

# The Relationship Between Folk Words and History and Culture in Guanzhong Region of Shaanxi Province

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**Abstract**—Prehistoric period and historical period are divided on the basis of whether there are language records. Language, especially regional folk language, is the best living fossil to carry the local history. Words are indispensable part of a language. Therefore, folk words are of great importance that they can carry and inherit historical culture and highlight its historical and cultural characteristics. Taking Dali County in Guanzhong Region of Shaanxi Province as an example, this paper studies the reflection of its folk words on history and culture.

**Keywords**—Dali County; folk words; history and culture

## I. INTRODUCTION

China is a country with a vast territory and a long history, many folk words with distinct regional characteristics exist in different region, Guanzhong Region of Shaanxi Province is of no exception. As the intersection of social language and folklore, the study of folk language and words is to use linguistic methods to study folk words in dialect. Directly speaking, the local folk words are actually the characteristic words of the local dialect. Many factors, such as historical and cultural background, geographical location, religious beliefs, customs and habits, will influence the formation of folk words. Folk words are very rich in categories, including not only folklore classified words, but also kinship terms, names, place names, incantations and so on. In addition, folk songs, folk stories and popular folk words also belong to the category of folk words. The record and inheritance of regional history and culture are supported by these folk words. Therefore, the study of these words is beneficial for the recording and restoring of historical facts and culture inheritance.

## II. THE THEORETICAL BASIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FOLK WORDS AND HISTORY AND CULTURE

### A. Folk Language Is a Tool for Bearing and Inheriting History and Culture

Words play an important role in people's cognition and processing of affairs. Residents in different regions live according to their own way of thinking, different folk words, different tools of thinking, and different cognition activities

and ways of dealing with affairs, and thus different spiritual life, culture and consciousness are constructed by different folk words. Therefore, folk words are a kind of thinking tool. The history and culture of a region are survived and spread depending on folk words. If we lose folk words, the whole region will lose its own way of thinking and eventually face the risk of assimilation.

### B. Folk Words Can Fully and Profoundly Show the Characteristics of History and Culture

Folk words are the symbolic system of the combination of sound and meaning. When people use folk words, they first determine the symbol of the combination of sound and meaning locally. In the process of symbol determination, the arbitrariness of folk words is manifested obviously, while in the process of using folk words, its customary formation has a greater impact. Local residents must abide by the content stipulated in the symbolic system of folk words, and form the habit of recognizing local people, things and objects in accordance with a unified way of thinking. However, different folk words have different rules of pronunciation, semantics and grammar, which will lead people to follow different ways of thinking in their recognition of people, things and objects in different regions. Therefore, folk words are the symbolic system to express regional concepts. The national characteristics and historical cultures embodied in the same thing are different according to different concepts.

### C. Folk Words Are More Stable in the History and Culture

Folk words are the symbolic system of combining sound and meaning, which is established by regional conventions and abided by local residents. At the same time, they are also the most important tool for people to communicate. Sudden changes in phonetics and semantics are bound to affect the communicative functions of words. However, due to the constraints of grammatical rules, there is little possibility of changes in phonetics and semantics. Folk words are not unchanged. They are gradually changing from complex to simple. Compared with other elements that represent the history and culture of the region, they are relatively stable and change slowly.

### III. DALI DIALECT FOLK WORDS AND THE HISTORY AND CULTURE

Mr. Luo Changpei believes that linguistic research must not be confined to the data of language itself, but should expand the scope of research, establish the relationship between linguistic phenomena and other social phenomena and consciousness, give full play to the functions of language, and explain the principles of linguistics. Therefore, whether it is the study of dialect or history, the study of folk words in dialect is indispensable. Different regions have different social and geographical environments, and the customs and habits formed are different, which will produce different folk words. The study of folk words is a key to the regional history and culture. The folk words of different regions can not only reflect the local history and culture of different times, but also reflect the differences of history and culture in different regions. The evolution of folk words reflects the evolution of local history and culture, but at the same time, they can also play a role in solidifying the local history and culture. On the contrary, the study of history and culture can further expand the study of folk words.

With the advancement of history, many folk customs have changed, some ancient national customs have gradually disappeared, but the existence of folk words can retain them in a certain sense, people can explore the unique regional history and culture from folk words. As for the history, culture and customs of Guanzhong region, the most widely known may be the "Ten Great Strange Things in Guanzhong", "noodles are like trousers bags, pot helmet is like pot cover, pepper is a dish, big pickled bowls are sold, bowls and basins are difficult to separate, Papa is worn, half of the house is covered, girls are not going outside, do not sit down but squat up, sing songs like roaring", representing and summarizing the history, culture and customs of the region from the aspects of food, use, shelter, wear, travel, entertainment, etc.

#### A. Marriage Words

Marriage has a long history since the ancient times. In the traditional history and culture of our country, marriage rites and customs occupy an important position. Since the Zhou Dynasty, we have paid attention to the procedures of nacai, wenming, naji, nazheng, qingqi and qinying. Marriage etiquette and custom are the sum of a series of marriage criteria, behaviors and concepts. In feudal society, parents' orders and matchmaker's words were emphasized. Men and women had no right of speech in life-long affairs. Many ceremonies were held for the purpose of determining the marriage relationship between men and women. In the process of social progress and development, some bad marriage habits have disappeared in our country, which have been replaced by many new marriage customs, but there are still some words of the original marriage customs that have been retained and used. The following is an analysis of the local marriage customs by taking some unique words of Dali as examples.

1) *Engagement*: In Dali, Shaanxi Province, men and women need to go through many procedures before they get married. Folk words mainly include "hebazi", "huantie", "dingrizi" and so on. Dali County retains the ancient custom of

counting eight characters and birthdays. Before getting married, eight characters of men and women need to be counted to see whether they are compatible, and also to crack the ill-matched elements between the two people. This is called "hebazi". This custom has received special attention among the elderly in many rural areas. There is a saying in Dali that men will be wealthy if they married with women three years older than them. In ancient times, hebazi is called "buji", which needed to be counted with the Zodiac symbol and the date of birth. At present, there are still saying that men and women cannot get married if they are incompatible in the eight characters, and superstition still exists. If the two people are coincide with each other, the man needs to be led by a matchmaker to the woman's home to "change cards", the time should be set at noon, with clothes, soap, onions, Aicao, etc., onions imply cleverness, Aicao means more and more affectionate, and then women need to return with rice, flour, pens, notebooks and so on. When changing cards, both sides need to write their birthdays in red letters, commonly known as "Dragon and Phoenix cards". This procedure is very exquisite in Dali, similar to the ancient "three mei and six zheng". If men and women fall in love freely and have not been introduced by a matchmaker, they also need to invite an old man to play the role of matchmaker to show the formality and solemnity of the marriage when changing their cards. After changing the cards, the two sides need to determine the date of marriage, that is, "dingrizi". The man's family will count a lucky day and write on red paper to send to the woman's home, and send "dingli" at the same time. In ancient times, men usually gave clothes and money. Nowadays, the main local gifts are "three gold things and one silver thing", that are gold bracelets, gold necklaces, gold earrings and money. The number of money should be lucky, and the specific number is usually agreed by both sides.

2) *Wedding*: The local marriage process in Dali has many ceremonies. Folk words mainly include "jiaolian", "zhuangxiang", "songqin" and "huimen", etc. According to Dali's custom, women need to "jiaolian" after wearing their wedding clothes, also called "kailian", mainly moving back and forth on their faces with two thin threads. Those who do not "jiaolian" are "unmarried", still girls, and those who have "jiaolian" are "married". At present, the custom is gradually fading away, and even has disappeared in some areas, replaced by modern cosmetics. On the night before the marriage, the aunts and sisters-in-law will use the bride's dowry box to pack the clothes and other clothes sent by relatives and friends, and put a red envelope on the box to bring the happiness of the bride's family to her husband's home, which is "zhuangxiang". Nowadays, the meaning of zhuangxiang has also changed, and the amount of money packed has become the representation of the bride's importance. When the bride is married, brothers and uncles need to "songqin". In the past, the bride was usually sent by her grandparents, uncles and ordinary generations, and some assistants would accompany them to carry the dowry, including washbasin shelves, bedding, and bicycles and so on.

With the improvement of people's quality of life, dowry items are now replaced by cars, air conditioning and so on. The etiquette of "huimen" has continued from ancient times to the present, called "guining" in ancient times. It refers to the return of a woman to her mother's home after her marriage. Dali women need to return to their mother's home after three days of the wedding, but cannot live in their mother's home, reflecting the historical and cultural saying that "the room cannot be empty for three days".

According to the above folk words, we can see that Dali local marriage custom still retains some of the ancient traditional culture, and the marriage procedure has not changed much since ancient times. In the process of the continuous social development, some new changes have taken place in marriage customs, some feudal bad customs have begun to disappear, and marriage procedures have tended to be simplified, but in any case, they are all symbols of people's yearning for a better life, even with some feudal superstitions. In addition, in the process of the continuous simplification and disappearance of some customs, some folk words reflecting historical folklore no longer exist, and the sense of history and culture is weakened and diluted.

#### *B. Funeral Words*

Since the ancient times, funeral has always been a major event, reflecting the filial piety culture in China. There are a series of funeral procedures in the countryside of Dali County, thus forming a unique funeral culture words, mainly including "daixiao", "laoyi", and "dapapa", etc. After the death of the old people in the family, their children and grandchildren need to "daixiao", and the filial piety cloth they wear are different in length. In the past, people wore filial piety cloth made of linen, but in recent years it was replaced by white cloth. Usually, sons, grandchildren and granddaughters need to wear long filial piety clothes, while grandchildren, uncles and nephews need to wear short filial piety clothes. "Laoyi", or shrouds, are the clothes worn by the dead people made by the children when the old man is still alive. There is a saying in Dali that "sewing laoyi in leap month", which implies "long time". After the death of the old man, the children and grandchildren will take out the clothes they have prepared before and put them on. There are also a series of steps. They should first wash his body and comb his hair, and then wear the laoyi. The number of laoyi should be singular and the number of underclothes should be less than that of jackets. After that, the old man's face was covered with white cloth, which meant not to be nostalgic for the living world. In Dali folk, "dapapa" also known as "songdeng", which refers to light some straw along the funeral route, and light lights at all corners, meaning that the old man's way to the hell is dark, and his children light some lights for him, hoping that he will not be afraid.

Similarly, the changes of the times and the development of society have changed the funeral customs to a certain extent. Some of them have evolved into new forms and some are dying out, but as a whole, most of them have been preserved completely. As one of the most important customs in Dali, funeral custom has formed unique funeral words by people's inheritance and oral transmission, which well expresses people's respect for the deceased and yearning for them.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Words are one of the important elements of language. In the study of language folklore, the most important content is folk words. Words are empirical and carry rich historical and cultural information and connotation. The unique material environment, social structure and spiritual beliefs of a nation can be expressed through the unique words. Therefore, the study and interpretation of folk words as living fossils of historical and cultural preservation, understanding their social and cultural connotations, is conducive to the accurate mastery of language and cultural information, so as to make better research and inheritance of regional history and culture.

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