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Aspect in Ogba and English Languages

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Abstract

This paper examined aspects in Ogba and English languages with the aim of identifying the areas of similarities and differences between the aspectual systems in both languages. The Contrastive Analysis Theory (CA) was adopted for the study. The study employed the descriptive survey design. The data were gathered through the use of the unstructured elicitation oral interview method and the intuitive knowledge of the researchers as L1 and L2 speakers of Ogba and English respectively. The methods of data analysis employed were the descriptive technique of morpheme-to-morpheme glossing and the contrastive method of data analysis. The study found out that whereas there are three types of perfective aspects (present, past and future) in the English language, there is only one type which is the past perfect in the Ogba language. It was observed that both languages have two types of imperfective aspects (durative/progressive and habitual). It was also affirmed that both languages marked duration through the combination of the auxiliary verb and affixation. However, whereas the Ogba language uses prefixation, the English language uses suffixation. This study recommends that English language teachers within Ogba speech communities should focus on the present and future perfect tenses when teaching tense and aspect in the English language.

1. Introduction

Every natural language has unlimited words which are usually classified into different classes. The classes to which these words can be grouped are finite. The number of these classes or parts of speech differs from one language to another. In traditional grammar, words in a natural language are grouped into eight parts of speech. But, modern linguistic researches have proven that words in a language can be classified into a minimum of two groups and a maximum of twelve groups based on what is

obtainable in the language under investigation. Where a language has only two classes of words, they must be the nouns and the verbs. This is because the nouns and the verbs are language universal. This suggests that the nouns and verbs exist in all the natural languages. Even though the verbs exist in all the natural languages, their grammatical features vary from one language to another. This is in agreement with the Principle and Parameter theory which states that even though all natural languages have certain features (principles) that are

believed to be language universal, the application (parameter) of the principle is typically language specific (Ndimele, 1992). As a result, this paper posits that the aspectual marking patterns in the Ogba and English languages must have some resemblances and discrepancies; whereas the areas of resemblances may support or enhance the teaching and learning of the target (English) language; the areas of discrepancies may hinder or obstruct it in the Ogba speech communities. Hence, a contrastive study of the aspect in both languages can assist L2 (English language) teachers in Ogba speech communities to identify the possible areas of learning difficulty for their learners. Accordingly, this paper contrasts aspect in Ogba and English languages.

1.1 The Ogba Language

The language "Ogba" is named after its native speakers. This implies that both the native speakers and their language are referred to as "Ogba". It is an Igbo language or an Igbo related language which is spoken in about forty-one (41) communities in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria (Isaac, 2018). Like other natural languages, Ogba has dialectal variations. Whereas Ojum (2016) identifies five dialectal variations: Egini, Usomini, Igburu, Idu and Omoku; Isaac (2018) identifies only two dialects (Egini and Igburu). However, it is observed that both linguists are unanimous that Ogba dialects are mutually intelligible. Ojum (2016) adds that the five dialects she identified have wide variations in terms of tone and intonation, and in terms of lexical items.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study adopted the Contrastive Analysis Theory (CA) and descriptive approach to the study of grammar. The CA is a second language learning theory. It can be applied in the analysis or study of two or more languages. According to Nickel (1971), the major advocate of the CA is Robert Lado in 1952. Nickel (1971) and Ndimele (1992) affirm that the CA theory is sometimes referred to as comparative syntax or contrastive syntax. Ndimele (1992) says that the comparative syntax or CA compares the syntactic behaviours of two or more languages. On the other hand, Anyanwa and Ndimele (2001) see the descriptive approach as the modern approach in language analysis. They examine the modern approach from the

historical perspective and observed that the famous scholar (linguist) who initiated this approach in the 19th Century is Ferdinand de Saussure who is commonly referred to as "the father of modern linguistics" (p.13). According to them, there was a new focus of interest to analyze language without reference to history in the 19th Century. Thus, the emphasis shifted from how language changes to language description. This implies that language scholars are not expected to stress how linguistic items have changed in a number of related languages, but they (language scholars) are to pay attention to the description of single languages at one point in time. From the foregoing, it is obvious that the goal of CA theory in language study or analysis is the teaching and learning of L2. Accordingly, this paper endorsed the CA theory because it is expected that the theory is enormously applicable in the analysis of the aspect in Ogba and English languages. Also, the descriptive approach was adopted because it has proven to be beneficial in the analysis of core linguistic data, since it makes provision for the analysis of linguistic data without reference to a particular language.

2.1 Review of Related Literature

Finch (2000) defined aspect as a category used in the description of verbs which refer to the duration of the activity indicated by the verb. He differentiated aspect from tense. He declared that whereas tense is primarily concerned with location of time; aspect is concerned with how long it occurred for. He also divides aspect into two categories, that is, the progressive and the perfective aspect. Jenewari (2011) acknowledges that aspect is the diverse ways of presenting the internal temporal structure of a situation. He also notes that "events take place through time; their duration may be thought of as having beginning, middle and an end" (p. 78). The affirmation of Jenewari (2011) implies that there are three types of aspects which include the inceptive, perfective or completive and progressive. Kari (2015) identified two types of aspect that is: complete and incomplete. The terms "perfective" and "imperfective" are synonyms of complete and incomplete verbal actions or events respectively.

Ogbuleka (2014) contrasted the negation in English and Ogba with the aim of contrasting the negative marking system in English and Ogba. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The data for the study were drawn the

researcher's intuition as an L1 speaker of Ogba and L2 speaker of English. The data were analyzed using the contrastive method of data analysis. The study found out that there are more negative operators in English than Ogba. According to the study, English language has about 14 negative operators, while Ogba has only four. The study also observed that the negative particle is typically attached to auxiliary verbs in English, but in Ogba, it is said to be typically attracted to both main and auxiliary verbs. The study further revealed that the scope of negation in Ogba differed from English in the sense that verbs that follow the negative item copy the tone of the negative, whereas English does not exhibit such phonological process. Weke-Ikpo (2020) carried out a contrastive study of the verbs in Ogba and English languages with the aim of contrasting the grammatical features of the verbs in both languages. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study and the competent speakers of Egni dialect of Ogba and English languages constitute the population of the study. The study employed the random sampling technique. The researcher collected the data for the study through the use of the unstructured elicitation oral interview method. The data collected were analyzed using the contrastive and descriptive method of morpheme-to-morpheme glossing. It was found out that verbs in both languages can be classified or grouped into three types using three criteria: the syntactic, morphological and semantic behaviours. It was also noticed that syntactically, there are lexical and auxiliary verbs in both languages. Morphologically, the study identified simple and complex verbs and semantically, there are dynamic and stative verbs in both languages. The study further observed that the syllabic structures of the verbs in Ogba language differ from those of English language. For instance, it was affirmed that simple verbs in Ogba usually begin with a consonant and end with a vowel while simple verbs in English may begin with either a consonant or vowel and end with either a consonant or a vowel. That is, in Ogba the syllabic structure of a simple verb is CV whereas that of English is CVC. Additionally, it is observed that unlike English, Ogba verbs generally do not agree in number with their subjects. In other words, verbs in the language do not inflect as a result of change in the number

of the subject. This means that a singular subject in the language takes the same form of verb with its plural counterpart. Ogba language deviates from the subject-verb concord that exists in English language. It is deduced from the findings of Ogbuleka (2014) and Weke-Ikpo (2020) that verbs exist in Ogba and English languages. Unlike, Ogbuleka (2014) and Weke-Ikpo (2020) who focused on negation marking and grammatical features of verbs in Ogba and English languages respective, this paper contrasts the aspect in Ogba and English language.

3. Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive survey design. The data were gathered through the use of the unstructured elicitation oral interview method and the intuitive knowledge of the researchers as L1 and L2 speakers of Ogba and English languages respectively. This suggests that the researchers did not provide any formal questionnaire for the respondents to answer. That is, the data were collected from the respondents in informal settings or situations. The methods of data analysis employed in this paper are mainly the descriptive technique of morpheme-to-morpheme glossing and the contrastive method of data analysis. The data collected in Ogba were first glossed in English language before been contrasted with their correspondence in English language.

4. Data Presentation and Analysis

The data gathered for this study are presented in this section. The data are presented in two sets: Ogba and English languages separately. For that reason, the data collected in Ogba are presented first followed their English language equivalence. This suggests that there are two tables for every data presented in this paper.

4.1 Data on Aspect in Ogba and English Languages

Aspect has been described as the manner in which the verbal action is expressed. Verbal action may be seen as complete or incomplete. Sometimes, the terms "perfective" is been used in place of complete verbal action while the term "imperfective" is been used as correlates of incomplete verbal actions.

4.1.1 Data on Perfective in Ogba and English Language

The term "perfective aspect" indicates some degree of completion. In other words, perfective aspect denotes action, event or situation that has

been accomplished. The action, event or situation originated before the moment of speaking and has already been completed. Ogba and English languages mark perfectiveness in different way. For example:

1) Data Illustrating Perfective Aspect in Ogba

- a. Uche znú-mè nnúnũ.
PN steal-PERF. fowl.
'Chikwe had stolen fowl.'
- b. Ada kwnà-mè ēkwná.
PN cry-PERF. cry(n).
'Ada had cried.'
- c. Yé biá-mè áhiá.
1PL come-PERF. market.
'We had come to the market.'
- d. O gbú-mè nkítá.
3SG Kill-PERF. dog.
'S/he had killed a dog.'
- e. Wó, kpó-mè yé ókwú.
3PL call-PERF 1PL talk.
'They had called us.'

2) Data Illustrating Perfective Aspect in Ogba

- a. He has eaten the food.
- b. They have eaten the food.
- c. John and Mary have been friends.
- d. Mary had killed the snake.
- e. Daniel and Mathew had gone to school.
- f. I would have finished teaching before the man arrives.

The sentences in 1a-e and 2a-f illustrate perfective aspect in Ogba and English languages respectively. The sentences in 1a-e indicate that the perfective in Ogba is realized through the suffixation of the morpheme “-mè” to the verb root in a construction. It is observed that the attachment of this suffix (-mè) to the lexical verb changes a simple past sentence into a perfective aspect in Ogba. The examples in sentences 2a-f show that perfectiveness is realized in the

English language through the use of the primary auxiliary verb “have” and the past particle form of the lexical verb. It is noticed that the perfective aspects in the English language can be did into three types: present perfect as in 2a-c, past perfect as in 2d-e and the future perfect as in 2f.

4.1.2 Data on Imperfective Aspects in Ogba and English Languages

The “imperfective aspect” refers to action, event and situation that is ongoing (progressive) and habitual. The data on imperfective aspects in Ogba and English languages are presented under two headings: Durative/progressive and habitual.

4.1.2.1 Data on Durative/Progressive Aspect in Ogba and English Languages

A durative/progressive aspect expresses an action or event that is perceived to have started in the past and is still on at the moment of speech and may continue after the moment of speech. It is not conclusive but on-going at a particular point in time. This means that the action or event is endless at the time of speaking. It is also described as an on-going process at the moment of speech. For example:

3) Data Illustrating Durative/Progressive Aspect in Ogba

- a. Onyebuchi dí í- rí írní nyē.
PN be Pref.- eat food Det.
'Onyebuchi is eating the food.'
- b. Yé dí í- gbú ágwô.
1PL be Pref.- kill snake.
'We are killing snake.'
- c. Nná gē dí í- jé úzò.
mother our be pref.- go bush/farm.
'Our mother is going to the farm.'
- d. Wó, dí í- kwná ēkwná.
3PL be pref.- cry cry.
'They are crying.'
- e. O dí í- gwú álí.
3SG be pref.- dig ground.
'He is digging the ground.'

4) Data Illustrating Durative/Progressive Aspect in English Language

- a. Joshua is writing a book.
- b. They are waiting at the room.
- c. He is coming to your house.
- d. We are drinking tea.
- e. I am running.

The examples in 3a-e and 4a-e demonstrate that durative/progressive aspect in Ogba and English languages respectively. Sentences 3a-e showed that the durative aspect in Ogba is usually marked by the combination of the auxiliary verb *dí* 'be' and the prefixation of the infinitive morpheme "i-" to the root of an active verb in the language. It is observed that the deletion of the auxiliary verb *dí* 'be' and the infinitive morpheme "i-" will change sentences 3a-e from durative or progressive constructions to simple past constructions. The sentences in 4a-e demonstrate that durative or progressive aspect in the English language can be marked through the use of an appropriate form of the primary auxiliary verb "be" and the attachment of the suffix "-ing" to the main verb. The actions or events in examples 3a-e and 4a-e are ongoing.

4.1.2.2 Habitual Aspect in Ogba and English Languages

Habitual aspect refers to actions or events that continually occur without restriction on their extension into the past and the future. The habitual aspect is distinctly marked from the progressive aspect in Ogba and English languages. The examples 5a-e and 6a-e exemplify habitual constructions in Ogba and English languages respectively.

5) Data Illustrating Habitual Aspect in Ogba

- a. Onyebuchi *rí* *gà* *íní* *nyē*.
PN eat HAB food Det.
'Onyebuchi eats the food.'
- b. Yé *gbú* *gà* *ágwô*.
1PL kill HAB. snake.
'We usually kill snake.'
- c. Nná *gē* *jé* *gà* *úzò*.
mother our go HAB bush/farm.
'Our mother goes the farm.'
- d. Wó *kwná* *gà* *ēkwná* *ósá* *ùtútù*.

3PL cry HAB cry every morning.
'They cry every morning.'

- e. O *gwú* *gà* *álí*.
3SG dig HAB ground.
'He digs the ground.'
- f. Onyebuchi *rnú* *gà* *dí* *órú* *nyē*.
PN eat HAB be work Det.
'Onyebuchi used to do the work.'
- g. Yé *gbú* *gà* *dí* *ágwô*.
1PL kill HAB. be snake.
'We usually kill snake.'

6) Data Illustrating Habitual Aspect in English Language

- a. Precious drinks tea every day.
- b. She eats foods before going to the church.
- c. They dance in the church.
- d. James and John always celebrate birthday on Fridays.
- e. Precious used to drink tea every day.
- f. The Director used to teach Economics.
- g. I used to visit my children.

The examples in sentences 5a-g and 6a-g illustrate habitual constructions in the Ogba and English languages. Sentences 5a-g indicate that habitual is usually marked by the auxiliary *gà* which comes immediately after the lexical verb. In other words, the introduction of the auxiliary "gà" immediately after the lexical or main verb changes a simple past construction to a habitual construction in the Ogba language. The examples show that there two types of habitual construction in the Ogba language: the present habit as in 5a-e and past habit as in 5f-g. The past habit is realized through the combination of the habitual marker "gà" and the auxiliary verb "dí" 'be' which occurs immediately after the habitual marker. The sentences in 6a-g show that the English language marks habitual in two ways. That is, through the use of the simple form of the lexical verb as in 6a-d, and the modal auxiliary used to as in 6e-g. It is also noticed that whereas the simple form of marks

present habit in the language, the modal auxiliary “used to” marks past habit.

5. Discussion of Findings

The data presented and analyzed in the study revealed that unlike the English language, the Ogbia language marks only the past perfect. This implies that whereas the English language expresses present perfect, past perfect and future; the Ogbia language expresses only past perfect. In other words, Ogbia does not express present and future perfect aspects. This may be because of the tense system in the language. An action or event in the Ogbia language is either on-going (progressive) or completed. That is, there is no present tense in the language. It was observed that the perfectiveness in the Ogbia language is marked through the suffixation of the “-mè” to the lexical verb of a simple past construction. On the other hand, English marks perfectiveness through the combination of an appropriate form of the primary auxiliary verb “have” and the participle form of the main or lexical verb. This study further noticed that unlike in the Ogbia language, there are three types of perfective aspects in the English language that is, present, past and future perfect. It is observed that present perfect is expressed in the English language through the combination of the present form of the primary auxiliary verb “have” and the past participle form of the lexical verb. It expresses past actions or events that have present consequences. On the other hand, examples 2d-e prove that the past perfect is marked through the combination of the past form of the primary auxiliary verb “have” and the past participle form of the lexical or main verb while example 2f show that the future perfect can be marked through the combination of the past form of the modal auxiliary verb “will”, the primary auxiliary verb “have” and the past participle form of the main verb. A contrastive evaluation of examples 1a-e and 2a-f showed that the Ogbia and English languages mark perfective through the use of auxiliary verbs.

This study found out that durative/progressive through the combination of the auxiliary verb “dĩ” ‘be’ which is usually introduced immediately after the subject and the attachment of the infinitive prefix “ĩ-” to the verb root. It was observed that the difference between simple past construction and durative/progressive structures is the presence of these two grammatical elements. This suggests that the

deletion of the auxiliary “dĩ” ‘be’ and the infinitive prefix “ĩ-” can all the constructions in 3a-e from durative/progressive aspectual construction to simple past constructions in the Ogbia language. Similarly, the constructions in 4a-e revealed that durative/progressive aspect is commonly marked in the English language through the combination of the primary auxiliary verb “be” and the suffixation of the “-ing” morpheme to the root of the main verb. This indicates that the Ogbia and English languages inflect to mark durative/progressive aspects. That is, both languages mark durative aspect through affixation. However, the difference is in the parameter, whereas the Ogbia language employs prefixation as illustrated in examples 3a-e, the English language selects suffixation as in 4a-e.

Once more, this study affirmed that habitual is distinctly marked from the progressive in the Ogbia and English languages. It was ascertained that the auxiliary verb “gà” is commonly used to mark habituality in the Ogbia language. It is deduced from the constructions in examples 5a-e that the introduction of the auxiliary verb immediately after the lexical verb changes a simple past construction to a present habitual construction. This means that the distinction between a present habitual construction and the simple past construction in the Ogbia language is the presence of the habitual marker “gà” in former (habitual construction). The present study also revealed that the past habitual construction is realized in the Ogbia language through the introduction of the primary auxiliary verb “dĩ” ‘be’ immediately after the habitual marker “gà”. A holistic examination of examples 5a-g proved that the distinction between a present habitual construction as in 5a-e and past habitual construction as in 5f-g in the Ogbia language is the presence of the auxiliary verb “dĩ” ‘be’ in the latter (past habitual construction). In contrast, this study affirmed that the present habitual construction is realized in the English language through the use of the simple form of the lexical verb while the modal auxiliary “used to” marks past habit in the language.

From the foregoing discussion, it is apparent that aspect is one of the secondary grammatical features of verbs in the Ogbia and English languages. This study proved that the aspectual marking in the Ogbia and English languages have their areas of similarities and

dissimilarities. In terms of resemblances, this study observed that aspect in both languages can be classified into two: complete (perfective) and incomplete (imperfective) action or event. It was also found out that the imperfective aspect in both languages can further be grouped into: durative/progressive and habitual. This suggests that the Ogba and English languages mark progressive and habitual aspects. It was further noticed that whereas the Ogba language uses the auxiliary verbs “gà” and “dí” to indicate both the present and past habits, the English language uses the simple form of the main verb and the modal auxiliary verb “use to” to indicate the present and past habits respectively.

6. Conclusion

The application of the Contrastive Analysis Theory (CA) in the analysis of the aspect in the Ogba and English languages has shown that the aspectual marking in both languages have their areas of resemblances and discrepancies. The study has proven that whereas there are three types of perfective aspects (present, past and future) in the English language, there is only one type which is the past perfect in the Ogba language. This study affirmed that both languages have two types of imperfective aspects (durative/progressive and habitual). It was ascertained that both languages marked duration through the combination of the auxiliary verb and affixation. However, whereas the Ogba language uses prefixation, the English language uses suffixation. Following the CA theory, this study posits that L2 learners of the English language in Ogba speech communities will have difficulty in understanding present and future perfect tenses in the language.

7. Recommendations

Following the Contrastive Analysis Theory (CA) that the areas of differences between two or more languages can pose learning difficulty for the L2 learner, this study recommends that English language teachers within Ogba speech communities should focus on the present and future perfect tenses when teaching tense and aspect in the English language.

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A Study on College Students' Use of Metacognitive Strategies in English E-Reading

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Abstract

In the realm of second language acquisition, the development of reading skills stands as a crucial aspect for language learners. College students engaging in English courses, as foreign language learners, can enhance their text comprehension through the employment of diverse reading strategies, with particular emphasis placed on metacognitive strategies. Moreover, in today's technologically-driven landscape, e-reading has firmly entrenched itself as an indispensable component of youth culture. However, a potential disparity may exist between traditional paper-based reading and electronic reading, thus necessitating distinct metacognitive strategies for different media. Against this backdrop, this thesis endeavors to explore the overall utilization of metacognitive strategies among college students, investigate the correlation between strategy implementation and reading proficiency, and examine the determinants influencing participants' strategy adoption. The findings derived from this study aim to inform the refinement of English reading pedagogies in higher education settings and advocate for the integration of metacognitive strategies into e-reading practices among future English learners. Methodologically, this study employed various instruments including reading assessments, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) personality test, and structured questionnaires. Specifically, participants' reading proficiency was assessed via standardized reading tests, their personality types were determined through the MBTI assessment, and their utilization of metacognitive e-reading strategies was gauged through questionnaire responses. Subsequently, a comprehensive analysis was conducted to elucidate the overall level of strategy employment, the relationship between strategy utilization and reading performance, and the influential factors shaping participants' strategic behaviors. The findings of the study revealed that Chinese college students exhibited a moderate level of metacognitive strategy utilization in online English reading, with evaluation strategies demonstrating a positive correlation with reading proficiency among the four sub-strategies examined. Regarding influencing factors, gender was found to have no significant bearing on the level of strategy employment, while participants' MBTI personality type revealed distinctions; specifically, individuals classified as J-types demonstrated a greater propensity for employing planning strategies compared to their P-type counterparts in the Perceiving-Judging dimension.

Keywords: metacognitive strategies, e-reading, English learners, college students, MBTI personality test

1. Introduction

In this chapter, the author will elucidate the background, objectives, and structure of the present study.

1.1 Background of This Study

According to foreign scholar Carrell, within the realm of second language acquisition, reading proficiency stands out as the most pivotal skill among the fundamental quartet of listening, speaking, reading, and writing (as cited in Luo et al., 105-06).

Consequently, English language instructors in Chinese universities and colleges have deemed reading courses as indispensable components of their curricula. Consequently, Chinese college students shoulder a substantial workload when it comes to engaging with English texts. However, owing to the divergent reading habits cultivated by Chinese readers between their engagement with Chinese and English materials, students tackling English texts often employ a variety of reading strategies to enhance their comprehension (Carrell, 121), with the efficacy of these strategies varying significantly. Consequently, the exploration of reading strategies has garnered escalating attention from psychologists, educators, and linguists alike (Luo et al., 106).

Over the past two decades, both domestic and international scholars have conducted numerous studies on reading strategies, as will be elaborated in the subsequent chapter. To illustrate, Chinese scholar Zhang conducted a study assessing college students' overall proficiency in employing various reading strategies. The findings revealed a generally low level of metacognitive strategy utilization among college students, with metacognitive strategies exhibiting the lowest utilization rate (45). Furthermore, Zhang noted a positive correlation between participants' reading scores and their level of strategy employment (31), underscoring the significant role of metacognitive reading strategies in terms of academic efficacy.

Moreover, in tandem with societal advancement, electronic devices have become ubiquitous fixtures in the lives of young individuals, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic. Foreign scholars Nastaran and Hesam have highlighted the burgeoning trend of online education since 2020 (Nastaran & Hesam, 1), wherein e-reading assumes paramount

importance. While the reading strategies employed by individuals may diverge between traditional paper-based reading and e-reading, the body of research pertaining to e-reading remains relatively sparse within domestic literature.

1.2 Objectives of This Study

As highlighted earlier, there exists a pressing need to enhance college students' overall utilization of metacognitive reading strategies. Not only is the current level relatively low, but the significance of these strategies in augmenting reading proficiency cannot be understated. Furthermore, the disparities between traditional paper-based reading and e-reading modes, along with the influential factors shaping readers' adoption of metacognitive strategies, warrant thorough investigation.

Given the aforementioned considerations, the author contends that against the backdrop of e-reading advancement, examining the application of metacognitive strategies in e-reading (specifically focusing on smartphone e-reading in this study) among college students can furnish valuable data for the still-limited body of research on e-reading. Additionally, delving into the factors influencing strategy utilization can inform reforms in English reading pedagogy in higher education institutions and facilitate more targeted interventions to enhance English learners' proficiency in metacognitive strategy employment.

This study employs the following methodologies to collect the requisite data and information: reading tests, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) personality test, and structured questionnaires.

The study aims to address the following research questions:

- 1) What is the overall utilization of metacognitive English e-reading strategies by college students in China?
- 2) Is there a correlation between strategy employment and participants' English reading proficiency, and if so, how?
- 3) Are participants' gender and MBTI personality type correlated with strategy utilization, and in what manner?

1.3 Structure of This Thesis

This thesis is structured into five chapters. In addition to the introduction outlining the study's background and objectives, the subsequent chapters will unfold as follows:

Chapter 2 will comprehensively review previous research concerning the concept and classification of metacognitive strategies, the notion of MBTI personality types, and prior studies on the utilization of metacognitive strategies in English reading. In Chapter 3, the methodology employed in this study, including participant selection, instruments utilized, methods of data collection, and the analytical approach adopted, will be detailed. Following data acquisition, Chapter 4 will present descriptive statistics pertaining to the metacognitive strategies employed by the participants, explore the correlation between strategy utilization and English reading proficiency, and examine the relationship between participants' gender and MBTI personality type. Finally, Chapter 5 will synthesize the major findings of the study, discuss pedagogical implications arising from the results, address any limitations encountered during the research process, and provide recommendations for future studies in this field.

2. Literature Review

In this chapter, the author will conduct a literature review to elucidate the relationships between metacognition, reading strategies, MBTI personality type, and English reading as explored in previous studies.

2.1 Concept of Metacognition

The inception of "metacognition" was initially proposed by American psychologist Flavell in his work *Metacognition and Cognitive Monitoring* (1976). The prefix "meta-" serves to denote a level of abstraction or higher order, as exemplified by terms like "metadata", which refers to data about data, and analogously, metacognition denotes the cognition of cognition (Jiao & Zhao, 2021: 7), signifying an understanding of how our brain processes the information it receives. In simpler terms, metacognition pertains to the awareness and comprehension of the cognitive processes involved in knowledge processing within the brain.

Flavell delineated metacognition into two components – "one's knowledge concerning one's own cognitive processes and products or anything related to them..." and one's "active monitoring and consequent regulation and

orchestration of these process..., usually in the service of some concrete goal of objective" (Flavell, 1979, *Metacognitive Aspect*: 232). Building upon this definition, metacognition was further subdivided into four branches, namely metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive experiences, goals (or tasks) and actions (or strategies) (Flavell, 1979, *Metacognition*: 906-07). However, to accommodate various research emphases, subsequent scholars, both domestically and internationally, reinterpreted Flavell's classification of metacognition, for instance, knowledge and strategy (Liu, 2004: 24), knowledge, experience and activity (Yang & Zhang, 2022: 213), and the like.

According to Flavell's definition, metacognitive knowledge consists of three parts—knowledge about human, task and strategy (Flavell, 1979, *Speculation*: 22-23). In simpler terms, this refers to understanding oneself, one's unfinished tasks, and the strategies to be applied to these tasks. It can also be interpreted as lessons drawn from successful problem-solving experiences (Jiao & Zhao, 2021: 10). For example, if skimming a book before delving into its details proves efficient, individuals may intentionally adopt this approach to quickly comprehend the content of subsequent books. Metacognitive actions or strategies, as the name suggests, encompass strategies derived from metacognitive knowledge and experience used to facilitate task completion, which will be further elaborated in the subsequent section. Additionally, metacognitive experiences pertain to one's emotions before, during, and after task execution, such as presupposing difficulty, judging progress, and evaluating the outcome of a task (Jiao & Zhao, 2021: 11).

2.2 Classification of Metacognitive Reading Strategies

Metacognitive reading strategies represent a fusion of traditional reading strategies with metacognitive approaches.

As per the definition provided in the *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Applied Linguistics*, reading strategy refers to the "deliberate and conscious processes by which the reader attempts to overcome a problem", regardless of classification, "they might involve the word attack strategies mentioned above, using text titles, examining visuals or reflecting on existing relevant knowledge" (333). In essence, reading

strategies encapsulate the reader's active efforts to attain their reading objectives.

In the realm of metacognitive strategies, a taxonomy approach is deemed essential for comprehensive understanding. American scholar Dembo has delineated learning strategies into cognitive and metacognitive categories, with the latter referring to methods and techniques for monitoring and adjusting the progress of information processing (qtd. in Shi 586-87). Within cognitive science, researchers generally accept two classifications of metacognitive strategies. One taxonomy, proposed by O'Malley and Chamot, encompasses planning, directed attention, selective attention, self-management, self-monitoring, problem identification, and self-evaluation (137-138). Alternatively, Oxford's classification simplifies metacognitive strategies into planning, organizing, monitoring, and evaluating (83), offering a more concise framework while retaining fundamental similarities with the former version.

With the diverse perspectives on reading strategies, metacognitive reading strategies are typically classified in two primary ways. One approach, advocated by Mokhtari and Richard alongside their Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (MARSI), delineates three sub-strategies: global reading strategy, problem-solving strategy, and support reading strategy (258). Alternatively, another common method of defining metacognitive reading strategies involves elucidating the reading process within the framework of metacognitive strategies, which is more practical and widely adopted. Under this framework, four reading strategies identified by O'Malley and Chamot—planning, directed attention, selective attention, and self-monitoring—emerge as key components. These four sub-strategies serve as the focal point of study and analysis in this thesis.

- 1) Planning strategy: The planning strategy involves establishing reading goals, as outlined by Yang and Zhang (214). This encompasses gaining a broad understanding of the reading task, devising appropriate reading strategies for future use, and formulating a relatively detailed plan regarding the timing, sequence of reading, and other pertinent aspects (O'Malley & Chamot, 2001: 137). It is noteworthy that the establishment of

reading goals occurs not only at the outset of reading activities but also throughout the reading process (Jiao & Zhao, 2021: 9). For instance, upon completing the initial section of a text presumed to be expository but revealing narrative elements, readers may realize that their original goal of acquiring knowledge diverges from the material's nature. Consequently, they may consciously or subconsciously adjust their reading goals and devise new objectives to guide subsequent reading endeavors.

- 2) Selective attention strategy: It involves focusing on specific points within reading materials either before or during reading, as described by O'Malley and Chamot (137). For instance, this may entail skimming materials prior to engaging in intensive reading, making annotations or stressed marks to aid comprehension, and prioritizing attention to topic sentences, among other techniques (Liu, 2004: 25).
- 3) Self-monitoring strategy: It entails assessing one's understanding accuracy, reading speed, and effectiveness of strategy deployment, followed by adjustments as needed, as outlined by O'Malley and Chamot (137) and Liu (25). It's noteworthy that O'Malley and Chamot's definition of self-monitoring encompasses both the monitoring process and subsequent correction, although in other research, these may be treated as distinct components.
- 4) Self-evaluation: It involves assessing the extent to which previously set goals have been achieved, one's reading proficiency, and the appropriateness and effectiveness of strategies employed, among other factors, subsequent to reading, as described by O'Malley and Chamot (137) and Liu (25).

2.3 MBTI Personality Type and English Learning

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is a personality assessment tool developed by Katharine Cook Briggs and her daughter Isabel Briggs Myers, rooted in Jungian personality theory. In their book *Gifts Differing: Understanding Personality Type*, the Myers-Briggs family categorized individuals into 16 personality types based on four dimensions:

- 1) I-E Dimension (Introversion-Extraversion): This dimension pertains to where individuals typically derive their energy.

Introverted individuals tend to focus more on their inner world, while extraverted individuals are more oriented toward the external world (80-81).

- 2) S-N Dimension (Sensing-Intuition): Sensing individuals place more emphasis on objective facts, while intuitive individuals are inclined toward evaluating possibilities (85).
- 3) T-F Dimension (Thinking-Feeling): This dimension involves how individuals make judgments, either through logic (thinking) or emotion (feeling) (93).
- 4) J-P Dimension (Judging-Perceiving): Individuals on the judging end prefer a structured, planned approach to life, while those on the perceiving end are more spontaneous and open-ended in their approach (98).

Having evolved over more than 70 years, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) has found effective applications in various fields, including team building, career guidance, psychotherapy, and education (Zeng & Zhang, 2006: 258-59). In the realm of research on the correlation between personality and second language acquisition, significant progress has been made in recent years. Scholar Faisal highlighted that the dimension of Extroversion exhibited the strongest correlation with academic achievement among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners (319). Similarly, Chinese scholar Wang's tests revealed that extroverted students tended to perform better in English listening, while introverted students excelled in English reading; furthermore, all participants involved in Wang's subsequent research emphasized the necessity for teachers and education researchers to consider personality type when designing teaching methods and conducting research (132).

To delve deeper into the correlation between metacognitive strategy use and personality type, scholars Obralic and Mulalic discovered that among various dimensions in personality description, Extroversion exhibited the strongest correlation with strategy use. Specifically, metacognitive strategies such as planning and monitoring showed notable associations with Extroversion (81). Additionally, Soleimani's study, employing a 90% confidence interval, revealed a link between metacognitive strategy use and personality type. Specifically,

introverted and sensing participants exhibited greater pertinence compared to their counterparts (39-40). Despite claims by researchers like Wu that there is no explicit evidence demonstrating a correlation between planning strategy and personality type (83), most scholars tend to acknowledge their inconspicuous correlation and continue further investigations into the matter.

2.4 Previous Studies on Metacognitive Strategies in English Reading

Over the past three decades, both domestic and international researchers have extensively explored the utilization of metacognitive strategies in English reading, encompassing both traditional paper-based materials and electronic formats.

In the realm of paper reading, the significance of metacognitive strategies has been underscored by numerous studies. Chinese scholar Ji advocated for the cultivation of students' metacognitive awareness, emphasizing its crucial role in facilitating English learning both presently and in the future (20). This assertion finds support in research conducted by domestic scholars Yang and Zhang, who identified a positive correlation between metacognitive awareness and participants' reading comprehension and English proficiency (216). Similarly, Zeng and Wu concluded that students with higher English proficiency demonstrated a greater utilization of metacognitive strategies, employed in a more flexible manner (42). However, Ji's study also revealed that Chinese students generally exhibited a low level of proficiency in employing metacognitive reading strategies, highlighting the urgent need for enhancing readers' metacognitive awareness (20).

As per the 20th National Reading Report, as of 2022, a noteworthy 77.8% of Chinese adults were found to engage in reading activities on mobile phones, showcasing a higher surge in the adoption of digital reading methods compared to traditional paper books, which underscores the necessity of redirecting research focus from paper-based materials to electronic formats (Chen para.5). While scholars like Li contend that the reading medium bears no influence on readers' utilization of metacognitive strategies (67), and some, such as Cho and Heron, argue that metacognitive strategies do not directly impact learning achievements (86), a growing

body of research discerns nuanced distinctions in the application of metacognitive strategies across these two mediums. Moreover, several studies have affirmed the beneficial effects of metacognitive strategies on participants' reading scores in online assessments. For instance, Wu and Peng's research concluded that paper materials fostered enhanced reading literacy compared to electronic counterparts (869). Additionally, findings from studies focusing on online reading by foreign researchers like Anthonysamy and Wu similarly advocate for the efficacy of these strategies in improving e-reading scores (13; 268). Hence, despite the shift towards e-reading, investigating the application of metacognitive strategies remains relevant and meaningful.

However, despite the advancements made by foreign researchers in the field of e-reading, few domestic scholars have placed emphasis on this area. Additionally, when it comes to research on the application of metacognitive strategies in reading, both paper and online, foreign researchers have often favored Mokhtari and Richard's classification over O'Malley and Chamot's. They consistently concluded that readers predominantly favored problem-solving strategies and rarely utilized support strategies (Marboot et al., 2020: 170; Jusoh & Abdullah, 2015: 75; Anderson, 2003: 17), which demonstrated the dispensability of more research based on Mokhtari and Richard's classification of metacognitive strategies. From the author's perspective, O'Malley and Chamot's classification, with its more concrete and explicit sub-strategies (planning, directed attention, selective attention, self-monitoring, etc.), offers greater clarity and utility than Mokhtari and Richard's (global, problem-solving and support strategy). In addition, according to previous literature, O'Malley and Chamot's version is preferred by more domestic researchers due to its legibility, facilitating quicker categorization of sub-strategies under broad categories. Considering these factors, it is reasonable for the author to conduct a study utilizing O'Malley and Chamot's classification version, involving domestic participants, within the context of e-reading.

3. Research Methodology

In this chapter, the methodology employed for conducting the study will be elucidated. Firstly, pertinent information regarding the participants involved will be presented. Secondly, detailed

explanations of the instruments utilized in the study will be provided. Lastly, the process of data collection and the analytical methods employed will be expounded upon.

3.1 Participants

This study delves into participants' overall utilization of metacognitive strategies, the correlation between strategy employment and reading scores, and the influencing factors affecting participants' strategy use—specifically, gender and MBTI personality type. Given the pivotal role of participants in this survey, the author will meticulously introduce their basic information, encompassing the following aspects.

Firstly, to examine the overall level of strategy use, a comprehensive questionnaire was administered to 186 participants, comprising 66 males and 120 females. These participants encompass college students, including those pursuing master's and doctoral degrees, from various disciplines across domestic and international universities or colleges. Notably, all participants have Chinese as their first language and English as their second language, with varying degrees of experience in English e-reading.

Secondly, with the research objective of studying the correlation between English reading proficiency and the level of strategy use, the author selected 32 participants to take a reading test. These 32 participants were all senior students from the English department of one university in Shanghai, originating from different provinces, and were relatively evenly distributed in the GPA ranking list.

Lastly, from the questionnaire results obtained from the initial 186 participants, the author selected 153 responses that included complete MBTI personality type information. This subset was analyzed to investigate the correlation between strategy use and MBTI personality type.

3.2 Instruments

As mentioned previously, three types of instruments were employed in this study: a questionnaire, a reading test, and an MBTI personality type test. To ensure comprehensive understanding among Chinese-native participants, all instructions, items, and the MBTI test within the questionnaire were meticulously translated into Chinese.

Firstly, the questionnaire (refer to Appendix Table 1.) utilized for quantifying participants' level of strategy use was primarily adapted from the design by Chinese scholar Liu for assessing college students' metacognitive awareness when reading English paper materials (25). The author of this thesis made modifications to the original version by initially incorporating the term "e-reading" into the instructions and headings of the questionnaire to distinguish it from Liu's "paper reading" version. Additionally, supplemental descriptions were added to each statement to enhance participants' comprehension. This approach aimed to ensure that the study was supported by scientifically rigorous data. Drawing primarily from the classification of metacognitive reading strategies proposed by O'Malley and Chamot (33), Liu categorized the questionnaire into four sections: planning strategy (4 items), selective attention strategy (9 items), monitoring strategy (which includes both monitoring and adjustment strategies, totaling 5 items), and evaluating strategy (6 items). Participants provided responses ranging from "never" to "always". Upon examination, the reliability coefficient of this questionnaire was calculated to be .850, meeting the standard requirements for scientific research.

Secondly, an online English reading test was devised (refer to Appendix Paper 1.) to evaluate the English reading proficiency of 30 participants. This test comprised three passages and a total of 20 multiple-choice questions based on these passages, each worth 5 points. To mitigate potential biases stemming from participants' textual preferences, a variety of text types—expository, argumentative, and narrative essays—were selected, totaling 2417 words. These texts were sourced from model tests of CET-6, TEM-8, and the 2017 CATTI English Written Translation Level-3, ensuring a comprehensive assessment of participants' reading abilities.

Thirdly, to investigate the relationship between MBTI personality type and the level of strategy use, participants were given the opportunity to voluntarily complete an MBTI personality type test at the outset of the questionnaire. Administered through a link provided by APESK, a reputable company specializing in psychological scales, the test comprised 105

items.

3.3 Research Procedure

Firstly, the questionnaire was distributed to Chinese college students without constraints, resulting in 186 valid responses for the study on participants' level of strategy use. Among these respondents, 153 provided their complete MBTI personality type for further analysis of the correlation between strategy use and personality type. Secondly, 32 participants (13 males and 19 females, selected to mitigate the influence of gender) were chosen from senior English majors of one university in Shanghai. These participants were evenly distributed in the GPA ranking list and completed the online reading test, with no time limitation imposed to foster a reading-focused environment rather than a timed comprehension examination. In total, the research collected 186 valid questionnaires (including gender data), 32 valid reading test results, and 153 valid MBTI test results.

The analysis was conducted using SPSS in five steps: (1) Descriptive statistical methods were employed to present the average score and relevant data of each sub-strategy. (2) One-way ANOVA was utilized to examine whether differences existed in English reading scores among participants categorized into high, medium, and low metacognitive strategy groups. (3) Linear regression analysis was employed to assess the explanatory power of metacognitive strategies on variations in English reading performance. (4) The independent-samples t-test was conducted to determine whether there were disparities in strategy scores between males and females. (5) Another independent-samples t-test was performed to assess whether differences existed in strategy scores among participants of different MBTI personality types.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Descriptive Statistics of the Use of Metacognitive Strategies

For the first research question, "What is the overall utilization of metacognitive English e-reading strategies among college students in China?", Table 1 presents the mean scores of the use of four types of sub-strategies and the overall result obtained from the questionnaire.

Table 1. Four Kinds of Metacognitive Strategies (N=186)

Strategy Use	M	SD	Maximum	Minimum
Planning Strategy	3.08	.84	1.00	5.00
Selective Attention Strategy	3.60	.64	1.67	4.89
Monitoring Strategy	3.67	.67	1.60	5.00
Evaluation Strategy	3.11	.79	1.17	5.00
Overall	3.40	.53	1.92	4.88

According to the findings presented in Table 1, the utilization of metacognitive English e-reading strategies among college students in China was analyzed based on Oxford and Burry-Stock's classification standard for strategy levels. The overall strategy use was determined to be at a medium level ($M=3.40$; $SD=.53$). Among the four sub-strategies examined, monitoring strategy exhibited the highest mean score ($M=3.67$; $SD=.67$), indicating a strong tendency towards its application. Following closely behind was the selective attention strategy ($M=3.60$; $SD=.64$), both falling within the high-level category. Meanwhile, evaluation strategy ($M=3.11$; $SD=.53$) and planning strategy ($M=3.08$; $SD=.84$) were classified under the medium-level category. These results suggest that participants demonstrated a commendable level of metacognitive strategy utilization, particularly in monitoring and selective attention strategies.

While the findings of this study did not align with Ji's assertion regarding the relatively low level of metacognitive awareness among Chinese college students (20), they were consistent with the conclusions drawn by numerous domestic and foreign researchers, including Liu (25), Luo et al. (109), Marboot et al. (164), Jusoh and Abdullah (75), and the like—participants' level of metacognitive strategy use was at or above the moderate level, no matter in paper context or online one. In this study, the result of "above the average level" can be elucidated through several perspectives:

1) The majority of participants engaged in this

research hailed from prestigious universities both domestically and internationally, positioning them as prominent figures within their respective fields of study. This demographic characteristic implies a heightened level of independent learning ability among the participants, a trait often associated with academic success and intellectual prowess. Such individuals are adept at navigating complex information landscapes and possess a keen sense of metacognitive awareness, particularly evident in their online reading endeavors.

2) In this research, the majority of participants were drawn from the researcher's network of middle-school and college classmates, a choice made for the sake of convenience in data collection. Many of these individuals were proficient English readers, owing to the researcher's educational background in a foreign language school during middle school and subsequent English major in college. Having been exposed to a plethora of foreign materials during their academic journey, participants developed a repertoire of reading strategies, including metacognitive ones, which were honed over years of engaging with diverse texts. This rich foundation of reading experience and skill acquisition greatly facilitated their performance in both the metacognitive awareness test and the reading comprehension test conducted as part of this research endeavor.

Table 2. The Most Frequently Used Strategies and the Least Frequently Used Strategies

The Most Used Strategies	The Least Used Strategies
1. Relate existing background knowledge to the content of the text to enhance understanding ($M=4.12$; $SD=.91$) (SAS)	1. Make a reading plan (e.g. regulating the number of pages you will read in a period of time) ($M=2.48$; $SD=1.22$) (PS)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>2. Pay attention to the characteristics of printing and use them to figure out the main information (e.g. using italics, bold fonts, font sizes of different sizes) (M=3.88; SD=1.11) (SAS)</p> <p>3. Connect the main points in the text to help you understand the content (M=3.84; SD=.95) (SAS)</p> | <p>2. Summarize whether the reading methods or strategies used contributed to the comprehension of the reading materials after reading (M=2.62; SD=1.19) (ES)</p> <p>3. Identify the shortcomings of your reading ability and consider future improvements (M=2.77; SD=1.19) (ES)</p> |
|--|---|
-

In analyzing individual strategies, as depicted in Table 2, it is evident that the top three most frequently employed strategies all fall under the category of selective attention strategy (SAS). Conversely, two of the least utilized strategies are categorized under evaluation strategy (ES), while the remaining one belongs to planning strategy (PS).

The results from Table 1 show that the monitoring strategy ranked first in overall utilization, contrary to the findings in Table 2 where the top three most frequently used sub-strategies all belonged to the selective attention group. This discrepancy highlights a significant gap in participants' utilization of selective strategies. For instance, while items like "relate existing background knowledge to the content of the text to enhance understanding" (M=4.12; SD=.91) were commonly employed, others such as "take a quick look at the part you read (e.g., a chapter/section/article) and read it carefully after you understand the main points" (M=2.90; SD=1.31) were seldom utilized. The result that participants had a high selective attention awareness when reading online was in line with Marboot etc.'s research finding where participants with high scores in metacognitive strategy use when reading online tended to prefer sub-strategies such as "scrolling through the text", "reading the questions before reading the text", "paying attention to the organization and length of the text", and "using reference materials", all of which fall within the selective attention group (166-67).

As for monitoring strategy, the analysis reveals that each item in this strategy category was relatively frequently utilized by participants, indicating a heightened awareness of monitoring while reading foreign materials online. This finding conformed with Jusoh and Abdullah's research findings: among the top seven strategies, items like "I adjust my reading speed according to what I am reading online", "when reading online, I decide what to read closely and what to ignore", "I try to get back on

track when lose concentration", and "when online text becomes difficult, I pay closer attention to what I am reading" all fall under the monitoring group (76). As for the reason accountable for participants' frequency in using monitoring strategies, according to Luo etc., Chinese readers tend to be more sensitive to English materials than Chinese ones, as they are less familiar with content written in a foreign language (113), and consequently, they pay special attention to their reading process to ensure they achieve a satisfactory comprehension level.

Among the top 3 least used strategies, two belong to the evaluation group and one to the planning group, in line with the mean score of strategy use. This result was also consistent with Jusoh and Abdullah's finding: among the bottom seven strategies, items like "I can distinguish between fact and opinion in online texts", "I critically analyze and evaluate the information presented in the online text" belong to evaluation group and the item "I read pages on the Internet for fun" belongs to planning group (76). The reason for this observation may stem from Chinese students' historical focus on achieving correct answers and excellent scores in their previous schooling experiences, and thus they paid more attention to the course of reading than to the preparatory planning and follow-up evaluation (Ji, 2002: 24-25). Consequently, their attention may have been more directed towards the reading process itself rather than on pre-reading planning or post-reading evaluation. This suggests that while participants in this study demonstrated a moderate level of metacognitive strategy use, they exhibited a deficiency in global metacognitive awareness.

4.2 English Reading Proficiency and Strategies

For the second research question, "Is there a correlation between strategy employment and participants' English reading proficiency, and if so, how?", Table 3 provides insights into the

average reading scores participants obtained in the online reading test. These scores were segmented into three groups based on their level of strategy use. Additionally, the table presents

the corresponding F-value and p-value for each group, shedding light on the statistical significance of any observed correlations.

Table 3. Average Online Reading Scores and Correlation Coefficients

Strategy Use	Low (M ≤ 2.4)	Medium (3.4 ≥ M ≥ 2.5)	High (5.0 ≥ M ≥ 3.5)	F	Sig (p)
Average Reading Score					
Planning Strategy	79.29	85.94	85.00	1.52	.24
Selective Attention Strategy	80.00	81.25	85.95	1.25	.30
Monitoring Strategy	85.00	79.38	85.91	1.74	.19
Evaluation Strategy	79.50	84.23	89.44	3.60	.04
Overall	75.00	81.11	89.23	4.80	.02

* “Low (M ≤ 2.4), Medium (3.4 ≥ M ≥ 2.5), High (5.0 ≥ M ≥ 3.5)” refers to participants’ scores of strategy use; numbers below “Average Reading Score” refers to the mean score of reading test from different groups of strategy use.

From Table 3, it is evident that while selective attention strategy, evaluation strategy, and the overall result all showed positive correlations with participants’ online reading scores, only the significance levels of evaluation strategy (p=.04) and the overall result (p=.02) in the one-way ANOVA were below .05. This implies that only the utilization of evaluation strategy and the overall strategy implementation were

significantly associated with participants’ reading scores. Specifically, significant differences in reading scores were observed between the high, medium, and low evaluation strategy use groups, highlighting the importance of evaluation strategies and the overall strategy use in influencing reading proficiency.

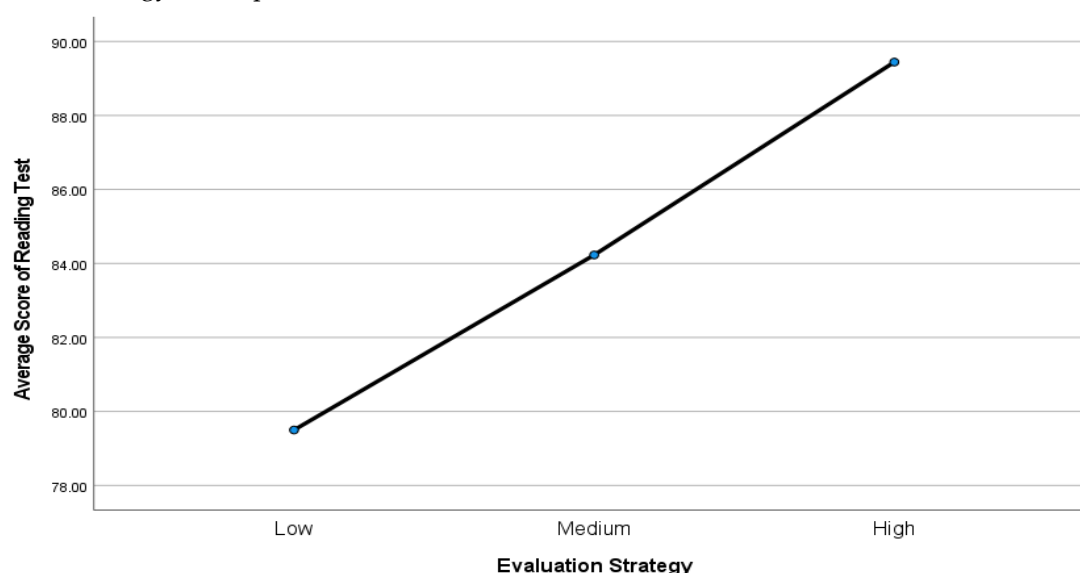


Chart 1. Average Score of Reading Test and Evaluation Strategy

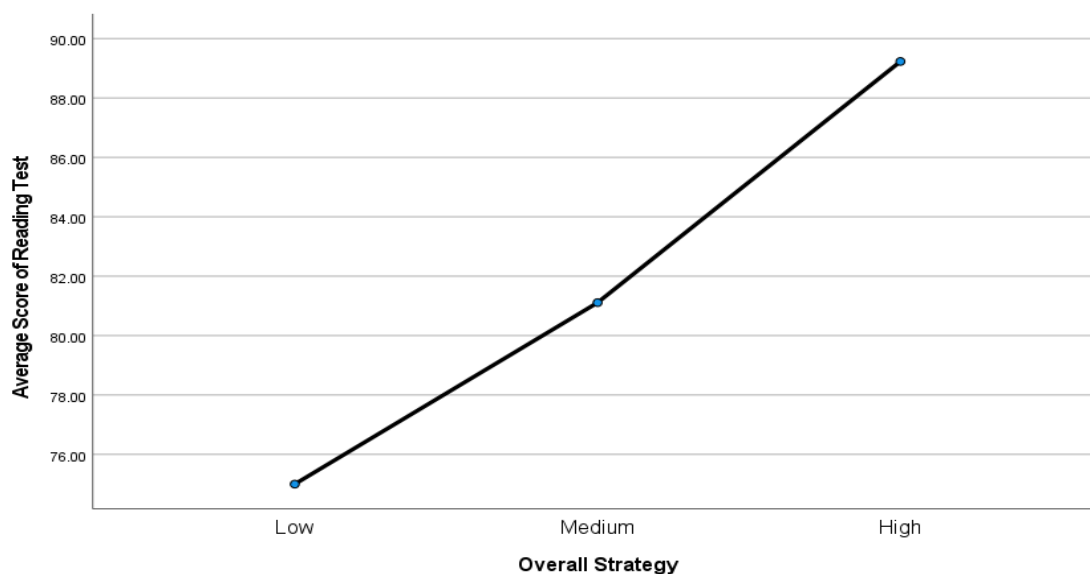


Chart 2. Average Score of Reading Test and Overall Strategy

Moreover, the line charts presented in Chart 1 and Chart 2 further elucidated a clear positive correlation between the average reading scores and the utilization of strategies. This observation aligns with the initial expectations of the author, indicating that the implementation of evaluation strategy and overall strategies exerted a discernible predictive influence on participants' reading scores. Additionally, the positive correlation observed for selective attention strategy, while evident, may not have been as

pronounced due to potential limitations in research samples. Nonetheless, the trend observed in the data resonates with the findings of researchers such as Anthonysamy (15), Taki (420), and Wu and Peng (871), underscoring the significance of employing metacognitive strategies to enhance reading efficacy. This suggests that the strategic approach adopted by participants during the reading process plays a crucial role in achieving favorable reading outcomes.

Table 4. Evaluation Strategy and Overall Result's Regression Coefficients

	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	R ²	F	Sig (p)
Evaluation Strategy	.415	.173	6.259	.018 ^b
Overall	.475	.226	8.759	.006 ^b

Following the confirmation of significant differences among low, medium, and high strategy use groups concerning evaluation strategy and overall results, linear regression analysis was performed to assess the predictive capability of metacognitive strategies on variations in English online reading scores. As depicted in Table 4, the evaluation strategy model exhibited a 17.3% explanatory power for predicting reading scores, while the overall result model demonstrated a 22.6% explanatory power.

In Ji's study, participants who underwent training to enhance their evaluation skills reported a notable boost in their confidence

levels for future learning endeavors (25). This underscores the pivotal role that evaluation skills play in fostering learning progression. Moreover, as previously highlighted, Chinese students often prioritize the active engagement in learning processes, such as the act of reading itself, rather than allocating sufficient attention to pre-reading planning or post-reading reflection and summary. In this context, individuals who proactively address this gap by consciously integrating evaluation strategies into their learning approach are more likely to excel academically.

Furthermore, the substantial explanatory power of 22.6% attributed to the overall results, despite

only one of its sub-strategies (evaluation strategy) being included in the regression equation, can be partly explained by the positive correlation observed between another sub-strategy—selective attention strategy—and participants' reading scores. However, due to the limited sample size, these differences failed to reach statistical significance. In other words, although the magnitude of the force of influence was comparatively weak to reach significance, the utilization of selective attention strategies did exert some influence on participants' reading scores.

4.3 Gender and Strategies

For the third research question: "Is participants' gender associated with strategy utilization, and in what manner?", Table 5 provides the p-values indicating the possibility of differences in strategy use between male and female participants, as determined by t-tests.

Table 5. Significance of Strategies and Gender

Strategy Use	Sig(p)
Planning Strategy	.785
Selective Attention Strategy	.627
Monitoring Strategy	.891
Evaluation Strategy	.696
Overall	.686

According to Table 5, all p-values obtained from the t-tests were above .05, indicating that there was no statistically significant difference between genders in metacognitive strategy use during online reading. In other words, gender did not influence participants' level of strategy use. Although in another study conducted by Wu, it was found that girls had a better understanding of metacognitive strategies (268), this research did not show any significant difference in metacognitive awareness scores between males and females. This finding is consistent with the results of domestic scholars like Luo et al. (113), even though their research was conducted in a paper-based context. The lack of significance in gender differences in strategy use may be attributed to the sample size of participants in different genders, but further investigation is needed to confirm this hypothesis.

4.4 MBTI Personality Type and Strategies

For the latter half of the third research question regarding the association between participants' MBTI personality types and strategy utilization, Table 6 presents the results of t-tests examining the differences in strategy use among participants with different MBTI personality types.

Table 6. Significance of Strategies and MBTI Personality Type

	E-I dimension	N-S dimension	T-F dimension	P-J dimension
	t-test's Sig(p)			
Planning Strategy	.610	.483	.584	.019
Selective Attention Strategy	.786	.320	.776	.069
Monitoring Strategy	.910	.158	.052	.772
Evaluation Strategy	.619	.143	.365	.688
Overall	.979	.120	.430	.137

According to Table 6, the only instance where the p-value was below 0.05 was in the "P-J dimension & Planning Strategy" category ($p = 0.019$), indicating a significant difference in the use of planning strategy between P-type and J-type participants. Specifically, J-type participants demonstrated a higher frequency of using planning strategy compared to their P-type counterparts. However, across other dimensions, participants' MBTI personality type

did not exert a significant influence on their level of strategy use. Additionally, in the N-S dimension, N-type participants exhibited a higher level of use for each sub-strategy compared to S-type participants, but the difference between them did not reach statistical significance, possibly due to insufficient sample sizes as mentioned earlier.

The findings regarding the correlation between

MBTI personality type and reading strategy use obtained in this study diverged from previous research. In earlier studies, English proficiency or strategy utilization were primarily correlated with participants' E-I type (Obralic & Mulalic, 2017: 81; Soleimani, 2018: 39-40). However, in the present study, participants' E-I type did not exhibit a significant correlation with their level of strategy use, but rather the P-J dimension did. This unexpected outcome may be attributed to several factors, as outlined below.

Drawing upon Myers' typology, J-type individuals are inclined to establish structured frameworks for various aspects of their lives, often meticulously planning each item on their daily agenda (Myers, 2016: 100). Conversely, P-type individuals tend to adopt a more spontaneous and flexible approach to life (Myers, 2016: 101). Consequently, in the context of online reading, J-type participants may exhibit a greater propensity to utilize planning strategies, such as creating reading schedules, whereas P-type individuals may opt for a more relaxed reading style.

In the N-S dimension, contrary to the findings of Soleimani et al. (40), N-type participants in this study exhibited a higher level of engagement with metacognitive reading strategies compared to S-type individuals. Myers's *Gifts Differing* offers insight into this phenomenon:

Firstly, S-type individuals tend to focus their attention on the lexical dimension while reading English materials online. This means they concentrate more on individual words and sentences rather than discerning the deeper implications intended by the authors, as favored by N-type readers. N-type individuals, on the other hand, are more inclined to delve into information beyond the surface level, often considering the overall flow of thoughts rather than just the text itself (Myer & Myer, 2016: 24). Within these broader considerations, questions may arise, such as, "How did the author structure this essay?" or "Are all the author's viewpoints valid?" These questions may prompt the use of specific reading strategies, such as "paying attention to the structure of reading material" or "evaluating the validity of the author's points". Furthermore, S-type readers typically aim for comprehensive understanding of every detail in the reading material, often reading word by word to ensure they do not miss any information (88). Consequently, for these meticulous readers, the primary focus lies

in understanding each word rather than developing critical thinking skills. In contrast, N-type readers may employ various reading strategies, including quick reading, especially when they perceive certain content to be less significant, even if it means potentially overlooking important information.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Major Findings

Based on the comprehensive framework provided by O'Malley and Chamot's classification of metacognitive strategies, as well as the adaptation of Liu's metacognitive reading awareness scale and the MBTI personality type scale developed by APESK company, this study was able to conduct a thorough examination of Chinese college students' utilization of metacognitive strategies in online English reading. Through meticulous analysis and interpretation, several significant conclusions emerged, shedding light on the intricate relationship between individuals' cognitive processes, personality traits, and reading behavior in the digital realm.

- 1) Chinese college students exhibit a moderate level of metacognitive strategy use when engaging in online English reading.
- 2) Selective attention and monitoring strategies emerge as the most commonly employed metacognitive strategies among Chinese college students.
- 3) The utilization of evaluation strategies demonstrates a significant and positive correlation with readers' online reading scores, in other words, the better readers were at using evaluation strategy, the higher reading score they would get.
- 4) Gender does not appear to be a determining factor in readers' levels of metacognitive strategy use.
- 5) On the dimension of MBTI personality type, the P-J dimension exhibits a significant correlation with the use of planning strategies. J-type readers demonstrate a higher frequency of planning strategy utilization compared to P-type readers.

5.2 Pedagogical Implications

Pedagogical insights gleaned from this study are outlined below:

- 1) While students demonstrate a moderate

level of metacognitive strategy use, there appears to be a deficiency in their overarching metacognitive awareness, as evidenced by their neglect of pre- and post-reading stages. This is evident in their lower scores in planning and evaluation strategies. To address this gap, educators in future reading and foreign language acquisition courses should underscore the significance of holistic learning. Emphasizing the creation of study plans prior to learning sessions and encouraging reflection and summarization afterward can foster a more comprehensive understanding of the learning process.

- 2) Despite the varying significance values, both selective attention strategy and evaluation strategy demonstrated a positive correlation with readers' reading scores. This suggests that students' utilization of metacognitive strategies in online English reading positively impacts their academic performance. Consequently, it is recommended for educators to incorporate instruction on reading strategies into their pedagogical approach. This integration is beneficial not only for students' success in reading comprehension assessments but also for fostering a sense of achievement in their reading endeavors. By explicitly teaching and reinforcing these strategies, educators can empower students to become more proficient and confident readers.
- 3) Regarding MBTI personality types, educators could consider them when designing pedagogical tasks. As evidenced by this study, P-type readers exhibited less frequent use of planning strategies compared to J-type individuals, while S-type participants utilized fewer metacognitive strategies than their N-type counterparts. Therefore, in personalized instruction of reading strategies, teachers could initially assess students' personality types. This tailored approach may enhance teaching effectiveness by aligning instructional methods with students' individual preferences and tendencies. By acknowledging and accommodating diverse learning styles based on MBTI personality types, educators can optimize the learning experience and foster greater engagement and success among students.

5.3 Limitations of this Study and Suggestions for

Future Studies

This research underscores the significance of metacognitive strategies in enhancing readers' reading scores, alongside the influence of readers' personality types on their selection and utilization of these strategies while engaging with English materials online. These findings offer valuable insights for curriculum developers seeking to advance English teaching practices. However, there are areas in which this research can be further refined. Firstly, the inclusion of some graduate students among the participants, who are not "college students" in the strictest sense, may cause deviations in the research data. Secondly, participants in the study could only differentiate between their experiences of paper reading and online reading based on their self-awareness. Consequently, there is a possibility of confusion between these two modes of reading, potentially impacting the accuracy of research outcomes. Future studies could address these limitations by delimiting the age of participants and implementing more precise methods for distinguishing between reading contexts, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings.

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Appendix

The questionnaire:

Table 1. Chinese version

元认知电子阅读意识测试（公测版）					
各位同学好！欢迎大家参与到我的毕业论文调查中来，感谢大家的支持，在此祝大家 2024 学业有成，工作顺利，万事胜意！					
请大家回忆以往的英语电子阅读经历（使用手机、电脑、平板或 kindle 类的电子阅读器进行广义上的阅读，而非做试题类的阅读理解测试），尽可能准确地完成以下测试，再次感谢！					
您的性别： [单选题]					
○男		○女			
您的常用邮箱（以便后续联系）： [填空题]					
此研究需收集参与者的 MBTI 人格类型作为研究因素之一， https://16type.com 请点击此链接进行人格测试，测试完毕后，请正确填写您的人格类型（若您认为完成 MBTI 人格测试会占用您过多时间，或不愿透露您的人格类型，请忽略此题，直接进行后续作答）： [填空题]					
在进行英语电子阅读时，你使用以下阅读策略的频率高低 总是 经常 有时 偶尔 从不 如何？请选择。[矩阵单选题]					
1. 制定阅读目标（如：为提高阅读理解能力、获取信息、消遣等）	○	○	○	○	○
2. 根据阅读目标找出符合自己水平的读物	○	○	○	○	○
3. 制订阅读计划（如：规定自己在一段时间内的阅读数量	○	○	○	○	○

或时间等)					
4. 根据不同的文章考虑采用不同的阅读方法或策略 (如: 消遣类的读物采用速读法, 学习类的读物采用精读法等)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. 先快速浏览所读部分 (如一章/一节/一篇等), 待了解要点后再仔细阅读	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. 阅读开始时根据标题/章节名/书名预测内容	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. 阅读时将已有的背景知识和文中内容相联系以增进理解	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. 阅读时将文中的要点联系起来帮助自己理解	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. 阅读时划线或做记号 (用鼠标、电容笔等) 来突出重点并帮助自己回忆前文内容	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. 阅读时注意并利用注释帮助自己理解内容	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. 阅读时注意印刷特点并藉此判断主要信息 (如: 使用斜体字、黑体字、不同大小的字号等)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. 阅读时注意篇章结构和组织形式 (如: 作者采用了总分总结构、倒叙手法等)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. 阅读时注意段落的主题句并藉此判断主旨或大意	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. 阅读过程中停下来思考检查自己是否理解所读的内容	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. 阅读过程中自我提问并通过阅读找到答案 (如: 默念“这句话是什么意思”等)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. 阅读过程中根据所读的内容修正先前的预测 (如: 欧亨利式结尾推翻读者先前的预测)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. 阅读过程中及时检查所用的阅读方法是否恰当及时调整不当的方法 (如: 略读到一半, 发现自己无法理解内容大意, 继而选用精读法等)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. 阅读过程中根据阅读时间和阅读量调整自己的阅读速度	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. 阅读后评价自己对所读内容的理解程度如何	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. 阅读后思考自己对所读内容的看法 (如: 拒绝接受作者的某些观点)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. 阅读后总结所使用的阅读方法或策略是否有助于对所读内容的理解	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. 阅读后评价所读内容是否满足自己的阅读目标或要求	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. 阅读后评价自己有哪些收获	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. 阅读后找出自己阅读能力的缺陷并考虑今后的改进措施	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Table 2. English version

Metacognitive Awareness for E-reading Test (Public Version)	
Welcome to participate in the research to support my graduation thesis. Thank you for your cooperation, and wish you all the best in 2024!	
Please recall your previous English e-reading experience (using a phone, computer, tablet, or kindle e-reader to read in a broad sense, rather than taking a test-based reading comprehension test) and completing the following tests as accurately as possible.	
Your gender: [multiple choice]	
<input type="radio"/> male	<input type="radio"/> female

Your email address (for later contact): [gap filling] <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-top: 5px;"/>					
Your MBTI personality type is to be collected as one of the study factors. https://16type.com Please click on this link to take the personality test, and fill in your type correctly (if you think that taking the test will take you too much time, or do not want to disclose your personality type, please ignore this question and directly answer the following items): [gap filling] <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-top: 5px;"/>					
How often do you use the following reading strategies when e-reading in English? [matrix multiple choice]	always	often	sometimes	seldom	never
1. Set reading goals (e.g. to acquire information, to entertain oneself, to improve reading comprehension)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Find reading materials that meet your level based on your reading goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Make a reading plan (e.g. regulating the number of pages you will read in a period of time)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Use different strategies for different types of materials (e.g. skimming recreational materials, but reading informative materials in detail)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Take a quick look at the part you read (e.g. a chapter/ section/ article) and read it carefully after you understand the main points	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Predict the content at the beginning of the reading based on the title of a passage/ chapter/ book	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Relate existing background knowledge to the content of the text to enhance understanding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Connect the main points in the text to help you understand the content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Underline or make marks (e.g. using a mouse or e-pencil) to highlight important points and help you recall the previous content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Pay attention to and use annotations to help you understand the content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Pay attention to the characteristics of printing and use them to figure out the main information (e.g. using italics, bold fonts, font sizes of different sizes)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Pay attention to the structure and organization of the passage when reading (e.g. the author using the summary-deduction structure, flashbacks)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Pay attention to the topic sentences and use them to figure out the main idea or main idea	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Pause and check whether you've understood the content or not	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. Ask yourself questions when reading and find their answers in later contents (e.g. meditating "What does this mean?")	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Revise previous predictions based on what you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

read during the reading process (e.g. O' Henry-style endings change the reader's previous predictions)					
17. Check whether the reading method used is appropriate and adjust it (e.g. skimming at first and then turning into reading in detail for you can't understand the content)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. Adjust your reading speed according to the time and amount of the rest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. Evaluate how well you understand what you read after reading	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. Think about how you evaluate the contents after reading (e.g. disagreeing with certain points of view from the author)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. Summarize whether the reading methods or strategies used contributed to the comprehension of the reading materials after reading	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. Evaluate whether the content you've read meets your reading goals after reading	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. Evaluate what you've learnt after reading	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. Identify the shortcomings of your reading ability and consider future improvements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Paper 1:

The Online Reading Test

<p>元认知电子阅读测试卷</p> <p>各位同学好！十分感谢大家能在假期中抽出宝贵的一小时参与此次测试，为我的毕业论文助力，我感激涕零，提前祝大家新年快乐，万事如意！</p> <p>请大家使用手机（为了确保变量统一，大家不要使用平板、笔记本电脑等设备进行测试）以正常状态（指情绪正常、做题姿势正常等，当然，如果有人愿意倒立做题也无妨~）完成以下三篇阅读题。题目难度基本与六级考题基本持平。最终得分的高低不重要（真的不重要，不是说说的），因为这不是我研究的重点，但是得分的真实性非常重要，这直接影响到我的研究结果的成败，所以请大家独立完成测试，无需借助网络资源（词典等）。大家的最终得分会绝对保密（大概率我也不会去看个人得分情况，只会计算平均分之类的），所以大家完全不必紧张，按照正常节奏完成即可~</p> <p>但是有一点很重要，那就是，在阅读过程中，请大家留意自己的阅读策略（如：精读或略读，阅读速度是否随着阅读难度发生了变化等，后续问卷填写需要用到相关信息）。</p> <p>完成试卷后，也请大家收下我的一个小红包，以表心意。</p> <p>祝大家测试顺利，再次感谢！</p> <p>(1) Shyness is the cause of much unhappiness for a great many people. All kinds of people describe themselves as shy: short, tall, dull, intelligent, young, old, slim, overweight. Shy people are anxious and self-conscious; that is, they are excessively concerned with their own appearance and actions. Worrisome thoughts are constantly occurring in their minds: What kind of impression am I making? Do they like me? Do I sound stupid? Am I wearing unattractive clothes?</p> <p>(2) It is obvious that such uncomfortable feelings must affect people adversely. A person's self-concept is reflected in the way he or she behaves, and the way a person behaves affects other people's reactions. In general, the way people think about themselves has a profound effect on all areas of their lives. For instance, people who have a positive sense of self-worth or high self-esteem usually act with confidence. Because they do not need constant praise and encouragement from others to feel good</p>

about themselves. Self-confident people participate in life enthusiastically and spontaneously. They are not affected by what others think they “should do”. People with high self-esteem are not hurt by criticism; they do not regard criticism as a personal attack. Instead, they view a criticism as a suggestion for improvement.

(3) In contrast, shy people, having low self-esteem, are likely to be passive and easily influenced by others. They need reassurance that they are doing “the right thing”. Shy people are very sensitive to criticism; they feel it confirms their inferiority. They also find it difficult to be pleased by compliments because they believe they are unworthy of praise. A shy person may respond to a compliment with a statement like this one: “You’re just saying that to make me feel good. I know it’s not true.” It is clear that, while self-awareness is a healthy quality, overdoing it is detrimental, or harmful.

(4) Can shyness be completely eliminated, or at least reduced? Fortunately, people can overcome shyness with determined and patient effort in building self-confidence. Since shyness goes hand in hand with lack of self-esteem, it is important for people to accept their weaknesses as well as their strengths. For example, most people would like to be “A” students in every subject. It is not fair for them to label themselves inferior because they have difficulty in some areas. People’s expectations of themselves must be realistic. Living on the impossible leads to a sense of inadequacy.

(5) Each one of us is a unique, worthwhile individual. We are interested in our own personal ways. The better we understand ourselves, the easier it becomes to live up to our full potential. Let’s not allow our shyness to block out chances for a rich and fulfilling life.

1. The first paragraph is mainly about ().

- A) the characteristics of shy people
- B) the cause of shyness
- C) the questions in the minds of shy people
- D) the effect of shyness on people

2. According to the writer, self-awareness is ().

- A) harmful to people
- B) a weak point of shy people
- C) the cause of unhappiness
- D) a good quality

3. According to the passage, the uncomfortable feelings of shy people ().

- A) have no effect on them
- B) have a favourable effect on them
- C) have an unfavourable effect on them
- D) can hardly be overcome

4. What is the shy people’s usual reaction to a compliment?

- A) They are pleased about it.
- B) They suspect it is not true.
- C) They are very sensitive to it.
- D) They feel it confirms their inferiority.

5. We can infer from the passage that the writer would favor ().

- A) a shy person
- B) a realistic person
- C) a sensitive person
- D) a reserved person

(1) Imagine being asked to spend 12 or so years of your life in a society which consisted only of members of your own sex. How would you react? Unless there was something definitely wrong with you, you wouldn't be too happy about it, to say the least. It is all the more surprising therefore that so many parents in the world choose to impose such abnormal conditions on their children — conditions which they themselves wouldn't put up with for one minute!

(2) Any discussion of this topic is bound to question the aims of education. Stuffing children's heads full of knowledge is far from being foremost among them. One of the chief aims of education is to equip future citizens with all they require to take their place in adult society. Adult society is made up of men and women, so how can a segregated school possibly offer the right sort of preparation for it? Anyone entering adult society after years of segregation can only be in for a shock.

(3) A coeducational school offers children nothing less than a true version of society in miniature. Boys and girls are given the opportunity to get to know each other and to learn to live together from their earliest years. They are put in a position where they can compare themselves with each other in terms of academic ability, athletic achievement and in many of the extra-curricular activities which are part of school life. What a practical advantage it is (to give just a small example) to be able to put on a school play in which the male parts will be taken by boys and the female parts by girls! What nonsense coeducation makes of the argument that boys are cleverer than girls or vice versa! When segregated, boys and girls are made to feel that they are a race apart. Rivalry between the sexes is fostered. In a coeducational school, everything falls into its proper place.

(4) But perhaps the greatest contribution of coeducation is the healthy attitude to life it encourages. Boys don't grow up believing that women are mysterious creatures — airy goddesses, more like fairy tale book illustrations, than human beings. Girls don't grow up imagining that men are romantic heroes. Years of living together at school dispel illusions of this kind. There are no goddesses with freckles, pigtailed, piercing voices and inky fingers. There are no romantic heroes with knobby knees, dirty fingernails and unkempt hair. The awkward stage of adolescence brings into sharp focus some of the physical and emotional problems involved in growing up. These can more easily be overcome in a coeducational environment. Segregated schools sometimes provide the right conditions for sexual deviation. This is hardly possible under a coeducational system. When the time comes for the pupils to leave school, they are fully prepared to enter society as well-adjusted adults. They have already had years of experience in coping with many of the problems that face men and women.

1. We can learn from the first paragraph that ().

- A) many children prefer to study in segregated schools
- B) it is abnormal to go to a coeducational school
- C) the author is against segregated schools
- D) parents like segregated schools

2. The tone of the author is ().

- A) straightforward
- B) mild
- C) indifferent
- D) pessimistic

3. According to the text, one major goal of education is to ().

- A) let students acquire knowledge
 - B) equip future citizens with technology
 - C) equip a future citizen with what is required in getting a position in society
 - D) let students score academic achievements
4. Students from a segregated school may find it () to enter society.
- A) interesting
 - B) shocking
 - C) easy
 - D) acceptable
5. What can coeducation provide to children?
- A) Skills about getting on well with each other.
 - B) A true model of the real society.
 - C) A real life.
 - D) A true picture of social conditions.
6. Which of the following is NOT mentioned as a benefit of coeducation?
- A) Learning from each other.
 - B) Acquiring a better understanding of each other.
 - C) Playing due roles in performance.
 - D) Teaching each other academically.
7. The word “rivalry” underlined in Paragraph 3 means
- A) friendliness
 - B) hatred
 - C) partnership
 - D) competition
8. Why do boys and girls in coeducational schools have no illusions about each other?
- A) They live together and know each other well.
 - B) Years of living together at school dismiss such illusions.
 - C) Coeducation encourages them to show a healthy attitude toward life.
 - D) They are familiar with each other’s weaknesses.
9. The word “unkempt” underlined in the last paragraph refers to () hair.
- A) long
 - B) dirty
 - C) untidy
 - D) greasy
10. It can be inferred from the passage that ().

- A) only coeducation can bring harmony to society
- B) people begin to realize the importance of coeducation
- C) coeducation is superior to segregated education
- D) coeducation has many features

(1) “All right, boys and girls, who’d like to see some magic?” Twice a day the ferry Arahura—and it is greeted with cries of “Me!” from children, and with sighs of relief from parents, glad to find something to occupy their kids for at least half an hour of the three-hour trip.

(2) The parental savior in question is Nigel Kennedy, a professional magician who has been working in the ferry for the past seven years. The facilities aren’t great—there is no designated performance space, and he has to conjure more or less in a corridor—but there is room enough to wave a wand (魔棒) and wow an audience more captive than most.

(3) Kennedy, 33, thrives on the work, which guarantees him a level of exposure he would not readily find elsewhere. The Arahura carries thousands of people each day in the holiday season. “Every time I travel,” says Jonathan Morgan, manager of passenger services for the ferry line, “he is ringed with kids, like the Pied Piper (魔笛手, 童话人物).”

(4) The key to what Morgan refers to as Kennedy’s stunning success is audience participation: every show, he ropes in four kids to help, although they usually wind up being the butt of his tricks. Wands are apt to wobble, droop, squeak or vanish; loosies (散装烟) and hankies (手帕) turn up in unexpected places. Kennedy is a dab hand with balloons, too, twisting them at top speed into crowns, swords, worms, ducks and donkeys.

(5) The children’s work, he says, is his bread and butter, although it is not without its hazards. “Adults are very predictable to perform for as an audience. They will always clap in the same place, always laugh in the same place. But kids, you can’t predict what they’re going to say or do. Sometimes you’re going to have a little five-year-old who’s going to sit there with his arms folded and say this trick’s absolutely pathetic—some words he’s learnt from his parents.”

(6) Kennedy was drawn to magic in the classic manner. “I got given a magic book when I was eight years old and that started me on it. From then on, I was putting on shows in Mum and Dad’s garage and plastering up flyers on lampposts and letterboxes around the streets, probably to their embarrassment. And it just developed from there.”

(7) “I remember vividly a magician in a touring show. I remember sitting watching him in this little seat on my own. I don’t know how old I would have been, but I was just rapt. He threw this big hula hoop (呼啦圈) at me and I had to examine it. I thought, wow, I feel so special.”

(8) Since turning professional in 1989, Kennedy has made what he calls a good living from magic. But the business is not what it was. He can remember doing cabaret every Friday and Saturday night, plus a round of conferences, dine-and-dances and garden parties. He still does conferences, but these days, “rather than having a set stage show with illusions, they’re more inclined to hire me for an hour or two, having me walk around the tables, do a little trick in somebody’s hand, which is what they call close-up magic (近景魔术).”

(9) He arguments his income by running an air order business for aspiring magicians, but admits that the average age of his clients is climbing: fewer and fewer children are taking up the craft.

“It’s the competition. Nowadays they can push a computer screen and a magic effect happens: why learn a magic trick? People come along to a magic club and, if they can’t see a person in half on the first evening, they lose interest.”

(10) Kennedy’s skill is acknowledged by fellow magicians who, have recently voted him best children’s entertainer. But—you have to ask—do people confuse him with the other Nigel Kennedy. the internationally famous violinist?

(11) Well, yes, and Kennedy shamelessly plays up to it: “Whenever Nigel is touring in this area, I make the most of it. I come on stage with a violin case while Vivaldi’s *The Four Seasons* plays in the background. Then I pull out a magic wand from the violin case and everyone laughs.”

(12) There are no plans for a name change, and in any case the confusion is worth it to overhear, as Kennedy once did, someone say: “This must be what that violinist does in the off-season (淡季).”

1. The relationship between the first and second paragraphs is that ().

- A) both present Kennedy’s performance sites
- B) each presents one side of the magician
- C) the first generalizes the second with examples
- D) the first introduces the second with more details

2. According to context, what’s the possible meaning of “conjure” in Para.2?

- A) to have a rest
- B) to play magic tricks
- C) to do one’s work
- D) to make other people gather together

3. According to context, which of the following words is the synonym of “ring” in Para.3?

- A) entwin
- B) curl
- C) surround
- D) swerve

4. From the description in the passage, we learn that ().

- A) Kennedy has a fixed stage on the ferry to perform his magic for children
- B) Kennedy’s career is now on the decline because some children learn it
- C) Kennedy runs a mail-order business for those interested in magic
- D) the magician often performs on the stage with Kennedy, the violinist

5. It can be inferred from the passage that Kennedy was all the following EXCEPT

- A) persistent
- B) humorous
- C) confusing
- D) diligent

TikTok Sounds and the Formation of Youth Media Rituals in Transnational Contexts

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Abstract

This paper investigates the role of sound on TikTok as a central medium through which transnational youth engage in ritualized digital practices. Focusing on German youth culture as a case study, the research conceptualizes short-form audio clips on TikTok as “ritual infrastructures” that facilitate repetition, emotional synchronization, and identity negotiation. Drawing on media ritual theory (Couldry), mediatization (Hjarvard), and global cultural flow theory (Appadurai), the study examines how TikTok sounds function as modular cultural units that travel across linguistic and geographic boundaries. These sounds acquire quasi-linguistic and affective meanings, enabling youth to participate in globally shared media rituals while embedding local identities. The paper argues that music discovery on TikTok has transformed into a performative and emotionally structured ritual rather than a search-based activity, and that algorithmically circulated sounds foster a new form of cultural synchrony. Through theoretical synthesis and platform-based analysis, the paper advances a new understanding of sound as both a medium of participation and a symbolic anchor in the digital lives of a globally connected generation.

Keywords: TikTok, media rituals, transnational youth culture, platformization, sound memes, mediatization, algorithmic culture, cultural synchrony, emotional media practices, global cultural flows

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

The trajectory of music discovery has undergone significant transformation in the past few decades, moving from centralized radio broadcasts to more personalized forms such as podcasts and streaming platforms. This evolution has culminated in the emergence of TikTok as a powerful agent in shaping contemporary music experiences, particularly among Gen Z users in Germany. These users,

often fluent in visual culture and mobile interaction, encounter music not through complete albums or curated playlists but through fragmented, looping sound clips embedded in short videos. These clips act as signals, triggers, and templates that structure user behavior in highly patterned ways. TikTok sounds have become the nexus through which cultural materials circulate, producing a distinct mode of transnational cultural engagement. In the German context, youth increasingly participate in these sound practices as part of a

larger network of content production, emotional expression, and cultural identification. The auditory elements are no longer mere background but operate as core components in shaping cultural rituals that are replicated and reinterpreted across national borders. Through repetition, synchronization, and emotional coding, TikTok sounds form the infrastructure of what can be understood as youth media rituals in a globalized setting.

1.2 Research Problem

The central question addressed in this paper concerns the role of TikTok sounds in constructing shared ritual behaviors among youth populations across different national and cultural contexts. Specifically, it investigates how certain sonic elements on TikTok are imbued with symbolic meaning through repeated acts of engagement, and how these repetitions come to define ritualistic media behavior. In the German youth scene, this process involves the appropriation of foreign and local sound bites alike, translating them into aesthetic performances that transcend linguistic and national barriers. The inquiry focuses on the affordances and constraints of TikTok's sound system, asking how it facilitates specific modes of cultural practice and identity work. These practices are not isolated phenomena but emerge within a global platform logic that encourages both mimicry and differentiation. The research problem also seeks to unpack how the algorithmic infrastructure of TikTok participates in shaping what becomes ritualizable, and how young users negotiate their agency within these platform-imposed patterns. The broader question is whether these emergent behaviors can be understood as a new form of media ritual that operates on the logic of modularity, scalability, and affective resonance.

1.3 Research Significance

By theorizing TikTok sounds as ritual objects, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of youth culture not simply as a demographic category but as an active agent in producing symbolic and emotional meaning in the digital age. The significance lies in repositioning short-form sonic media from an entertainment tool to a core mechanism of social organization and cultural circulation. In examining the German context, this research adds to the growing body of work on transnational digital youth culture by providing empirical and

theoretical insights into how media platforms mediate collective behavior across cultural boundaries. It suggests that sound operates as a low-threshold, high-impact medium through which affective communities are formed and sustained. The study also contributes to the field of media ritual theory by expanding its scope to include algorithmically shaped, platform-native practices that are globally diffused yet locally situated. In doing so, it bridges the gap between media anthropology, platform studies, and musicology, proposing an interdisciplinary framework for understanding the ritualization of sound in digital culture.

1.4 Theoretical Positioning

The theoretical framework is anchored in three interrelated bodies of scholarship that offer distinct yet complementary lenses for interpreting the phenomenon under study. The first is Nick Couldry's theory of media rituals, which conceptualizes ritual as meaningful repetition that produces symbolic order in media environments. Couldry's work emphasizes the ways in which media practices become ritualized through routine, symbolic actions that reinforce shared cultural frameworks. The second theoretical strand draws on Stig Hjarvard's mediatization theory, which views media not merely as channels for communication but as constitutive forces that reshape social institutions and everyday life. This perspective allows for an analysis of how TikTok structures daily behaviors and emotional rhythms, making media practices inseparable from lived experience. The third component engages Arjun Appadurai's model of global cultural flows, particularly his notion of the ethnoscape and mediascape, to account for the transnational mobility of sound and its role in forming global youth identities. Appadurai's emphasis on deterritorialization and reterritorialization provides a framework for understanding how sound travels across borders while being recontextualized in specific cultural settings, such as among German youth negotiating global influences and local meanings.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Media Ritual Theory

Media rituals, as conceptualized by Nick Couldry, provide a powerful framework for understanding how everyday interactions with media can acquire symbolic, communal, and

performative dimensions. Within the TikTok environment, sounds are not simply functional or decorative elements; they are ritual triggers that structure user behavior through repetition, emotional investment, and symbolic alignment. For German youth, performing a TikTok dance challenge using a globally trending sound is not merely an act of imitation but a ritualized performance that affirms one's place within a transnational media community. These sounds act as markers of belonging, signaling cultural literacy and emotional alignment with a particular mood or theme. The frequency with which users encounter, reuse, and recontextualize the same audio clips reinforces the ritualistic nature of their participation. By repeatedly engaging with these sounds, youth create patterns of behavior that echo traditional rituals in their regularity and affective resonance, but which are deeply embedded in platform-specific logic. Unlike religious rituals grounded in sacred time and space, TikTok rituals are ephemeral yet powerful, embedded in scrollable feeds and fleeting encounters, yet experienced as meaningful by participants who invest time, identity, and affect into their enactment.

2.2 Mediatization of Everyday Life

Mediatization theory, particularly as articulated by Hjarvard, posits that media are no longer external channels through which society communicates but have become constitutive forces that reshape the very structure of daily life. This perspective is crucial for understanding how TikTok, through its sound infrastructure, formats not just content but the emotional and temporal rhythms of young users in Germany. Sound clips on TikTok shape when and how emotions are expressed, how social roles are performed, and how shared experiences are crafted. The interface between user and platform becomes a site where cultural habits are formed and normalized. For example, the act of scrolling through TikTok before bed while listening to emotionally coded sounds like melancholic piano loops or nostalgic lo-fi beats has become a daily routine for many, a moment of introspection or emotional regulation that is deeply mediated. The platform, through its design and algorithm, subtly encourages this repetition, embedding media into the structure of everyday life not only as content but as a temporal and emotional organizer. In the German context, where media use intersects

with local cultural expectations around emotional expression and privacy, TikTok creates new forms of affective publicness, where feelings are both shared and stylized through sonic repetition.

2.3 Transnational Youth Culture

Transnational youth culture provides the broader socio-cultural framework in which TikTok sound rituals are embedded. Youth across different nations, including Germany, increasingly participate in a globalized media environment where cultural products circulate rapidly and are subject to reinterpretation across contexts. TikTok's sound system enables what can be called a transnational soundscape, in which users in Berlin might use a snippet of Korean pop, Brazilian funk, or Nigerian Afrobeats without needing to understand the language or cultural origin of the sound. These sonic elements become detached from their original contexts and are re-embedded within new, locally meaningful performances. German youth, often fluent in English and digitally literate, are well-positioned to engage in these flows, drawing upon diverse audio materials to perform hybrid identities. This engagement is not uncritical or passive; rather, it reflects an active process of cultural negotiation, where sounds are selected, remixed, and embodied in ways that resonate with both global trends and local values. The platform fosters a form of cultural simultaneity, where a single sound can support millions of different performances, each inflected by the cultural context of the user, yet bound together by the shared grammar of platform participation.

2.4 Platformized Cultural Flows

The concept of platformized cultural flows, as developed by scholars like José van Dijck, shifts attention from user agency to the infrastructural logic that organizes and channels media circulation. TikTok's sound system exemplifies how platforms fragment and recontextualize content, turning sound into modular units that can be endlessly replicated, appropriated, and redistributed. These units are not neutral; they are shaped by recommendation algorithms, metadata tagging, and user interaction metrics, all of which determine which sounds rise to prominence and how they are framed within the user interface. In the German TikTok ecosystem, popular sounds often follow a trajectory from global virality to local adaptation, guided by the

platform's logic of visibility and trendiness. A Latin pop track might become a dance challenge, then a comedic voice-over, and finally a vehicle for political commentary. This constant reconfiguration reveals the deep entanglement between cultural production and platform design. Youth engagement with these sounds is both creative and constrained, structured by the platform's affordances and algorithmic preferences. TikTok not only enables cultural flows but actively shapes their form, duration, and visibility, producing a new media ecology in which sound is a modular building block of identity, community, and ritual participation.

3. TikTok Sounds as Cultural Units

3.1 Short-form Sound as Communicative Symbol

On TikTok, short-form sound operates as a semiotic resource that functions in ways analogous to language, yet with distinct multimodal affordances. Within the German TikTok environment, these sounds serve as symbolic cues that trigger recognizable social meanings and affective states, even when stripped of their original lyrical or cultural context. A five-second audio loop of a distorted pop song, a snippet of a viral speech, or a slowed-down rap hook becomes a flexible communicative unit capable of encoding irony, desire, nostalgia, or resistance. These audio fragments are not merely background for visual performance but central elements that direct the mood, rhythm, and structure of the video. Their semiotic power lies in their polysemy; the same sound can support hundreds of interpretations, each conditioned by local cultural knowledge and platform subcultural literacy. For German youth, the reuse of a trending sound functions as a signal of in-group belonging and digital fluency, positioning the user within a broader affective and symbolic economy. These sound symbols become legible not through conventional language but through platform-native intertextuality, where shared listening and performance history constructs meaning in collective ways.

3.2 Meme-ification of Sound

The meme-ification of sound is a core mechanism through which TikTok transforms music into ritual content. In Germany, as elsewhere, full-length songs are rarely consumed in their entirety; instead, they are clipped into five to ten-second fragments that circulate as standalone audio memes. These

fragments undergo processes of decontextualization, where they are stripped from their original narrative or cultural setting, and recontextualization, where they are embedded in new video formats, genres, or moods. This transformation allows the sound to take on a ritualized function, becoming part of a familiar template that users can repeatedly perform. For example, a dramatic orchestral sting originally composed for a film trailer might be repurposed by German creators to parody moments of everyday stress, such as missing a train or failing an exam. Over time, the repeated pairing of specific sounds with recurring visual tropes hardens into what can be described as an auditory meme grammar. The meme-ified sound becomes recognizable not only through its acoustic features but through the social scripts it evokes. This ritualized reuse fosters a sense of continuity and familiarity, enabling youth to participate in a shared media practice while inflecting it with local relevance and personal creativity.

3.3 Emotional Coding of Sounds

Sounds on TikTok are not neutral; they are densely coded with emotional signals that structure how users interpret and respond to content. In the German TikTok sphere, emotional codes are often embedded in sonic texture, tempo, and tonal quality rather than explicit lyrical meaning. A slow, melancholic piano loop evokes introspection and sadness, while high-tempo electronic beats signal energy and playfulness. These sounds become affective templates that structure not only how a video is received but also how it is created. Youth creators in Germany often select sounds to frame their emotional expression, whether to signal heartbreak, joy, sarcasm, or existential boredom. These sounds offer a kind of emotional shorthand that simplifies complex feelings into performable cues. The popularity of themes like "soft sadness," "cozy night," or "weekend hype" illustrates how emotional genres are consolidated into auditory forms that youth can easily adopt and remix. The repetition of such emotionally coded sounds across different videos and users produces a shared emotional syntax, allowing for a kind of empathetic synchrony across linguistic and national boundaries. For youth negotiating the emotional turbulence of adolescence and early adulthood, these sounds offer not only expression but also recognition, functioning as

sonic affirmations of shared affective experience.

3.4 Cross-cultural Portability

The portability of sound across cultural contexts is a key feature of TikTok's transnational logic. In the German context, youth interact daily with sounds that originate from diverse regions, including South Korea, the United States, Brazil, and Turkey. The non-verbal or quasi-verbal nature of many TikTok sounds makes them particularly adaptable to cross-cultural use. Instrumental loops, rhythm patterns, or brief vocal hooks without intelligible lyrics can circulate freely without requiring translation, enabling participation from users with different linguistic backgrounds. This facilitates the formation of globally synchronous sound practices, where a German teenager might engage with a dance challenge using the same audio clip as peers in Tokyo or São Paulo. The platform's algorithm further reinforces this portability by promoting sounds that demonstrate high levels of user engagement across regions, creating a feedback loop in which transnationally popular sounds become even more visible. This cross-cultural portability enables German youth to participate in what might be termed an auditory cosmopolitanism, where global cultural fluency is expressed through sound adoption and remixing. At the same time, this process often involves cultural simplification or flattening, as complex cultural references are abstracted into digestible audio units. The portability of sound, then, is both an opportunity for connection and a site of negotiation over meaning, identity, and cultural representation.

4. Youth Media Rituals on TikTok

4.1 Repetition as Ritual Structure

Repetition is the foundational structure through which TikTok sounds gain ritualistic meaning in the lives of young users. In Germany, youth often engage in daily or weekly content creation practices that revolve around repeating specific sound templates. These may involve dance challenges, comic lip-syncs, or dramatizations of mundane experiences using trending audio. The repetitive nature of these performances is not merely algorithmically driven but also socially sustained; the very act of participating in a challenge involves recognizing a format, adhering to its constraints, and reproducing its core symbolic gestures. Over time, these repetitions stabilize into forms that carry

cultural weight. A sound originally associated with a dance in Los Angeles can, after weeks of circulation, become embedded in German youth culture as a humorous marker of school stress or weekend euphoria. This ritualized repetition transforms individual actions into collective practices, offering a sense of rhythm and order in the ever-scrolling landscape of digital media. Unlike traditional media rituals tied to scheduled events or institutions, TikTok rituals are constantly emergent and user-generated, yet they exhibit strong patterned behaviors that echo older forms of symbolic repetition. Repetition, in this context, is not only a method of engagement but also a mode of meaning-making that structures youth experience through sonic familiarity.

4.2 Embodied Participation

Embodied participation describes the way users physically interact with TikTok sounds, turning listening into movement and sound into gesture. German youth do not passively consume viral sounds; they embody them through coordinated dance routines, facial expressions, hand signs, and mimetic actions that render sound visible and spatial. The platform encourages this embodiment by integrating editing tools, filters, and real-time sound syncing features that reward precise physical alignment with audio cues. These bodily performances become highly ritualized over time, particularly when they involve globally recognized movements associated with specific sounds. Participating in a challenge often means learning a shared choreography, which is then reproduced, modified, and personalized in each new iteration. Through these embodied practices, sound is not merely heard but felt, enacted, and remembered through the body. In the German youth context, this kind of performative engagement offers an avenue for self-expression that blends digital aesthetics with physical discipline. It allows for visibility in the networked attention economy while also reinforcing shared cultural grammars. The body thus becomes a medium through which sound acquires meaning, and participation becomes a form of corporeal inscription in the digital ritual. The repetitive and public nature of these embodied acts transforms them into social rituals that mark belonging and creativity within both local and transnational youth communities.

4.3 Affective Synchronization

Affective synchronization refers to the collective emotional alignment facilitated by repeated use of specific sound clips across user communities. On German TikTok, this can be observed in the widespread use of sounds that carry strong emotional coding, such as melancholic melodies, ambient lo-fi beats, or dramatic monologues. These sounds often function as emotional templates that guide users in crafting videos around themes of loneliness, nostalgia, anxiety, or introspection. Youth scroll through countless iterations of the same sound being used to express subtly different experiences, creating a cumulative emotional atmosphere that transcends individual expression. This shared mood space fosters a sense of intimacy and co-presence, even among strangers. The ritual aspect emerges not only through repetition but through the patterned emotional responses that the sounds elicit. Users know what kind of affective engagement is expected with a given sound and respond accordingly, reinforcing communal feeling structures. In Germany, where emotional expression among youth is shaped by both local norms and global media influences, TikTok offers a new form of affective collectivity. These shared emotional rituals serve as a form of non-verbal communication, creating temporary communities of feeling that exist through sound. By participating in these moments of synchronization, youth tap into a transnational emotional field that both validates personal experience and connects it to a larger, platform-wide narrative.

4.4 Playlist-less Music Discovery

TikTok has fundamentally altered the process of music discovery, shifting it from a curated, list-based system to a ritualized encounter with sound driven by platform logic. German youth no longer rely primarily on playlists, radio charts, or album releases to find new music; instead, they engage in a scroll-based practice where discovery is contingent on repetition, attention, and emotional resonance. A user might stumble upon a song fragment while browsing and, after encountering it in multiple videos, begin to associate it with specific moods, movements, or cultural moments. This form of discovery is both serendipitous and structured, shaped by the algorithm but experienced as intuitive. The ritual here lies in the habitual action of scrolling, pausing, and entering what could be described as a sonic micro-world that each sound creates. The repeated encounter with

the same sound across diverse contexts encourages users to internalize its rhythm and emotional tone, effectively transforming casual listening into a form of media ritual. In the German context, this allows youth to encounter global sounds without actively searching for them, embedding them in daily routines and affective landscapes. The process becomes ritualized through its predictability and emotional rhythm, making music discovery not just a technical function but a meaningful cultural practice. The absence of traditional playlists is compensated by the emergent rituals of algorithmic co-presence, where sound is discovered not through intent but through repeated emotional contact.

5. Transnational Contexts of Youth Rituals

5.1 Globalized Sound Journeys

TikTok facilitates the rapid circulation of sounds across borders, enabling what can be described as globalized sound journeys. A track originating in the Philippines, a meme-sound from Chicago, or a Bollywood-inspired beat can appear on a German user's feed within hours of its viral takeoff. These sounds do not travel in isolation but are accompanied by performative templates that suggest how they should be used, interpreted, and re-enacted. Among German youth, this results in a form of co-presence where users across continents engage with the same sonic unit, often within similar performative genres such as lip-syncing or storytelling. The phenomenon of transnational co-listening chains emerges when thousands of users globally encounter and interact with a sound within a tightly compressed time frame, creating a shared auditory experience that transcends geography. German youth are not merely passive receivers in this chain; they actively contribute to it by producing their own interpretations, adding regional inflections, or modifying the sound for local memes. These sound journeys challenge traditional models of cultural diffusion by emphasizing speed, simultaneity, and user-driven adaptation. Through these processes, TikTok becomes a stage for sonic globalization, where the act of listening is inherently social, ritualized, and geographically distributed.

5.2 Cultural Hybridization

TikTok's global sound ecology creates fertile ground for cultural hybridization, where sounds from diverse linguistic and stylistic origins are

blended to create new, mixed-cultural forms. In Germany, such hybridization is particularly visible in the way youth interact with sounds that combine K-pop production aesthetics, Latin American reggaeton rhythms, and German-language captions or voiceovers. These sonic mashups are not mere entertainment; they are vehicles for constructing hybrid identities that reflect both global exposure and local rootedness. A TikTok video might feature a Korean chorus with a German punchline, performed through a dance style influenced by U.S. hip-hop. These combinations reflect the reality of a globally interconnected generation for whom cultural authenticity is less important than expressive fluidity. The hybrid nature of TikTok sounds allows German youth to experiment with identity through audio-visual collage, often in ways that challenge traditional notions of national or linguistic purity. This hybridization is not always symmetrical; some cultural forms dominate the soundscape while others appear in fragments. Yet the overall trend is one of constant recombination, where the boundaries between cultural categories are blurred and new forms of ritual expression emerge. Sound becomes the medium through which youth practice global belonging while articulating local sensibilities.

5.3 Platformized Global Youth Synchrony

One of the most striking outcomes of TikTok's sound infrastructure is the emergence of platformized synchrony, where youth around the world participate in the same auditory rituals within the same temporal frame. This form of synchronization is not coordinated by intention but orchestrated by algorithmic visibility and trend diffusion. A sound that begins trending in the morning in Seoul may reach Berlin by the afternoon, prompting thousands of users to create responses or adaptations by evening. This temporal alignment creates the conditions for globally shared ritual time, where youth experience emotional and performative alignment through the same auditory content. In Germany, young creators often express amazement at seeing how a sound they just discovered is being used simultaneously by users in different countries, highlighting a shared digital now that collapses geographic distance. This synchronous participation transforms TikTok into a platform for global ritual convergence, where the boundary between the personal and the

collective is suspended. Sound operates as a temporal bridge that allows users to feel connected in the same performative moment, producing a sense of being part of something larger than oneself. The speed and scope of this synchrony challenge traditional understandings of ritual as locally grounded and temporally fixed, replacing them with a model of constantly updating, globally distributed performance.

5.4 Negotiation of Cultural Identity

As TikTok sounds traverse borders and are adopted by youth in different national contexts, they become tools for negotiating cultural identity. In Germany, youth often use globally popular sounds to position themselves within a cosmopolitan aesthetic while simultaneously reasserting local or ethnic belonging. This negotiation is visible in the appropriation of trending English-language sounds paired with German dialect captions, or in the overlay of Turkish-German humor onto Latin American beats. These performances allow users to navigate the tension between being part of a global youth culture and maintaining distinct cultural reference points. For youth from migrant backgrounds, sound becomes a particularly potent medium through which to articulate dual or multiple identities. A user might engage with a sound that connects them to global popular culture while embedding references that speak to their diasporic heritage or community context. These acts are ritualistic in that they are repeated, socially visible, and emotionally charged. They provide a platform for identity experimentation and affirmation in an environment where cultural markers are often fluid and contingent. Through such negotiations, TikTok becomes not only a site of cultural convergence but also a dynamic field for identity work, where sound is the material through which selfhood is continually redefined.

6. Discussion

6.1 TikTok Sounds as Ritual Infrastructures

TikTok's sound architecture functions as more than an interactive feature; it serves as a ritual infrastructure through which global youth cultures structure their emotional routines, social participation, and cultural expressions. In the German context, sounds offer a blueprint for performance, establishing not only the aesthetic but also the temporal and emotional contours of participation. This infrastructure supports the

rapid emergence and stabilization of media rituals by offering pre-structured templates that can be easily replicated, recombined, and personalized. The ritual potential of TikTok sounds lies in their capacity to formalize behavior through repetition, align collective experiences through emotional cues, and embed symbolic meaning through performance. Youth do not merely encounter sounds; they inhabit them, allowing the sonic form to guide gestures, moods, and narrative framings. These infrastructures become the scaffolding through which users enter shared communicative zones, where each act of participation, although individualized, contributes to a broader, repetitive structure. Sound provides a spatialized temporality that users move through collectively, producing meaning not through isolated acts but through patterned cultural engagement. This system of ritual sound use reveals a deeper layer of media logic, in which platforms offer not only content but the very formats of cultural life.

6.2 Cultural Power of Platformized Sound

The circulation of sound on TikTok is governed by platform-specific dynamics that shape what becomes culturally meaningful, visible, and repeatable. The algorithm plays a decisive role in determining which sounds are amplified and which fade into obscurity, not based solely on aesthetic value but on quantifiable patterns of interaction. In Germany, as in other national contexts, youth creativity unfolds within this logic of visibility, where success is often tied to adopting trending sounds at the right moment, following the right template, and aligning with current platform moods. This algorithmic governance transforms sound into a mode of soft power through which platforms mediate cultural formation. The recommended sound clips, metadata tags, and remix features channel attention toward particular affective and performative registers, reinforcing dominant genres and marginalizing others. At the same time, users possess the capacity to reinterpret and subvert these structures. German youth creators often inject subcultural codes, local humor, or political critique into standardized sound formats, revealing a dialogical relationship between platform logic and user agency. Sound becomes the terrain on which this negotiation occurs, offering both a site of constraint and a space for rearticulation. The platform's cultural power operates not through

coercion but through the seductive rhythms of repeatable sound, which structure behavior while appearing to invite freedom.

6.3 Reimagining Music Discovery as Ritual Practice

TikTok reconfigures music discovery from a process of selection and listening to a practice of encounter, repetition, and performance. This shift represents a fundamental change in how youth in Germany relate to music, moving away from curated playlists or album-based listening toward ephemeral, immersive soundscapes embedded in everyday digital rituals. Discovery becomes a ritual not because of formal structures but because of the patterned, symbolic, and affective dimensions it acquires. Scrolling through TikTok and encountering a new sound involves more than auditory exposure; it initiates a process of emotional association, visual interpretation, and sometimes embodied performance. Over time, users come to anticipate these encounters, seek them out, and organize their emotional life around them. Music discovery is no longer about accumulating knowledge or taste but about entering a shared cultural moment. These moments are not passive but require users to decide how to respond, whether through imitation, parody, or reinvention. In this sense, TikTok produces not just music fans but ritual participants who co-construct musical meaning through practices that are both highly personal and deeply collective. Discovery is reframed as a mediated event that carries symbolic weight, offering users a repeated portal into aesthetic worlds that feel both spontaneous and structured.

6.4 Transnational Youth as Co-Creators

Youth across national boundaries, including those in Germany, participate in TikTok not merely as consumers of content but as co-creators of a globally resonant sonic culture. This co-creation occurs through the ritualized practices of sound use, in which young people interpret, remix, and reframe audio materials in locally meaningful ways while contributing to transnational flows. Each time a user in Berlin uses a trending sound from Seoul or São Paulo, they engage in an act of cultural translation, embedding that sound in new visual narratives, emotional contexts, and social meanings. These acts of remix are not isolated but accumulate into collective repertoires that define what it means to be part of a global youth culture

mediated through sound. Participation in these repertoires is both inclusive and stratified, shaped by access to technical tools, cultural fluency, and platform literacy. Yet despite these differences, the core ritual of co-creation remains a powerful mechanism for building shared symbolic worlds. TikTok sounds thus become the minimal denominator through which diverse users synchronize their creativity, producing a mediated cultural commons grounded not in linguistic or national identity but in the shared capacity to act within sound. In this process, youth become agents of cultural production who continuously reconstruct global sonic imaginaries from the bottom up.

7. Conclusion

This paper has examined how TikTok sounds function as ritual infrastructures that structure youth participation, cultural expression, and emotional synchronization in transnational contexts, with a focus on German youth culture. Through a combination of theoretical perspectives—media ritual theory, mediatization, global cultural flows, and platform studies—it has shown that short-form sounds on TikTok are not incidental background elements but central cultural units that organize meaningful, repeatable, and embodied social practices. The research demonstrated that sounds circulate across borders with remarkable speed and flexibility, facilitating affective alignment and performative co-presence among youth in vastly different cultural settings. In the German context, sounds are appropriated and reconfigured in ways that express hybrid identities, local affiliations, and global belonging. Youth use sound not only to perform emotions but also to locate themselves within complex cultural networks. These practices are deeply ritualistic, rooted in repetition, symbolic coding, and shared temporalities, transforming TikTok into a space where global and local cultures converge through the medium of sound.

This study contributes to the growing body of scholarship that seeks to reconceptualize media consumption as culturally embedded ritual practice. It expands the scope of music discovery by reframing it as a participatory process shaped by platform logic, emotional resonance, and social imitation. By foregrounding sound as the analytical entry point, the paper advances the understanding of TikTok not merely as a platform for entertainment but as a site of

affective labor, symbolic production, and identity negotiation. In particular, the concept of sound as a modular and portable ritual unit allows for new insights into how youth build continuity, community, and creativity in fast-paced, algorithmically governed environments. The German case enriches this analysis by illustrating how national and regional cultural elements are woven into globally circulating sound practices, resulting in layered and hybrid media rituals. The study thus positions TikTok sounds as cultural bridges that connect youth across linguistic, geographic, and social boundaries, enabling new modes of symbolic cohabitation in digital space.

The study's theoretical scope, while comprehensive, is limited by its reliance on platform-wide patterns rather than detailed ethnographic or content-based evidence. Although it captures general tendencies in sound use and cultural formation, it does not fully account for the diversity of experiences among different youth subgroups within Germany. Variations across class, gender, ethnicity, and regional background may significantly influence how sounds are interpreted, appropriated, or resisted. Additionally, the study focuses primarily on the cultural functions of sound while leaving aside the political, economic, and technological infrastructures that underlie platform governance. A deeper engagement with the political economy of algorithmic visibility, content moderation, and platform capitalism would provide a more critical understanding of the power relations embedded in these ritual practices.

Future research should seek to complement this theoretical framework with empirical methods such as digital ethnography, visual content analysis, and in-depth interviews with young creators in Germany and beyond. Particular attention should be paid to the ways in which gender, race, and class mediate access to cultural participation on TikTok, especially in the context of sound-related performance. Investigating the regional variability of sound reception and reinterpretation would also enrich the understanding of how global rituals are localized and hybridized. Another important direction lies in examining the political dimensions of sound rituals, such as their use in protest culture, identity resistance, or counter-hegemonic narratives. Exploring the

intersections between sound, embodiment, and algorithmic rhythm may yield further insights into how users internalize platform time through affective engagement. Such research would continue to illuminate the complex and dynamic role of sound in structuring the digital lives of a globally connected yet culturally fragmented generation.

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Literary Translation Creation from the Perspective of Domestication—A Practice Report on the Chinese Translation of James Joyce's *The Dead* (Excerpt)

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Abstract

Literary translation inherently involves the translator's subjectivity and the selection of cultural strategies, with domestication and foreignization being the two core approaches. Against the background of China's pursuit of more equitable cultural dissemination, this study focuses on the creative dimension of literary translation from the perspective of domestication. Taking excerpts from James Joyce's *The Dead* as the source text, the research integrates Vermeer's *Skopos Theory*, Schleiermacher's and Venuti's domestication theories, and Chinese theories such as Xu Yuanchong's *Three Beauties Theory*. It conducts a comparative analysis of two existing Chinese translations (by Wang Fengzhen and Wang Zhiliang) and presents the author's own translation practice. The study explores how to exert translator subjectivity and apply creative techniques under the framework of domestication to balance the original text's artistic value and the target readers' cultural adaptability. Research findings indicate that domestication, when guided by clear translation purposes, can effectively convey the emotional tension and cultural connotations of the source text. The study also reflects on limitations such as insufficient comparative cases and proposes directions for further improvement. This research aims to enrich the academic discourse on literary translation creativity and provide practical insights for promoting cross-cultural communication and Chinese cultural dissemination.

Keywords: literary translation creation, domestication, translator's subjectivity, *Skopos Theory*, *The Dead*, James Joyce

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Due to its inherent nature, literary translation inevitably involves the translator's subjectivity. As fundamental dimensions of literary translation, they often govern the ultimate effect

of the translated work in terms of linguistic nuances. The creativity in literary translations thus becomes an important discussion in literary translation. Akin to all types of translation, the process involves the deliberate selection of cultural strategies. Two strategies, namely domestication and foreignization, come to the

fore.

Domestic translation theories since the May Fourth Movement reveals a prevailing emphasis on coexistence, guiding translations towards achieving a state of “harmony”. Within this overarching framework, ensuring the translator’s subjectivity and fostering creativity in translations aligns aptly with domestication. It is within this academic context that the current research is undertaken.

1.2 Research Purpose and Significance

Academic attention towards the creation of literary translation remains relatively limited despite the diversity in global literary translation. Being the largest populous country and the second-largest economy globally, China’s cultural dissemination remains in a marginalized position, progressing towards a more equitable cultural context. The selected case for practice stems from *The Dead* by James Joyce, the greatest Irish writer of the 20th century and a pioneer in postcolonial literature. Corresponding Chinese translation analysis of his works provides a means to highlight the motif from both theoretical and practical perspectives.

This study centers on the crucial module of the creative aspect of contemporary literary translation. The research delves into the application of creativity in literary translation with domestication. The dual purposes are to contribute to the research landscape of this specific module and to facilitate breakthroughs in translation theory for the monumental task of introducing and disseminating Chinese culture.

2. Researches and Theories

2.1 Research Status Review

We conduct a comprehensive analysis of the literary translation history after the Qing Dynasty, concurrently assessing the current state of China-related literary translation research globally. Regardless of the diversity in nationalities and motifs, there is an increasing trend in the innovation of literary translation theories. Additionally, interdisciplinary research phenomena involving literary translation and Computer-Aided Translation (CAT), corpus translation, linguistics, law, psychology, and others are gaining prominence. These trends collectively indicate that China’s literary translation and research are currently in an ascendant process. However, the aesthetic value

of some classical translators and translations is being questioned. The development of literary translation criticism gives rise to numerous challenges.

Professor Yang Wuneng, a renowned Chinese translator of German literature, asserts in his paper *Reflections on Literary Translation Criticism* published in *Chinese Translation* in May (Ma Huijuan, 2013), “Since the reform and opening up, we have witnessed a considerable number of renowned literary works and translations. However, scholars of translation criticism are rarely esteemed.” Translation critics align their practice with research, while the “reclusive” type of translation critics prefer to remain isolated within the realm of literary translation. It often results in outstanding translations sinking into oblivion along with the translator’s anonymity, exemplified by works such as Professor Xu Jun’s *Literary Translation Criticism* and Mr. Qian Zhongshu’s *Lin Shu’s Translation*. Xie Tianzhen and Zha Mingjian, in their collaborative work *A History of Foreign Literature Translation in 20th Century China*, divide this history into three phases: 1898–1949, 1949–1976, and 1977–today. Through analysis, the authors attempt to elucidate the development of each phase from perspectives such as cultural context and manipulation. For instance, political-based restrictions of literary genres after 1949 experienced a revival after 1977.

As for Chinese literature translation, Australian sinologist Bonnie Macdougall (2011:5) outlines four modes of Chinese literary translation: academic mode, commercial mode, political mode, and personal mode (Yang Wuneng, 2023). Her analysis suggests that the latter two modes, involving routine international publishing, have gradually become the mainstream models, which requires multiple number of renowned translators. Howard Goldblatt, American sinologist and world-famous translator, encompasses all four modes. He points out that many English readers are not solely drawn to Chinese literature for its literary charm but as a window to understand China.

James Joyce, author of the selected source text in this research, is normally referred within the stream of consciousness literature. From 1949 to 1978, translation and study of this subject was restricted for the representative expression of the decadent bourgeois culture, leading to its suppression in translation. It flourished, however, following the reform and opening up.

Joyce's works by Shanghai Translation Publishing House went through multiple editions, with Xiao Qian, Jin Di, and Wang Zhiliang being the most representative translators.

Overall, the Chinese translation of classic foreign literature reached a critical point by the early 2000s, while related translation criticism lags behind (Xu Yuanchong, 2016). The Chinese literature translation is still in the early stage, with researchers inheriting ancient approaches but facing a quantifiable shortage.

2.2 Theoretical Review

The adoption of translation theories determines the academic degree of this research. Here are the translation theories to be adopted during the research. Hans Vermeer, German translation theorist, introduced *Skopos Theory* during the 1960s and 1970s. "Skopos Rule" governing translation activities determines translation strategies, methods, and techniques. Following this principle, the source language holds not a central position but an open entity providing information to the translator.

The standpoint of translation creation involves highlighting the translator's subjectivity while dealing with the relationships between the source text and the translated text, the source language and the target language, and the author and the translator, where domestication and foreignization are adopted. Domestication is defined in translation studies as a translation strategy in which a transparent, fluent style is adopted in order to minimize the strangeness of the foreign text for the target language reader (Venuti, 1995:15), i.e., it assimilates texts to target linguistic and cultural values. The source of this thought derives from Schleiermacher, who states that the such a translation "leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him" (Venuti, 1995: 19–20; Huijun & Sun Zhili, 2006). In actual fact, the strategy of domestication "brings the reader to the author"; it is the case "when the text is accommodated to the reader". Subsequently, Andre Lefevere, spokesman of the "translation studies" school, advocates for the application of domestication. In his *Translation, Rewriting, and Manipulation of Literary Fame*, Lefevere argued that translation is a form of rewriting, inevitably constrained by ideological factors like poetics. As the manipulators, translators should pay more attention to translation purposes and

target text functions other than the author or source text.

In China, the rise of domestication is exemplified by Fu Lei's *Resemblance Theory*, Qian Zhongshu's *Transformation Theory*, and Xu Yuanchong's *Three Beauties Theory*. In 2016, Xu Yuanchong proposed the development of distinctive Chinese literary translation theories, emphasizing literary translation theory as part of translation philosophies. In literary translation, translators' subjectivity is imperative for purposes to better serve domestic readers (Shen Fuying, 2020).

3. Case Analysis and Practice

3.1 James Joyce and *The Dead*

As one of the three forerunners of modernism along with Franz Kafka and Marcel Proust, James Joyce is widely acknowledged as the greatest Irish writer. He frequently employs the stream of consciousness, using his unique voice to narrate the hidden corners of the human psyche. Growing up in a fragmented nation perennially struggling on the edge of independence, Joyce is also the best spokesman of postcolonial literature (Carmen Millán-Varela, 2004).

Such desire is ubiquitous in his creation including *The Dead*. *The Dead* symbolizes the "moral petrification of all the Dubliners who appeared throughout the pages of the book". We read of Joyce's intention to write a moral history of his country, and his choice of Dublin because it represented the centre of what "paralysis" means (Mary T. Reynolds, 1999).

Joyce's book carries a message to which readers can respond in all ages and in all parts of the world, as it express fundamental truths about human beings. Through their stories, Joyce shows the sad futility of war and violence, the sorrowful picture of the Irish people living under colonial domination, and, above all, the sad condition of men and women when they are eaten up by envy and jealousy and anger. Yet Joyce creates comedy to carry this message, and he leaves the reader with the possibility of hope for the future. The world by his portrayal is utterly different from that of Homer, Shakespeare, and Dante, but the human spirit continues and survives. His description of translation method as accurate, slow, and fastidious seems to be an exact description of approach to the Chinese translation. His goal, as Jin Di has written, was to produce as nearly as

possible the closest approximation to the author's total effect—not just a word-for-word equivalent, but the full sense of the author's words in the original context (Nigora Negmatova, 2022).

3.2 Comparative Analysis of Two Translations

Evident from the comprehensive review above of the aforementioned literature theories is that “translation creation” has increasingly become a research focus for translators at home and abroad. The three principles of translation creation—namely, of harmonious coexistence, of artistic equivalence, and of the translator's subjectivity and its limitations—stand out in balancing domestication and foreignization in terms of translation. Therefore, it is imperative to conduct a comparative analysis of preceding translations. The last two paragraphs from *The Dead* are excerpted as source text. Two parallel Chinese translations are selected for an in-depth case study. Translation A is translated by Wang Fengzhen from the 2012 edition of *Dubliners* by Shanghai Translation Publishing House; Translation B is translated by late translator Wang Zhiliang (1928–2023) from the 1984 edition.

Translation A: 大量的泪水充溢着加布里埃尔的眼睛。他从未觉得自己对任何女人有那样的感情，但他知道，这样一种感情一定是爱情。(Wang Fengzhen, 2012:131)

Translation B: 泪水大量地涌进加布里埃尔的眼睛。他自己从来不曾对任何一个女人有过那样的感情，然而他知道，这种感情一定是爱。(Wang Zhiliang, 1984:260)

The first sentence adheres to the expression of the source language. Both “generous” uses adjective to emphasize strength, while “feel oneself towards” employs a copula-verb structure with an adverb, presenting a static scene. In conjunction with the preceding context, the more static the expression, the better it can convey the emotional tension. Translation A imitates the original text by using “generous” as an adjective and releasing the tension through the term “充溢”; Translation B breaks the static structure by directly translating as “pouring in large quantities.” As for the expressive effect, Translation A maintains the static sense of the original text under foreignization; Translation B directly releases the emotional tension through the predicate under domestication.

Translation A: 它飘落下来，厚厚地堆积在歪斜的十字架和墓碑上，堆积在小门一根根栅栏的尖顶

上，堆积在光秃秃的荆棘丛上。他听着雪花隐隐约约地飘落，慢慢地睡着了，雪花穿过宇宙轻轻地落下，就像他们的结局似的，落到所有生者和死者身上。(Wang Fengzhen, 2012:132)

Translation B: 它纷纷飘落，厚厚积压在歪歪斜斜的十字架上和墓石上，落在一扇扇小墓门的尖顶上，落在荒芜的荆棘丛中。他的灵魂缓缓地昏睡了，当他听着雪花微微地穿过宇宙在飘落，微微地，如同他们最终的结局那样，飘落到所有的生者和死者身上。(Wang Zhiliang, 1984:260)

According to the Joycean “epiphany”, the finale sentences represent the manifestation of such realization. A comparison between Translation A and Translation B reveals that the adoption of domestication and foreignization is not absolute but rather flexibly employed based on the translator's intention and layout, as demonstrated in *Skopos Theory* within the creativity of translation and the translator's subjectivity. Considering the *Skopos Theory*, translators manipulate the final effect of the translation based on the “Skopos Principle”. Besides, by the end of the translation, the distinct styles of the two translators are evident, eliminating the need to emphasize the highlighting of subjectivity.

The final sentence is the most evocative section in *The Dead*. Through the original text analysis, both Translation A and Translation B remain largely consistent, attempting to restore the charm of Joyce's language. However, in the initial part, Translation A employs a technique by reversing the order of the two sentences. The ultimate effect not only meets the conventions of the target language but alters the emotional tone of its first half. The preceding analysis provides an assessment of the effectiveness of the two translations, and the subsequent section will be presented by the author, accompanied by an analysis.

3.3 Translation Practice and Analysis

恍然间，加布列尔眼间盈满泪水。自己从未被其他女人这样触动，但他很清楚这触动便是爱。泪水越积越满，或明或暗间，他仿佛看见一颗湿漉漉的树，底下站着位年轻人。其他身影愈靠愈近，自己的灵魂则愈行愈远，向着那片亡灵国度慢慢靠过去。亡灵们时隐时现，他感知得到，却难以触及。接着，他自己也越来越模糊，逐渐融进一个灰暗虚无的世界里。这里曾坚不可摧，无数亡灵在此繁衍生息。此时却正在一点点瓦解，最终消逝。

玻璃上传来几声轻击，他转向窗户这边：雪又下起来了。他睡眼惺忪，眼前银色黑色的雪花迎着灯光斜落而下。该出发西行了。报纸上写的不错：整个

爱尔兰都在下雪。雪落在阴郁中部平原的每片土地，又落在光秃秃的山丘，然后轻轻落进艾伦沼泽，再向西，最终轻轻落进香农河汹涌的黑浪中。山丘上孤寂的教堂墓地一片白茫茫，里面长眠着迈克尔·富里。大雪随风滑落，积在歪斜的十字架和墓碑上，堆在小门的尖顶上，落在荒芜的荆棘丛中。在他灵魂昏睡之时，大雪正穿过宇宙，落向每一个死者，也落向每一个生者，指向他们的结局。

In accordance with the motif of this research report, my translation is grounded in the creativity of the translation and the translator's subjectivity, primarily drawing upon Veemer's *Skopos Theory* and domestication of Schleiermacher and Venuti. Adhering to the cultural context of domestication, I directly embody the emotional tension in the term “盈满” in this sentence. Besides emotion, it strives to maintain the modality present in the original text. For the second sentence, I employ amplification, breaking down the sentence and subsequently altering the perspective of the first half. “Dripping” as a gerund transformed into an adjective is generally translated to its dynamic sense. However, considering the preceding context, I translate “dripping” as “湿漉漉”, capturing both a dynamic sensation and a suppressed emotional feel. This insertion reflects my own interpretation, showcasing the subjectivity of the translator based on the purpose of translation.

For the third sentence, “where dwells...” is translated as “亡灵国度” to adhere to the conventions of the target language, reflecting the creative equivalence principle in translation. To achieve a similar artistic expression, the predicate is nominalized, with the term “亡灵国度” in the target language still exuding foreignization. In the second paragraph, the third sentence from the end similarly involves a shift in the perspective of the source text during translation to avoid imbalance in sentence structure.

In the final two sentences, the three prepositions “on” in the original text are translated environmentally and emotionally as “堆” and “落”. Amplification technique is also adopted in the last sentence. Upon completing the translation, it occurred to me that the creativity of the translation and the translator's subjectivity can be achieved through a wide range of translation techniques. Particularly, when a translator develops a specific translation style, it's needless to pursue subjectivity, but rather rethinking the adoption of harmonious

coexistence. This might be a modest gain from this practice.

4. Reflection and Summary

4.1 Reflection on Translation Process and Result

This research practice can be broadly divided into six stages: the selection of theoretical perspectives, the collection and reading of literature, the selection and excerpting of the source text, the selection of translated cases, the conduct of translation practice, and the analysis of translations. The most challenging aspects relatively throughout the entire process were the selection of theoretical perspectives and analyzing translations. In terms of integrating theories with practice, the endeavor yielded certain valuable insights. Three personal reflections, however, are still to be improved. Firstly, the limited comparative case translations hindered the formation of more comprehensive analysis. Secondly, haste was observed in analyzing previous translations, leaving room for exploration in specific details. Thirdly, when citing theoretical support for practice, it would be beneficial to incorporate one's own translation for parallel analysis, thus rendering the translation practice more valuable.

Throughout this research practice, I have upgraded my understanding of how the creativity of the translation and the translator's subjectivity are manifested in translation. However, it's important to note that while the translation represents a static outcome, the process of practice is dynamic and constantly evolving. Attempting to solidify translation thinking based on a single translated work is not advisable, nor is it appropriate to detach translation reflection from practical application. Both aspects should be intertwined and considered together.

4.2 Summary of Translation Insights and Experience

Fundamentally, culture is exposed behind techniques, methods, and strategies in terms of translation, giving rise to the concept of “cultural untranslatability”. Even between two closely related cultures, there exist numerous unthinkable aspects. For instance, *The Dead* was authored by Joyce, who lived in early 20th-century Ireland, seeking independence and liberation. As Chinese readers and translators, we volunteer to have better access to Joyce's context within postcolonial Irish literature. Yet, there remain more cultural symbols inherent to Irish post-colonialism undecipherable to us

upon analyzing *Dubliners* or *Ulysses*. However, the closing sentence of *The Dead* has resonated with countless readers worldwide, indicating the enduring influence of culture. A translator who uses a cultural approach is simply recognizing that each language contains elements which are derived from its culture that every text is anchored in a specific culture, and that conventions of text production and reception vary from culture to culture (Zsuzsanna Ajtony, 2017).

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Politeness Adaptation in Email vs. Enterprise Messaging Apps in Chinese Workplaces

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Abstract

Digital communication in Chinese workplaces increasingly requires employees to navigate multiple platforms that differ sharply in interactional rhythm, formality expectations, and affordances. Among these, email and enterprise messaging apps such as DingTalk and WeCom have become the two dominant channels through which professional communication unfolds. This study examines how Chinese employees adapt politeness strategies across these platforms, shaped by long-standing socio-cultural norms—including hierarchy, face concerns, and relational attunement—and by the functional and technological constraints of each medium. Drawing on theories of pragmatics, platform affordances, and Chinese workplace discourse, the analysis identifies systematic differences between email politeness practices—characterized by extended mitigation, hierarchical alignment, and conventionalized structural markers—and messaging app interactions, which rely on brevity, multimodal cues, and a conversational tone.

By integrating case-based examples with documented trends in Chinese organizational communication, the study outlines the contextual factors that guide politeness adaptation, including task urgency, power distance, organizational culture, and generational communication preferences. Misalignments in politeness strategies can produce unintended pragmatic effects, ranging from perceived bluntness to excessive formality, with implications for teamwork, authority negotiation, and workplace rapport. The paper proposes a multi-dimensional framework for politeness adaptation that synthesizes cultural norms, platform-specific expectations, situational demands, and individual pragmatic competence. This framework provides a foundation for developing organizational communication guidelines and enhancing employees' digital communication literacy in the evolving Chinese workplace.

Keywords: politeness strategies, digital communication, Chinese workplace discourse, email pragmatics, enterprise messaging apps, DingTalk, WeCom, platform affordances

1. Introduction

Digital communication has become a central component of contemporary workplace interaction in China, where rapid organizational

modernization coincides with longstanding sociocultural expectations surrounding hierarchy, relational harmony, and face management. While traditional Chinese professional communication places considerable

emphasis on deference, indirectness, and formulaic politeness, the shift from paper-based correspondence to electronic communication has created new environments in which these norms are negotiated. Email and enterprise messaging applications such as DingTalk and WeCom now structure everyday workplace exchanges, yet they promote markedly different communicative rhythms and forms of expression. This divergence has produced new patterns of politeness adaptation that reflect both technological affordances and culturally embedded interactional expectations.

Email retains its status as a formal, institutionally oriented channel in many Chinese organizations. Its conventional structure, slower pace, and archival nature align well with hierarchical norms and the preference for carefully framed requests or evaluations. In contrast, enterprise messaging systems have transformed workplace communication through real-time notifications, mobile-first usage, and multimodal expression. By 2023, DingTalk reported over 600 million registered users, and WeCom reached more than 10 million enterprise clients, illustrating how deeply these platforms have penetrated Chinese professional environments. Their widespread adoption has normalized concise messaging, reduced reliance on elaborate honorific expressions, and encouraged more conversational tones, even between individuals of unequal status.

These technological shifts intersect with evolving demographics and workplace cultures. Younger employees, especially those born after 1995, show greater comfort with rapid, informal exchanges, while senior staff continue to value structured politeness as a marker of professionalism. The result is a blended communicative landscape in which workers must constantly assess how much politeness to express, how much formality to maintain, and how to avoid misinterpretation when switching between platforms. Although politeness is a pervasive aspect of Chinese communication, its manifestation is no longer uniform across channels. The presence of emoji, stickers, read receipts, typing indicators, and mobile interface constraints introduces new dynamics that complicate traditional facework strategies.

Understanding politeness adaptation across email and enterprise messaging apps is therefore essential for analyzing how Chinese employees navigate authority, relational

alignment, and task management in digitally mediated contexts. Because miscalibrated politeness can lead to misunderstandings of tone, perceived disrespect, or reduced communicative efficiency, a systematic examination of these patterns provides valuable insights into both linguistic practice and organizational behavior. This paper investigates how communicative norms shift across platforms, what factors guide employees' choices, and how these adaptations reflect broader transformations in China's digital workplace culture.

2. Communicative Characteristics of Email and Messaging Platforms

Email and enterprise messaging applications occupy distinct communicative spaces in Chinese workplaces, shaped by their technological affordances and institutional functions. These platforms influence how employees frame requests, express alignment, manage hierarchy, and perform politeness. Understanding their structural and pragmatic differences is essential for analyzing how politeness strategies shift across channels.

Email is characterized by a relatively slow and linear communication rhythm. Messages are typically drafted on desktop interfaces, promoting longer sentences, complete structures, and clear formatting conventions. Openings and closings tend to follow recognizable formulae, such as “您好” or “此致敬礼”, which reflect hierarchical expectations and serve as markers of workplace propriety. The archival nature of email encourages careful wording because messages can be forwarded, stored, and revisited during evaluations or conflict resolution. Surveys conducted by Zhaopin.com in 2022 indicate that over 70% of Chinese employees still view email as the most appropriate channel for tasks involving documentation, formal reporting, or communication with senior leadership. These expectations reinforce a communication style that values explicitness, deliberate politeness, and measured tone.

Enterprise messaging platforms such as DingTalk and WeCom operate in a different interactional environment. Their mobile-first design promotes immediacy, fragmented messaging, and conversational flow. Real-time notifications create expectations of prompt responses, and messages often appear as short

bursts rather than extended paragraphs. The multimodal affordances of these platforms—emoji, stickers, GIFs, voice messages, and quick reactions—enable users to soften directives or signal relational warmth without lengthy linguistic framing. Company-wide surveys published by the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology (CAICT) in 2023 show that approximately 85% of employees rely on enterprise messaging apps for day-to-day coordination, and many report feeling pressure to remain reachable outside formal working hours. These conditions shift the texture of workplace politeness, encouraging efficiency-oriented brevity while embedding interpersonal nuances into visual and auditory cues.

Email generally supports a top-down communication model, whereas messaging apps blur hierarchical boundaries. Managers often use messaging platforms to issue rapid instructions that bypass the formality of email, while junior employees may respond using short confirmations or emoji-based acknowledgments. The absence of elaborate framing does not indicate impoliteness; instead, it reflects the platform's norm of task-centered interaction. At the same time, messaging apps can amplify misinterpretation because elliptical expressions, rapid exchanges, or missing politeness markers may be perceived as inattentive or abrupt, especially by employees accustomed to more formal modes of communication.

The contrasting affordances of these two platforms create complex expectations for employees navigating both systems. Email rewards careful editing and formal politeness, while messaging apps encourage directness supported by paralinguistic cues. The coexistence of these channels in Chinese organizations produces a communicative duality that requires workers to continually assess context, audience, and task demands when adapting their politeness strategies. These platform-specific characteristics provide the structural foundation for examining how politeness is enacted, modified, and negotiated across workplace communication settings.

3. Politeness Practices in Chinese Workplace Email

Politeness in Chinese workplace email is closely

linked to hierarchical norms, face management expectations, and the formal nature of written professional communication. Because email interactions are recordable and often subject to internal circulation, writers tend to adopt cautious, elaborated, and ritualized linguistic strategies to maintain relational harmony and protect both parties' face. These strategies manifest through honorific phrasing, indirect requests, mitigated criticism, face-saving refusals, and formulaic closings that reinforce organizational culture.

A defining feature of Chinese workplace email is the use of honorific openings that frame the interaction as respectful and hierarchical. Employees commonly begin with deferential salutations such as “尊敬的王经理，您好”，signaling recognition of the superior's authority. This creates a polite relational frame even before the substantive message begins. For example:

Ex.1: “尊敬的王经理，您好：打扰您了，我们已完成预算初稿。想请您在方便时帮忙看一下。”

English explanation:

The opening combines an honorific title with an apologetic softener (“sorry to bother you”), which reduces imposition and reinforces hierarchical deference. The modalized request (“when it is convenient for you”) expresses negative politeness by minimizing the burden placed on the manager.

Indirectness is equally central to email politeness. Employees frequently soften directives through conditional or tentative phrasing, especially in horizontal or cross-departmental communication. A typical coordination request illustrates this tendency:

Ex.2: “若您这边方便的话，能否协助提供 Q4 的活跃度指标？时间上本周五前即可。”

English explanation:

The conditional structure (“if it is convenient for you”) signals respect for the recipient's autonomy, while the relaxed deadline reflects an effort to avoid face-threatening pressure. This mitigated request aligns with broader Chinese cultural preferences for indirectness in professional settings.

Politeness also shapes how employees address errors or discrepancies, particularly when communicating upward. Direct criticism is generally avoided; instead, employees rely on hedging and collaborative framing. When noticing inconsistencies in a supervisor's

document, an employee might write:

Ex.3: “部分数值可能与之前的数据不完全一致。是否需要我再核对一次？”

English explanation:

The hedge “可能” (“may/might”) softens the assertion, and the offer to assist frames the issue as a shared task rather than attributing blame. This strategy protects the superior’s positive face and maintains hierarchical harmony.

Hierarchy further influences the amount of detail included in email communication. Employees often provide extensive background information, justifications, or anticipatory clarifications when addressing superiors, demonstrating diligence and respect. Data from a 2021 workplace survey by 51Job shows that employees spend significantly more time composing upward emails compared to peer-level messages, indicating that formality and elaboration are integral components of perceived politeness.

Face-saving strategies also appear when declining or deferring requests. Instead of issuing a direct refusal, writers often reframe constraints as scheduling or workload issues. For example:

Ex.4: “目前团队正在处理既定上线包，若保持现有排期，预计最快下周三完成。如您有优先级调整，我们也愿意配合。”

English explanation:

The refusal is softened by attributing the limitation to existing workflows rather than unwillingness. Offering to “coordinate if priorities change” signals cooperation, preserving both parties’ positive face and reinforcing workplace harmony.

Timeliness also functions as a politeness practice. Quick acknowledgements such as:

Ex.5: “已收到，我会尽快处理。”

English explanation:

A prompt, concise confirmation demonstrates professionalism and attentiveness. Survey results from CIGC (2022) indicate that 63% of Chinese employees interpret delayed email responses as impolite or disrespectful, making timely communication a relational expectation in email-based interactions.

Beyond individual strategies, organizational norms shape email politeness through expected formulaic expressions. Closings such as “辛苦您

了”，“感谢支持”，or “如有不当之处还请批评指正” perform humility and respect while reinforcing collective identity. These ritualized expressions function as relational buffers, softening transactional content and aligning personal communication with institutional values.

4. Politeness Patterns in Enterprise Messaging Apps

Enterprise messaging apps such as DingTalk, WeCom, and Feishu introduce a distinct politeness environment shaped by immediacy, conversational flow, and multimodal interaction. Unlike email—where formality, structural organization, and ritualized openings dominate—messaging platforms invite brevity, rapid turn-taking, and the use of paralinguistic cues such as emoji, softening particles, and reaction icons. These affordances shift how Chinese employees express politeness, negotiate hierarchy, and manage face.

A defining feature of messaging-app politeness is the acceptance of short, efficient turns as polite in themselves. In routine coordination, messages such as “好的我处理” (“Okay, I’ll take care of it”) are considered sufficiently respectful within the platform’s fast-paced rhythm. This brevity does not diminish politeness; instead, it indexes responsiveness and cooperation within a high-tempo digital environment.

Ex.6: “好的我处理。”

English explanation:

A compact confirmation is interpreted as polite because the platform values immediacy and task alignment rather than elaborate formal phrasing.

Multimodal cues further soften directives and sustain relational warmth. Emoji and sentence-final particles such as “哈”，“呀” or the tilde “~” help adjust tone in the absence of extended verbal politeness markers. These features allow users to manage face through affective nuance rather than syntactic complexity.

Ex.7: “这个表格麻烦今天更新一下哈。”

English explanation:

The softening particle “哈” and the smile emoji reduce the imposition of the request, mitigating its directive force and conveying friendliness.

Politeness also manifests in interaction pacing. Because messaging apps create expectations of rapid response—documented in CAICT’s 2023

survey where over 80% of employees reported feeling pressure to reply within minutes—employees often send interim responses to signal attentiveness when immediate task completion is not feasible. These brief acknowledgments function as relational maintenance moves in a communication environment where silence may be interpreted as inattentiveness.

Ex.8: “稍等我看一下，马上回您。”

English explanation:

This message manages expectations by signaling attention and commitment, functioning as a politeness strategy that prevents misunderstanding in a rapid-exchange platform.

Hierarchy remains relevant in messaging contexts, but its expression becomes more subtle. Employees addressing superiors may still use respectful address terms—“王经理”—and avoid overly casual markers. Yet directives often become more direct in wording because platform norms prioritize efficiency. Compared with email, the politeness system becomes more distributed across multiple short turns rather than encoded in a single elaborated message. Affirmations, sticker responses, and post-task appreciation often appear in subsequent exchanges rather than in formal closings.

While messaging apps reduce linguistic formality, they introduce new risks of misinterpretation. Generational differences in emoji use, particle tone, or response timing can result in perceived abruptness or insufficient respect. For example, a single-character reply such as “嗯” (“mm”) may appear neutral to younger users but curt to senior staff. Thus, politeness in messaging apps depends on shared platform literacy and sensitivity to relational dynamics.

5. Conditions Influencing Politeness Adaptation Across Platforms

Politeness adaptation between email and enterprise messaging apps in Chinese workplaces is shaped by a constellation of contextual and social conditions. Workers navigate multiple variables—task urgency, hierarchical distance, organizational communication culture, generational preferences, and mobile-first interaction habits—leading to distinct politeness strategies across platforms. These factors influence not

only linguistic choices but also pacing, modality selection, and expectations for responsiveness.

Task urgency plays a critical role in determining the level of politeness elaboration. Email is preferred for tasks requiring documentation, formal justification, or extended reasoning, which encourages more elaborate politeness forms including honorific openings, mitigated requests, and ritualized closings. When tasks require rapid coordination or immediate operational responses, messaging apps become the default. In these contexts, politeness is achieved through speed and clarity rather than linguistic elaboration. For instance, a same-day technical issue or scheduling update is more likely to appear on DingTalk or WeCom, where a succinct message such as “好的我马上处理” is considered more polite than sending a full email. The platform itself therefore shapes expectations for how much politeness can or should be encoded linguistically.

Hierarchy continues to influence politeness adaptation, but its expression varies across platforms. In email, hierarchical distance is strongly marked through titles, deferential openings, and elaborate mitigation. In messaging apps, hierarchy is present but less explicitly foregrounded, often expressed through tone rather than structure. Employees may still address superiors with “王经理” or avoid overly casual particles, yet they also adopt shorter turns and direct task-oriented phrasing to conform to the platform’s norms. This blending of deference and efficiency produces a hybrid politeness style unique to Chinese digital workplaces. CAICT’s 2023 report notes that over 60% of employees feel that messaging platforms make communication with superiors “less intimidating,” suggesting that platform affordances soften hierarchical rigidity while not eliminating it entirely.

Organizational culture further shapes politeness adaptation. Companies with traditional bureaucratic structures may implicitly encourage more formal language even in messaging apps, whereas tech firms or creative industries often normalize casual, emoji-rich communication. In some workplaces, employees report being corrected for using overly informal expressions with senior staff on WeCom, while in others, managers routinely communicate with casual markers such as “哈” or “~”. These organizational differences influence how employees calibrate politeness and determine

whether to prioritize relational harmony, efficiency, or institutional expectations.

Generational variation also contributes significantly to politeness differences across platforms. Younger employees, particularly those born after 1995, tend to interpret emoji, stickers, and softening particles as legitimate politeness resources. Older employees, however, may interpret the same cues as overly informal or insufficiently respectful. A study conducted by Renmin University (2022) found that younger workers rated emoji-based softening as more polite than text-only mitigation, whereas older workers expressed preference for fuller sentence forms. As a result, adaptation across platforms requires sensitivity not only to technological affordances but also to the demographic composition of workplace participants.

Mobile-first communication habits shape message length, tone, and pacing across platforms. Because messaging apps are frequently used on smartphones, users produce shorter fragments, rely more on voice notes, and respond more quickly. Email, still largely composed on desktops, encourages longer turns and more structured reasoning. These device-based habits influence politeness strategies: mobile messaging favors immediacy as a politeness gesture, while email favors clarity and completeness. The technological context thus directly shapes how linguistic politeness is performed.

These conditions reveal that politeness adaptation across platforms in Chinese workplaces is not merely a matter of choosing between “formal” or “informal” styles. Instead, it reflects a dynamic and context-dependent negotiation shaped by task demands, organizational expectations, hierarchical relations, generational norms, and mobile communication practices. As workers navigate these layered conditions, they continuously recalibrate politeness to fit the communicative logic of each platform, demonstrating the fluidity and situational nature of contemporary digital workplace discourse.

6. Pragmatic Effects of Platform-Driven Politeness Variation

The coexistence of email and enterprise messaging apps in Chinese workplaces produces a complex communication ecology in which politeness varies not only by linguistic choice but also by platform-specific affordances.

These variations carry significant pragmatic consequences, influencing how messages are interpreted, how relationships are negotiated, and how authority and cooperation are enacted within organizations. As workers shift between platforms with different expectations for formality, immediacy, and relational display, misunderstandings and pragmatic mismatches become more likely.

One pragmatic effect of platform-driven variation is the potential for tone misinterpretation. In email, politeness is overtly encoded through elaborate openings, mitigated expressions, and formulaic closings. When employees accustomed to email formality encounter the brevity of messaging apps, they may perceive short responses as abrupt or insufficiently respectful. For example, a one-word acknowledgment such as “收到” (“noted”) is pragmatically appropriate in DingTalk but may appear curt when transferred into email communication. Conversely, an overly formal message in a rapid-fire messaging thread may be interpreted as distancing or passive-resistant behavior because it disrupts the expected tempo of interaction. These contrasting norms illustrate how politeness evaluations are platform-contingent rather than universally shared.

Hierarchy magnifies these risks. While messaging apps reduce the visibility of status markers, they do not eliminate hierarchical expectations. A senior manager may intend a task directive to sound neutral, yet the lack of mitigation or greeting in a short message might be read by subordinates as overly terse. Meanwhile, junior employees who adopt casual messaging styles may inadvertently cross politeness boundaries, particularly when interacting with older managers who associate politeness with syntactic elaboration rather than visual softeners such as emoji. CAICT’s 2023 report notes that over 40% of intergenerational workplace conflicts stem from divergent interpretations of digital communication tone, highlighting the pragmatic fragility of platform-mediated politeness.

Another pragmatic effect concerns relational alignment. In messaging apps, politeness is often co-constructed through sequential exchanges—acknowledgments, emoji reactions, and follow-up affirmations—rather than encoded in a single turn. Because politeness is distributed across interactional sequences,

missing elements in the chain can be interpreted as relational disengagement. For instance, a manager who issues a request in DingTalk may expect a quick acknowledgment as a politeness move; failure to provide one may be perceived as inattentiveness even if the task is being completed. In this way, platform norms influence not only linguistic form but also relational expectations regarding response timing and interaction structure.

Politeness variation also affects perceptions of organizational identity and professionalism. Email's formality signals institutional seriousness and procedural legitimacy, making it the preferred channel for reporting, documentation, and communication with external partners. Messaging apps, by contrast, are associated with agility and teamwork, reinforcing organizational cultures that prioritize efficiency and informality. When employees misalign their politeness strategies with institutional norms—such as using overly casual messaging with clients or overly formal email within an agile team—the mismatch may be interpreted as a lack of professionalism or cultural fit. These interpretations emerge from the pragmatic interplay between linguistic style, platform expectations, and organizational values.

Platform-driven politeness variation further influences power negotiation. Messaging apps can subtly redistribute authority by enabling more frequent and low-stakes interaction between hierarchical levels. However, this informality may blur boundaries in ways that create discomfort or ambiguity. Managers may perceive reduced formality as a loss of status cues, while junior employees may struggle to judge when brief messages are appropriate and when more explicit politeness work is required. These uncertainties can produce pragmatic tension, particularly in organizations that are undergoing digital transformation without formal communication guidelines.

Finally, politeness mismatches may impact team cohesion. When employees draw different conclusions about tone, intention, or effort based on platform norms, trust and rapport may suffer. Miscommunication arising from politeness variation—such as perceived coldness in messaging apps or perceived rigidity in email—can escalate into larger interpersonal or departmental misunderstandings. Because Chinese workplace interaction is highly

relational and face-sensitive, such pragmatic disruptions can have outsized effects on cooperation and workflow.

7. Platform-Specific Challenges and Strategic Responses

The coexistence of email and enterprise messaging apps in Chinese workplaces presents distinctive communicative challenges that arise from the structural differences between the two platforms. These challenges affect how politeness is interpreted, how tasks are coordinated, and how employees navigate relational expectations. Because each platform encourages a different linguistic and interactional style, workers often face difficulties adapting their politeness strategies appropriately, leading to inefficiencies, misunderstandings, or unintended face-threatening effects. Identifying these platform-specific challenges and developing strategic responses is therefore essential for maintaining professional clarity and harmonious workplace relations.

Email poses challenges primarily related to over-formality and the cognitive load created by its structural conventions. The expectation to follow formal schemata—including salutations, honorific references, contextual framing, and extended closings—can slow communication, especially when dealing with routine matters. Employees may feel compelled to produce excessively elaborate messages even when the content requires only a straightforward update or simple request. This over-investment in formality may also create relational distance, particularly in organizations where collaboration is high-frequency and task cycles are short. Moreover, email's slower rhythm increases the risk of timing misalignment; long delays between turns may be perceived as disinterest or lack of cooperation. For younger employees accustomed to rapid digital communication, learning to modulate tone and formality within email conventions becomes a significant pragmatic challenge.

Messaging apps, by contrast, introduce challenges associated with brevity, immediacy, and multimodal cue interpretation. The pressure to respond quickly—reinforced by notifications and mobile-first usage—can lead to unintended bluntness when employees produce minimal or fragmented responses. Short expressions such as “嗯” or “收到” may be pragmatically sufficient

within the platform's norms but can be interpreted as perfunctory or dismissive by recipients with different expectations for politeness. Additionally, multimodal resources such as emoji or stickers, while helpful for softening tone, carry ambiguous meanings across generational and organizational lines. What younger employees consider warm or collaborative may appear unprofessional to senior staff, and the absence of such cues may be interpreted by younger employees as emotional coldness. Messaging apps therefore heighten awareness of how tone is distributed across both linguistic and visual signals.

Another challenge arises from the blurred boundaries between work and personal time. Because messaging apps are often used on smartphones, employees may feel obligated to respond outside official working hours. CAICT's 2023 survey reports that over 55% of Chinese employees experience “持续在线压力” (continuous availability pressure) due to workplace messaging. This pressure can alter politeness expectations: delayed responses may unintentionally signal disrespect, while immediate responses after work hours may set unsustainable precedents for communication norms. These tensions highlight the platform's capacity to reshape politeness not merely as a linguistic act but as a temporal and emotional negotiation.

Strategic responses must therefore address both linguistic practice and organizational structure. For email, adopting concise yet respectful templates can help reduce unnecessary formality while maintaining professional tone. Organizations may encourage clearer subject lines, modular formatting, and selectively applied honorifics to ensure that politeness does not impede efficiency. For messaging apps, establishing shared norms about expected response times, appropriate emoji usage, and boundaries between work hours and personal time can reduce ambiguity. Training programs or internal communication guidelines can help employees understand how to use brief confirmations, softening particles, or visual cues without compromising professionalism.

At an interpersonal level, workers can adopt adaptive strategies such as mirroring a superior's or colleague's tone to maintain relational alignment. When communicating across generations or departments, providing slightly fuller responses or adding minimal

softening elements may help prevent misinterpretation. Similarly, the use of transitional statements—such as indicating when one will follow up with a more detailed email—can bridge the pragmatic differences between platforms and reinforce politeness expectations in hybrid communication flows.

Ultimately, these platform-specific challenges reveal that politeness in Chinese digital workplaces requires continuous negotiation across multiple communicative environments. Effective adaptation depends not only on individual linguistic choices but also on collective awareness of how each platform structures interaction. Strategic responses that balance clarity, efficiency, and relational sensitivity can help organizations maintain coherence and reduce friction in an increasingly multimodal communication landscape.

8. A Framework for Politeness Adaptation in Chinese Digital Communication

A coherent framework for understanding politeness adaptation across email and enterprise messaging apps in Chinese workplaces must account for the interaction between cultural norms, platform affordances, organizational expectations, and individual communicative competence. Because Chinese professional communication is fundamentally shaped by hierarchy, face concerns, relational attunement, and situational appropriateness (得体性), politeness emerges not as a fixed linguistic property but as a dynamic process of adjusting tone, style, and interactional rhythm in response to contextual cues. The growth of digital communication technologies in the workplace has intensified this adaptive process by introducing platform-specific constraints and expanding the range of possible pragmatic expressions. A synthesized framework must therefore integrate these multiple dimensions to guide workers toward contextually aligned and culturally coherent communication practices.

At the cultural level, the framework recognizes that politeness in Chinese workplaces continues to operate within a system of relational hierarchy and face sensitivity. Deference to superiors, cautious mitigation of disagreement, and attentiveness to relational harmony underpin communication norms regardless of platform. Politeness adaptation thus involves preserving these cultural expectations while adjusting the linguistic means used to express

them. In email, hierarchical alignment is maintained through formal salutations, honorific phrasing, and expanded contextualization, whereas in messaging apps, it may be achieved through slight elaboration of short turns, softened expressions, or selective use of emoji that convey warmth without crossing professional boundaries.

At the platform level, the framework highlights the need to calibrate politeness strategies according to the communication mode's structural properties. Email's slower rhythm and textual density call for fuller explanations, complete syntactic structures, and explicit politeness markers. Messaging apps, in contrast, reward immediacy, informality, and multimodal expression, requiring users to adopt concise but relationally sensitive forms. Politeness adaptation therefore involves switching between these modes with agility, understanding when to expand, when to condense, and when to supplement language with visual cues to preserve tone.

Organizational culture forms a third essential dimension. Different companies—especially those in tech, finance, state-owned enterprises, or creative industries—hold distinct expectations regarding linguistic decorum, response time, and communication style. A national survey by Zhilian Zhaopin (2023) indicates that over 60% of Chinese employees believe their organization's communication norms significantly influence how polite or direct they can be in digital exchanges. Within this framework, politeness adaptation requires employees to read organizational cues, mirror collective practices, and adjust tone in line with implicit expectations. Organizations, in turn, can support smoother adaptation by establishing communication guidelines that clarify norms around formality, multimodality, and temporal expectations.

A fourth dimension concerns situational factors, including urgency, task complexity, audience composition, and relational distance. High-urgency tasks on messaging apps may justify minimal politeness marking to optimize efficiency, whereas cross-departmental collaboration or conflict-sensitive discussions may require enhanced politeness signaling even in fast-paced channels. Similarly, communicating with senior staff may call for more elaborated forms, while exchanges among peers may sustain a lighter, more conversational

style. The framework suggests that users evaluate each situation through three key questions: *What is the task requirement? Who is the recipient? Which platform best supports both efficiency and relational appropriateness?*

Finally, the framework incorporates an individual competence dimension, emphasizing the role of pragmatic awareness and metacommunicative sensitivity. Workers must learn to interpret subtle cues—such as the tone implied by a brief confirmation, the function of an emoji, or the degree of contextualization needed—and adjust their politeness strategies accordingly. This competence includes knowing when cross-platform signaling is appropriate, such as using messaging apps for quick coordination followed by a formal email summarizing decisions. Training programs that increase awareness of cross-platform pragmatics can strengthen organizational communication and reduce misunderstandings rooted in tone misalignment.

Synthesizing these cultural, platform, organizational, situational, and individual dimensions, the framework positions politeness adaptation as a flexible, context-dependent process rather than a fixed etiquette. It encourages calibrated communication choices that preserve relational harmony without sacrificing efficiency. By understanding the distinct affordances of email and messaging apps and the cultural meanings attached to politeness in Chinese professional life, workers can engage in communicative practices that support clarity, respect, and collaboration across digital platforms.

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Reconstructing the Power Structure of Visual Communication in the Platform Era: Re-examining Content Production Mechanisms Amid the Rise of AIGC

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Abstract

As platformization becomes the dominant structure shaping global digital ecosystems, the domain of visual communication is entering a phase of extensive structural reconfiguration. This study argues that the rise of AI-generated content (AIGC) does not merely revolutionize creative workflows but exposes and intensifies long-standing tensions between algorithmic governance, creator autonomy, and platform-centered visibility structures. Building upon theories of media affordances, platform governance, and visual cultural politics, this paper presents a comprehensive and expanded framework—aimed at understanding how AIGC reshapes cultural production, reorganizes symbolic power, and transforms meaning-making processes in the platform era.

Keywords: AIGC, platformization, visual culture, algorithmic governance, media affordances, digital power

1. Introduction: From Technological Waves to Platform Power Visibility

In the past decade, discussions about digital transformation have overwhelmingly emphasized technological waves such as big data, cloud computing, and artificial intelligence. However, the deeper structural force reshaping global communication ecosystems has been platformization, which determines how information flows, how attention is distributed, and how cultural value is assigned. The emergence of AIGC reveals these hidden structures by making visible the mechanisms through which platforms influence

not only the circulation of content but also its very production conditions. This paragraph further elaborates the conceptual implications of platform-driven visual ecosystems, highlighting how power, visibility, and cultural production converge in the AIGC era.

AIGC enters a media environment already governed by platform logic, in which algorithms shape what becomes visible, what gains traction, and what fades into obscurity. Visual communication, particularly in short-video and image-driven ecosystems, functions as the primary arena where these structures manifest. Its dependence on algorithmic recommendation

systems means that any technological shift—especially one capable of generating content at scale—will inevitably reconfigure power relations within the communication ecology. This paragraph further elaborates the conceptual implications of platform-driven visual ecosystems, highlighting how power, visibility, and cultural production converge in the AIGC era.

Within this context, creators face increasing pressure to align with platform incentives. Their ability to express stylistic individuality becomes constrained by algorithmic preferences that reward predictability, emotional intensity, and fast-paced visual styles. AIGC intensifies this pressure by automating aesthetic norms derived from platform-trained datasets, thereby embedding platform logic directly into the generative process. This paragraph further elaborates the conceptual implications of platform-driven visual ecosystems, highlighting how power, visibility, and cultural production converge in the AIGC era.

Media affordance theory offers a lens for understanding how AIGC serves as both an enabling and constraining force. Its generative capabilities expand creative possibility while simultaneously narrowing stylistic diversity by relying on historically successful patterns. Platform governance frameworks further reveal how algorithmic policies determine which forms of cultural participation receive visibility and which become marginalized. This paragraph further elaborates the conceptual implications of platform-driven visual ecosystems, highlighting how power, visibility, and cultural production converge in the AIGC era.

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As AIGC content floods digital ecosystems, platforms gain heightened power to curate,

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2. Theoretical Foundations: Media Affordances, Platform Governance, and Visual Cultural Politics

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3. Structural Transformation of Visual Content Production

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4. Algorithmic Visibility Power and Multi-Layered Discipline

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5. AIGC as a Platform Power Amplifier

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6. Political Dimensions of Platformized Visual Culture

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content supply intensifies competition for visibility, making platform-regulated exposure the most valuable resource in visual communication. This shift further centralizes power, strengthening the role of platforms as cultural gatekeepers. This paragraph further elaborates the conceptual implications of platform-driven visual ecosystems, highlighting how power, visibility, and cultural production converge in the AIGC era.

Algorithmic visibility power operates on multiple dimensions: content discipline, creator discipline, and audience discipline. Content is shaped toward forms that maximize engagement metrics. Creators adapt their behavior to fit algorithmic expectations. Audiences, in turn, develop attention patterns sculpted by platform-driven recommendations. AIGC reinforces each of these layers by aligning generative outputs with historical engagement data. This paragraph further elaborates the conceptual implications of platform-driven visual ecosystems, highlighting how power, visibility, and cultural production converge in the AIGC era.

The political implications of this transformation extend beyond aesthetics. AIGC participates in shaping cultural memory, symbolic representation, and identity politics. Training datasets often reproduce societal biases, which become naturalized through algorithmic amplification. As platforms distribute AIGC content globally, these biases risk becoming embedded in transnational flows of visual culture. This paragraph further elaborates the conceptual implications of platform-driven visual ecosystems, highlighting how power, visibility, and cultural production converge in the AIGC era.

A more subtle yet equally consequential aspect of AIGC is its role in restructuring labor relations in digital creative economies. As generative tools automate image creation, illustration, editing, and animation tasks, human creators experience shifting expectations regarding originality, efficiency, and style conformity. This raises urgent questions about the future of creative labor and cultural authorship. This paragraph further elaborates the conceptual implications of platform-driven visual ecosystems, highlighting how power, visibility, and cultural production converge in the AIGC era.

The recursive nature of data feedback loops—which integrate viewer behavior, algorithmic ranking results, and model training inputs—establishes a self-reinforcing cycle that privileges dominant visual forms. Over time, this dynamic shapes not only what is seen but what is imaginable within platformized environments. Understanding this cycle is essential for evaluating the cultural consequences of AIGC. This paragraph further elaborates the conceptual implications of platform-driven visual ecosystems, highlighting how power, visibility, and cultural production converge in the AIGC era.

7. Conclusion and Research Outlook

AIGC provides a structural lens through which to observe platform power consolidation. This article identifies three forms of structural platform power: visibility power, disciplinary power, and interpretative power. Meaning-making shifts from a creator-centered model to a platform-centered model. Future research may explore algorithmic aesthetics and cultural diversity, regional variations in platform power, de-creatorized visual culture, and how AIGC transforms cross-cultural communication patterns.

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