenon of abnormal characters. Later, after

the first emperor of Qin unified the six countries, he unified the characters with small seal characters. It is worth mentioning that 1380 oracle bone inscriptions have been released, with a total of 412 basic components, with an average of 3.35 characters per component; There are 9431 small seal characters in Shuowen Jiezi, with a total of 367 basic parts, and the average word formation of each part is as high as 25.5. It can be seen that from oracle bone inscriptions to small seal characters, while the number of basic components decreased, they produced a very strong word formation ability. This is the embodiment of the systematization and strictness of Chinese characters.

2.2 Ambiguity of components

Just as Chinese characters have multiple meanings, the components of many Chinese characters also have different meanings, which depends on the meaning expressed in the Chinese characters they form. For example, the component "Moon" is the most direct component, which means the moon in Chinese characters, such as "Ming", "Shuo" and "period"; It can also be related to the body, such as "liver", "gallbladder" and "stomach", and some are related to "boat", such as "clothing" and "Teng". Many components can be formed into characters alone, or simplified Chinese characters can be used as components, so their polysemy has something in common with Chinese characters. In the early stage of the creation of Chinese characters, Chinese character components were monosemy, but with the increasing development of social communication, the inclusive meaning of Chinese character components is increasing, and many Chinese character components have derived meaning, different meaning and other phenomena. In fact, the basic word formation units of any language are limited, and so are the basic components of Chinese characters. Giving multiple meanings to Chinese characters is actually to make full use of the morphological value of a single component to make its meanings more diversified. Although the meaning of Chinese character parts has increased, but also gave birth to many remote meanings, from a macro point of view, the polysemy of Chinese character parts has reduced the generation of many remote and useless parts.

2.3 Structure and word formation mode of components

According to the number of components in Chinese characters, Chinese characters can be divided into independent characters and combined characters. Combined characters mainly have the following twelve structures: left-right structure, upper and lower structure, left middle right structure, upper middle and lower structure, right upper surrounding structure, upper left surrounding structure, lower left surrounding structure, upper three surrounding structure, lower three surrounding structure, left three surrounding structure, full surrounding structure and mosaic structure. It can be seen that although there are a large number of Chinese characters, there are traces to follow in their structure. The typical word formation methods of Chinese characters are upper, middle, lower and left, middle and right structures, which are easy to see even in the surrounding and mosaic structure after splitting. At first glance, the word formation method of Chinese character components is very simple. In fact, this word formation method is very consistent with the square characteristics of Chinese characters, making Chinese characters look more intuitive and not messy. On the other hand, because the components of Chinese characters themselves have different meanings, the combination of components can also intuitively express the meaning of their combined Chinese characters. For example, "wood" represents trees, "branches" can represent branches, and the combined "branches" can represent branches next to the trunk. These word formation methods well reflect the efficient word formation ability of Chinese character components.

2.4 Similar parts in Chinese characters

There are a large number of components with similar shapes in Chinese characters. For example, the component "you" represents people, and the similar component "speed" mostly represents walking, behavior and road. This is a bit similar to similar words in words. The shape is similar but the meaning is different. In any case, as an important intermediary part of Chinese characters, the form and meaning of Chinese characters change gradually with the development of Chinese characters. In the history of Chinese characters, there have been several large-scale Chinese character movements. The common feature of these movements is that they are relatively concentrated from the place of initiation, and there are many summaries of Chinese characters. Many evolved Chinese character parts will be created in similar forms. There are also some

components, similar to the creation method of finger words, which add symbols to a component to produce a brand-new component. These methods reflect the regularity of Chinese characters and make the creation of components and even Chinese characters more simple and efficient.

3. Reasons for the existence of economic principle in Chinese character components from the perspective of social interaction

3.1 Inconvenience of ancient Chinese characters

The ancient Chinese characters in this paper mainly refer to Oracle Bone Inscriptions and gold inscriptions. The history of Chinese characters has a long history. The earliest mature Chinese characters we can see are oracle bone inscriptions, which are a kind of hieroglyphics. In the structure of characters, some hieroglyphics pay too much attention to the characteristics of objects, but lack of unity between the components of characters and the front and back. At the same time, the unity of Oracle Bone Inscriptions is also very weak. There are many variant characters. Sometimes a word can even have more than a dozen writing methods. Another problem with Oracle Bone Inscriptions is that the shape of characters is very unstable. Its shape completely depends on the size of the real characters expressed by the characters, which leads to the different length of characters, and some characters will occupy the position of several characters. The non-uniform font of oracle bone inscriptions may be due to the fact that in ancient times, people still lived in tribes as groups, the low degree of social development, less communication in different regions, and there is no unified concept of font. At the same time, it is deeply affected by the method of pictographic character making, resulting in the emergence of a large number of variant or complicated characters. From today's perspective, Oracle is obviously difficult to popularize in the society, which is an important reason why Oracle is gradually lost in the future.

3.2 Strengthen regional cultural exchanges

In ancient times, Chinese ancestors mostly lived in the form of tribes, and social exchanges were mostly limited to their location. The role of Chinese characters in this period was not as rich as today, mainly used to record major historical events such as war or sacrifice. Therefore, the usage of Chinese characters in this period was mainly divination and recording events, and the social role was not as obvious as the first two. However, with the deduction of history, the development of Chinese society is also advancing. In the spring and Autumn period and the Warring States period, there were hundreds of schools of thought, and the great process of cultural exchange in different regions also began in this period. After the unification of the six countries, Qin Shihuang realized the important role of characters in political and cultural exchanges, so he unified Chinese characters to make the official characters of the whole country consistent. At the same time, he also unified the two cultural centers of the Yangtze River and the Yellow River. The development of Chinese characters has always been synchronized with the development of Chinese culture, which also promoted the development of Chinese characters. Qin Li, the turning point of the change of Chinese characters, was born in this period. Qin Li's greatest function is to change the direction of Chinese characters from ancient hieroglyphics to modern characters we use today. In the font of Qin Li, the parts transition from circle to square, and many parts' strokes change from curved pen to square pen. Because the writing efficiency of Qin Li was higher than that of Xiaozhuan and the economy was high, it was soon popularized by the society at that time. From the perspective of ancient Chinese social history, various political changes were staged in various periods, which led to frequent population changes. Firstly, the northern Han people went south on a large scale, which scattered the northern dialects in different regions in various southern regions, and secondly, the northern Altai language and southern ancient Yue language were integrated into Chinese from the outside. Under such influence, many borrowed characters appeared in Chinese characters, and the components of Chinese characters began to become more integrated with all kinds of meanings.

3.3 Change of text carrier

Before the invention of papermaking, people used to carve characters on various objects, most of which were hard and not portable, which made it more difficult to spread characters. After the invention of papermaking, due to the portable nature of paper, the efficiency of text communication has been greatly increased. The emergence of paper also gave birth to concise and efficient written language. Moreover, the invention of paper promoted the change of Chinese character font and made the Chinese character font closer to the aspect of easier handwriting.

3.4 People's inertia in communication

Inertia is one of human nature. In fact, economy can also be traced back to human inertia. In daily communication, people are always used to expressing new things with things they are already familiar with. In the process of communication, on the one hand, people need to meet their needs of communicating with the outside world, on the other hand, they are restricted by the potential inertia psychology. The specific manifestation of this restriction is that people will use the least words to express their meaning as much as possible in the process of daily communication, and will use some words with strong generality. The same is true of Chinese characters. In the long process of development, influenced by this aspect, the meaning of Chinese characters has been continuously enriched, and what changes with it is that the meaning of Chinese characters has also been continuously expanded.

4. Conclusion

The main function of Chinese character components is to form an independent and mature Chinese character. In the long history of the development of Chinese characters, through its own continuous changes, it makes its own connotation and use methods more in line with social communication, which fundamentally affects the fluency of Chinese characters in social written communication. Therefore, it can also be said that the economic origin of Chinese character components has never been independent. It is a dynamic process, which is closely related to social culture and complements the economy of Chinese characters. Finally, it achieves the result that the combination of quantity and effect most meets the social requirements.

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