

On the Evolution and Cultural Connotation of the Appellations for Foreign Places from the Perspective of Chinese-Characterized English Textbooks in the Late Qing Dynasty

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Abstract:

The appellations of foreign places witness great changes in the late Qing Dynasty, owing to people's different views on history, geography, economy, culture and national consciousness at that time. The study on the appellations of foreign places listed in the Chinese-characterized English textbooks compiled in the late Qing Dynasty reveals that Chinese people applied names to foreign places mainly according to their senses of vision, audition, meaning and a combination of sound and meaning, which highlights Chinese people's transformed views on cross-cultural communicative consciousness and competence.

Keywords:

Appellation of Foreign Place, Chinese-Characterized English Textbook, Way of Designation, Cross-Cultural Communication, Transformed View

1. Introduction

The Chinese-characterized English textbooks, in which the Chinese characters were used to transcribe the pronunciation of English words, originated from the linguistic and cultural contact between China and English-speaking nations. As a result of commercial necessity, the C-C-E textbooks mainly include vocabularies and conversations used in trading. The so-far found earliest C-C-E textbook was named *English Dictionary with Chinese Translation*, compiled around 1750s. [1] For quite a long time in the Qing Dynasty, the Chinese government adopted the "closed-door policy", that is, seclusion from international intercourse, and Canton had been the only international trading port between 1757 and 1842, thus the C-C-E textbooks were widely used around Canton. After the Opium War (1840-1842), Chinese government signed the Treaty of Nanjing with the Great Britain and was forced to open up to the western nations. As a result, Canton, Hong Kong as well as Shanghai became very

important international trading ports and English was thus a commonly-used language of commerce. For the ordinary people, those who could speak a bit of English would be able to get a job for living at the ports. For the government officials, those who were enlightened realized the importance of the mastery of foreign languages, regarded it as “the ladder of all western learning” and advocated English learning. The first government-owned school of western learning, named Tongwen Guan, or School of Combined Learning, was established in 1862, from which many C-C-E textbooks were compiled to meet the needs of English learning for Chinese people. Due to necessity of commerce, the appellations of foreign places were listed in most of the C-C-E textbooks, with the Chinese translations and their English pronunciations indicated in Chinese characters.

The study of the appellations of foreign places helps to gain a better understanding of how Chinese people got to know and disseminate knowledge of foreign nations. By analyzing the cultural connotations of the Chinese translations for the appellations of foreign nations and places, people get a clear idea of Chinese people’s transformed views on cross-cultural communicative consciousness and competence as well as the international exchange between China and western nations.

2. The Appellations of Foreign Places Included in the C-C-E Textbooks in the Late Qing Dynasty

Researches show that the C-C-E textbooks mushroomed in the late Qing Dynasty, most of whose titles could be found in gazettes, magazines, documents, bibliographies or other literary data nowadays. In 1837, it was mentioned by Samuel Wells Williams, the founder of the Chinese Repository, the existence of manuscript vocabularies entitled *Hungmaou mae mae tung yung kwei hwa* or *those words of the devilish language of the red-bristled people commonly used in buying and selling*, which was usually employed by the Chinese in learning to speak English.[2] Those manuscript vocabularies were frequently seen in the hands of interpreters (or so called linguists at that time), compradores (or local agents of a foreign business house) and even coolies(such as porters), and which each individual formed as his circumstances required. Some of them attained a very respectable size, containing upwards of three thousand words and phrases, and were valuable to those who wished to learn the modes employed by natives in expressing foreign objects. The following are some of the C-C-E textbooks compiled in the late Qing Dynasty, in which the appellations of frequently-contacted nations or places were recorded as an important part of teaching contents.

Table 1. *Relevant Information of the C-C-E Textbooks in the Late Qing Dynasty.*

No.	Titles of the Books	Date of Issue	Num. of listed foreign places	Authors
1	Chinese and English Vocabulary	1843	20	Robert Thom
2	Kwung-Zhao English Vocabulary	1840s	48	Null
3	Chinese and English Phrase Book	1855	26	Tse Hing
4	English Translated into Chinese	1860	31	Fong Tse Fang
5	Chinese and English Phrase Book	1860	30	Chun TseTeng
6	The Chinese and English Instructor	1862	32	T’ong TingKü
7	Tones of the Mandarin Dialect Given in English and Chinese	1865	23	SauMangYian
8	A Guide to Foreign Commerce	1875	38	Tam Tat Hin
9	The English and Chinese Dictionary	1875	18	Tan Yanchang

10	Textbooks for Foreign Speakers	1879	49	Yang Xun
11	An English and Chinese Dictionary	1881	50	Kwong Ki Chiu
12	English Made Easy	1904	38	Mok Man Cheung
13	An English and Chinese Standard Dictionary	1908	30	W. W. Yen

The appellations of foreign nations or places included in the above mentioned books are listed in the following, with their designations used in China nowadays as well as in the course of history.

Table 2. *Comparative Appellations of Foreign Places at Present and in the C-C-E Textbooks in the Late Qing Dynasty.*

Foreign Places	Chinese Equivalences	Different Chinese-characterized Appellations
Africa	Fei zhou	Ah fri li chia; Ah fee li ka
America	Mei zhou	Ah mei lei ka; Hua chi kwoh; Fah Keh kwoh or nation of flowery flag
Arabia	A la bo	Ah la poh kwoh; A lah pah kwoh
Argentina	A gen tin	Ah ting kwoh
Asia	Ya zhou	Ah sae ah kwoh
Austria	Ao di li	Shwang ying kwoh or nation of two eagles; Yat er man
Australia	Ao da li ya	Sun kum san or New gold mountain; Ngao Tah leih ah kwoh
Batavia	Ba da wei ya	Kou la pa; Ka la pa
Bavaria	Ba fa li ya	Pa wa lei ah kwoh
Belgium	Bi li shi	Bae chih ying; Bae chih ying kwoh; Bae lei ts'en kwoh
Bolivia	Bo li wei ya	Po lei hwa kwoh
Beluchis	?	Pei lu chih kwoh
Bengal	Meng jia la	Mung Ka la
Burma	Mian dian	Burmah
Bombay	Meng mai	Kang ts'iao; Mang mae; Mung Ka la; Mung mae; Uang mae
Bornio	?	Man loi
Brazil	Ba xi	P'i leih sin kwoh
Bugis	?	Mou kei si
Calcutta	Jia er ge da	Kalicutta
California	Jia li fu ni ya	Kau kum san or the old gold mountain
Celebes	?	Si li pi si
Colombia	Ge lun bi ya	Kwoh lun pei ah kwoh
Denmark	Dan mai	Ta nee kwoh; Tai nae kwoh; Tian kwoh; Hwang ke kwoh or nation of yellow flag; Ta tian kwoh
Egypt	Ai ji	Mai Sae kwoh
Europe	Ou zhou	Ta sae Yiong or great western ocean; Ou luo pa kwoh
Fiji Islands	Fei ji dao	Fei chi ai lan si
France	Fa guo	Fah lan si; Fah lan si Yia; Fah lan si kwoh; Fa lahn sai Kwoh; Fa lahn sai; Tai Fat kwoh or the Empire of France
Germany	De guo	Gih rh man kwoh; Jar mun ni kwoh; Yeh er man kwoh; Ta De Kwoh or the German Empire
Goa	Guo a	Siu sae yiong or small western ocean
Greece	Xi la	Shi leh kwoh; He lih kwoh
Hayti	Hai di	Hah ti kwoh
Hamburg	Han bao	Haam pu
India	Yin du	Hin doo stan; Yin too kwoh; Yun too kwoh; Tian Tuh kwoh; Shen du kwoh; Siu Sae Yiong or small western ocean
Ireland	Ai er lan	Ai lan
Italy	Yi da li	I ta li or Luoma; Ita; I-ta-ly; Italy kwoh
Japan	Ri ben	Yih pan kwoh; Yat poon; Tung yeung or eastern ocean
Java	Zhao wa	Ts'a wa

Kanagowa	Heng Bin	Wang pun
Corea	Gao li	Kau li kwok; Ko lae Kwoh
Lisbon	Li si ben	Sae yeung kwok king sing or the capital of Portugal
Loochoo	Liu qiu	Laukau; lew-kew; Loochu; lew-chew
Luconia	?	Liu gao ni yah; Luson kwoh
Lubeck	?	Lu beh
London	Lun dun	Ying kwoh king sing or the capital of England
Madras	Ma de la si	Ma ti la sy; Ma ta la sa; Mah tah lai sah
Manila	Ma ni la	Luzon; Lu sung; Lüsung
Malacca	Ma liu jia	Ma liu ka; Ma la ca; Ma liu ca
Malaysia	Ma lai xi ya	Malay; Ma lai; Ma lai fow or the port of Ma lai
Mexico	Mo xi ge	Mae sae ko
Mongol	Meng gu	Mang kuoo; Mung Koo
Nagasaki	Chang qi	Cheung Ki
Netherlands/ Holland	He lan	Hung Maou kwoh or Red-bristled nation; Ho lain kwoh; Ho lahn kwoh; Netherlands; Tai Ho lahn kwoh
New York	Niu Yue	Fah ki tai fow or the great port of Hwake
Norway	Nuo Wei	Na hwa kwoh; No wah kwoh
North America	Bei mei zhou	Pah Ah Mei lih ka; Pah hwake or north nation of flowery flag
Oldenburg	?	Aou Tian Pah
Padang	Ba dong	Pa dang
Paris	Ba li	Fah lahn sae king sing
Penang	Bin lang yu	Sin fow; Pinang or Pulu
Perssia	Bo si	Bo si kwoh; Pah tou kwoh or white-headed nation
Peru	Bi lu	Pih lu kwoh
Port Phillip	Fei li pu gang	Sin chin shain fow; Sun kum san fow or the port of new gold mountain
Portugal	Pu tao ya	Si yiang or westen ocean; Sae yeong kwoh or nation of western nation; Ta Sae yeong kwoh or great nation of western nation; Pou tou ya kwoh
Prussia	Pu lu shi	Dan ying kwoh or the single- eagle-flag nation; Po lu sae kwoh; Ta pau kwoh
Rome	Luo ma	Lo ma kwoh
Russia	E lu si	Ngo lo sy kwoh or Muscovy; E lo sy kwoh; Ngo lo see kwoh; Ta Ngo lo see kwoh or the great empire of Russia
San Francisco	Jiu jin shan	Kau kum san tai fow or the great port of old gold mountain
Sardinia	Sa ding dao	Sah tian yah kwoh
Scotland	Su ge lan	Seu ka lan kwoh
Siam	Xian luo	Siam luo; Siam luo kwoh
Singapore	Xin jia po	San chau fow or the port of new State; Sin chau; Sing ka poa
South America	Nan meizhou	Nan ah mei lih Ka; Nan hwake or sorth nation of flowery flag
South Africa	Nan fei	Nan ah fei li ka
Soxony	?	Sa saw nae kwoh
Spain	Xi ban ya	Ta lü sung kwoh; Tai lü sung kwoh; Sae ban yah; Shih ban yah; Si bak nih yah
Sumatra	Su men da la	Sou mung da la
Sweden	Rui dian	See Sui tian; Sue teen kwoh
Taxas	De ke sa si	Di sian see kwoh
Thailand	Tai kwoh	Siam lo kwoh; Chim lo kwoh
Turkey	Tu er qi	Hui hui; Tai hui hui; Too rh chi kwoh; Tooh ye ki kwoh
the U. K.	Ying guo	Hung Maou kwoh or Red-bristled nation; Ying kat li kwoh; Tai Ying kwoh or the Empire of Britain
the U. S. A	Mei guo	Fah ke or flowery flag; Mee lee Kan; Tai mae kwoh or the

		empire of America; Hô tsiong
Viet Nam	Yue nan	Keaou che or folded toe; Cochín-china; Ngan nam kwoh; Yue nam kwoh

The study shows that 84 foreign places are included in the C-C-E textbooks listed above, from which it could be seen that Chinese people applied various names to foreign places in the late Qing Dynasty, which reveals their ways of getting to know the outside world at that special period of time.

3. Analysis of the Appellations and Cultural Connotations of Foreign Places in the Late Qing Dynasty

A restricted view could be drawn from the above listed words that Chinese people designated foreign places mainly according to their senses of vision, audition, meaning and a combination of sound and meaning.

3.1. Foreign Places Named by the Sense of Vision

At the earlier contact with foreign nations, Chinese people intended to apply names to them by what appalled them at their first sight. They once applied names to foreign nations by their national flags and their outlooks. For instance, the United States was described by Hwake or flowery flag, Denmark by Hwangke or yellow flag, Prussia by Tanyingke, the flag of single eagle and Austria by Shuangyingke, the flag of two eagles. Persia was described by Paktaukwoh, white-headed nation. Both Holland and the Great Britain were named Hung-maou kwoh or red-bristled nations. Cochín-china was Keaou che, a nick name implying that their toes folded over each other, in an odd manner.

Milne, William C.(1785-1822), the Scotland reverend who arrived on the China coast in 1813, wrote in his work the China and the Chinese: “In naming the nations to which foreigners separately belong, sometimes there is an attempt to transfer the proper name, e. g., Yingkihlih for England, Amiliko for America, Holan for Hollanders; at other times, the nations are described by their flags, e. g., Danes by Hwangke, or yellow flag; America, by Hwake, or “flowery flag”; Prussia, by Tanyingke, the flag of only one eagle.” [3] It seems odd that Chinese people named foreign places by their sense of vision. Some quotes from the ancient works will help to reveal the secret. Chen Lunjiong(1703-1730)wrote in *Hai Guo Wen Jian Lu*: “they wear western clothes, with big collars and small sleeves, their waists girdled and heads wrapped in white cloth, so named them white-headed.”[4] The name of the red-haired or bristled nation was applied to Holland, England and other European countries by the physical appearance of the residents. Chen Feng Heng, a Chinese scholar in the late Qing Dynasty, alluded to their arrival in his work , “Their hair is red, so they are nicknamed the red-hair and where they reside called red-haired capital. They are actually Hollanders”. [5] And the capital of England, namely, the city of red-haired barbarians, lies on the south-west of France.[6] It appears that, when they visited the Chinese Empire three hundred years ago, they excited the wonder of the Chinese by their reddish hair; hence, the name was given to them and other subsequent visitors indiscriminately.

As these kind of appellations of foreign nations became proper names, things related to these nations were likewise named. E.g. North America is described by Pah hwake or north nation of flowery flag; South America by Nan hwake or south nation of flowery flag and New York by hwake tai fow or the great port of America.

Englishman is named by hungmaou yi or the red-haired barbarians. And English language is called by hungmaou hwa or language of the red-haired barbarian. Samuel Wells Williams mentioned in *the Chinese Repository*, the Chinese Vocabularies named *hungmaou mae mae tung yung kwei hwa, or those words of the devilish language of the red-bristled people commonly used in buying and selling*, a general collection of English words and phrases, designed to assist the Chinese trader in his traffic with his red-bristled customers, who definitely refer to Englishman. Samuel Wells Williams showed a strong objection against the title of *the Chinese Vocabulary*, which was stigmatized by the epithet of devilish.

As a matter of fact, Chinese people in the Qing Dynasty tended to designate foreign nations or foreigners by describing their appearances through their vision and ending with a yi, a wot or a quei, which literately mean barbarian or devil, such as hungmaou yi or hungmaou quei, namely red-bristled devils, referring to Dutch or Englishmen; pah yi or pah quei, namely white-headed devils, referring to Persian or other Muslim races. The Portuguese, who of foreigners were the first to trade at the Canton port, were likewise designated wotsze, that is, barbarians or devils. It was to be expected that, ignorant at that time as the Chinese were of geography and of the geographical position of foreign nations, they would reveal their contempt to all foreigners who then made their appearance on the eastern coasts out of their China-centred concept.

3.2. Foreign Places Named by the Sense of Audition

The above listed appellations of foreign places and their Chinese equivalences show that in a certain period of time in late Qing Dynasty, the vast majority of foreign places were named by Chinese through their sense of audition, which means that they managed to transcribe the foreign places in their own language by what they heard in the course of commercial conversation with foreign traders. In linguistic term, most of the Chinese equivalences are onomatopoeia of foreign places. For instance:

Africa was transcribed by Ah-fri-li-chia or Ah-fee-li-ka.

Arabia was expressed by Ah-la-poh or A-lah-pah.

Asia was pronounced by Ah-sae-ah.

Batavia by Ba-da-wei-ya.

Belgium by Bae-chih-ying.

Bolivia by Po-lei-hwa.

Brazil by P'i-leih-sin.

Colombia by Kwoh-lun-pi-ah.

France by Fah-lan-si-yia.

Germany by Gih-rh-man-ni.

Goa by Guo- a.

Hayti by Hai-ti.

Hamburg by Han-bauo.

Ireland by Ai-rh-lan.

Italy by Ee-ta-lee.

Java by Ts'a-wa.
Corea by Ko-lae.
Rome by Lo-mah.
Loochoo by Lew-kew or Lew-chew.
Madras by Ma-ti-la-sy.
Malacca by Ma-la-ka.
Mexico by Mae-sae-ko.
Norway by Na-wae.
Peru by Pih-lu.
Prussia by Po-lu-sae.
Sardinia by Sah-tian-yah.
Scotland by Seu-ka-lan.
Singapore by Sing-ka-po.
Spain by Si-bak-nih-yah.
Sweden by See-sui-teen.
Turkey by Too-rh-ki.

The foreign places listed in the C-C-E textbooks were placed in columns, and the translations were given in Chinese sounds immediately beneath each one. The same character is always employed to represent the same sound. According to Samuel Wells Williams, the majority of the words represented by Chinese sounds were close enough for the reader to detect the word he had heard in conversation. [2] And, on the other hand, for the student to catch by the ear the phrase he previously learned from the book. Imperfect as they are, these incipient attempts in philology deserve a notice, in as much as they show the Chinese mode of doing such things, which had done its share in the intercourse between China and foreign nations. Some of the appellations of foreign nations or places transcribed in Chinese sound are still in use as the proper names in Chinese documents nowadays.

3.3. Foreign Places Named by the Sense of Meaning

Besides naming the foreign nations or places by what they saw and heard, Chinese people sometimes designated foreign nations or places by their subjective understanding of the outside world. In other words, they interpreted the connotative meaning of the foreign places according to their cognition. One of the outstanding representatives was the appellation of California, the Chinese equivalence of which was firstly named “kum san” or the gold mountain. To understand why California is so called, it is necessary to trace back to the early California gold rush days. Since the discovery of gold in California in January, 1848, tens of thousands of Chinese rushed there for mining gold. Thus “kum san” was used as a synonym of California where Chinese people could earn much money for living by mining gold. The name “kum san” was applied to San Francisco as well. Then when gold mine was discovered in Australia in 1851 and many Chinese people embarked on ships for making a living by mining gold there, thus Australia was referred to as “Sun kum san” or the newly-discovered gold mountains and San Francisco was named “Kau kum san” or the old

gold mountain, to avoid confusion between the two places. Besides, New Zealand was described as “Sun kum san” as well.

More examples of foreign nations or places had been named by Chinese people's sense of connotative meaning. E.g. Lu sung, Lüsung or Luzon, the chief island of Philippines, was first the designation of Manila, and then became the appellation of Spain after the Spaniard colonized Manila in 1571. Similarly, Se yang or the western ocean was first applied to Europe and then confined to Portugal at Canton. Sometimes Europe was called “Ta se yang” or the great western ocean and India was named “Seaou se yang”, or the small western ocean. And tung yang or the eastern ocean was applied to Japan, presumably due to their limited geography knowledge about the nations outside China.

3.4. Foreign Places Named by the Combination of Sound and Meaning

As Chinese people got to learn more about western culture, they realized that it was most tricky to identify foreign nations and places by transcribing them in their own language, since there were so many synonyms in Chinese. Out of ten individuals, there would be ten different appellations for the same foreign place. And even the same individual would have different versions of transcription for the same place. [7] To make things easier, Chinese people began to transcribe foreign places by the combination of sound and meaning, which was similar to the practice of clipping in lexicology, with the first part clipping from the onomatopoeia of the foreign place and the ending part indicating whether it was a continent, a nation or a port. For instance, America (usually refers to the U.S.A.) was designated by Mei Kwoh, Enland by Ying kwoh, France by Fa kwoh. Here the first part of the appellations “Mei, Ying, and Fa” represented the pronunciations of Ame, En and Fr, sounds clipping from America, England and France respectively. And the ending part of the appellation “kwoh” means “a nation”. Similarly, they designated the continents of Europe, Asia, Africa, America by Ou chow, Ya chow, Fei chow and Mei chow, with the first parts indicating the clipping sounds and the ending part “chow” representing continents. In some of the cases, the Chinese character “ta or tai”, which means great and usually a respectful form of address, was placed in front of the appellations of foreign nations, such as Tai Ying kwoh or the great Empire of Britain, Tai Mae kwoh or the great empire of America, Ta Ngo lo see kwoh or the great empire of Russia, Tai Fat kwoh or the great Empire of France. From the corresponding Chinese translations of foreign nations, capitals, and ports, it could be seen that Chinese people in the late Qing Dynasty got a broader view of foreign nations and cultures. For a very long time in Chinese history, Chinese people only acknowledged China as Tai Ching Kwoh, a great empire of Qing Dynasty. The Chinese character “ta or tai” put in front of the appellations of other nations symbolized Chinese transformed views on the foreign cultures.

The practice of combining sound and meaning in transcribing foreign nations or places lay the foundation of the contemporary appellations of foreign nations in China.

4. Conclusions

The compilation of the Chinese-characterized English textbooks was the initial attempt for Chinese people to break down the communicative barrier between China and foreign nations. The appellations of foreign nations and places included in the C-C-E textbooks in the late Qing Dynasty witnessed how Chinese people transformed

their attitude toward foreign nations from exclusion to respectfulness, which highlighted their views on cross-cultural communicative consciousness.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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