

XXVII Convegno internazionale Ass.I.Term

“Il Nome del prodotto. Marchi, Termini e Professioni”

Sportswear brand names adaptation
from alphabetic languages
in Modern Standard Mandarin
and vice versa

Victoria Bogushevskaya

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Brescia)

China's growth as a sporting superpower



China's growth as a sporting superpower



In Shanghai since 2004



Sportswear brand names' borrowings in Modern Standard Mandarin (MSM)

- 'lettered words' (Chin. 字母词 *zìmǔcí*);
- borrowings via transliteration, also known as 'phonemic loans' (Chin. 音译词 *yīnyìcí*);
- calques (Chin. 意译词 *yìyìcí*);
- graphic loans (Chin. 借形词 *jièxíngcí*).

Alphabetic vs Chinese writing system

1. Alphabetic system:
 - a) grapheme-morpheme mapping;
 - b) words have a linear structure.
2. Chinese writing system:
 - a) non-phoneme based (ideographic, logographic, word-syllabic, morphosyllabic, ideophonographic, etc.)
logosyllabic language;
 - b) phonological information is not encoded;
 - c) graphic units (characters) have a nonlinear configuration, possess a number of strokes packed into a square-shaped spatial figure.

2.756 distinct CVC syllables regularly used in Modern English
(Barker 2008)

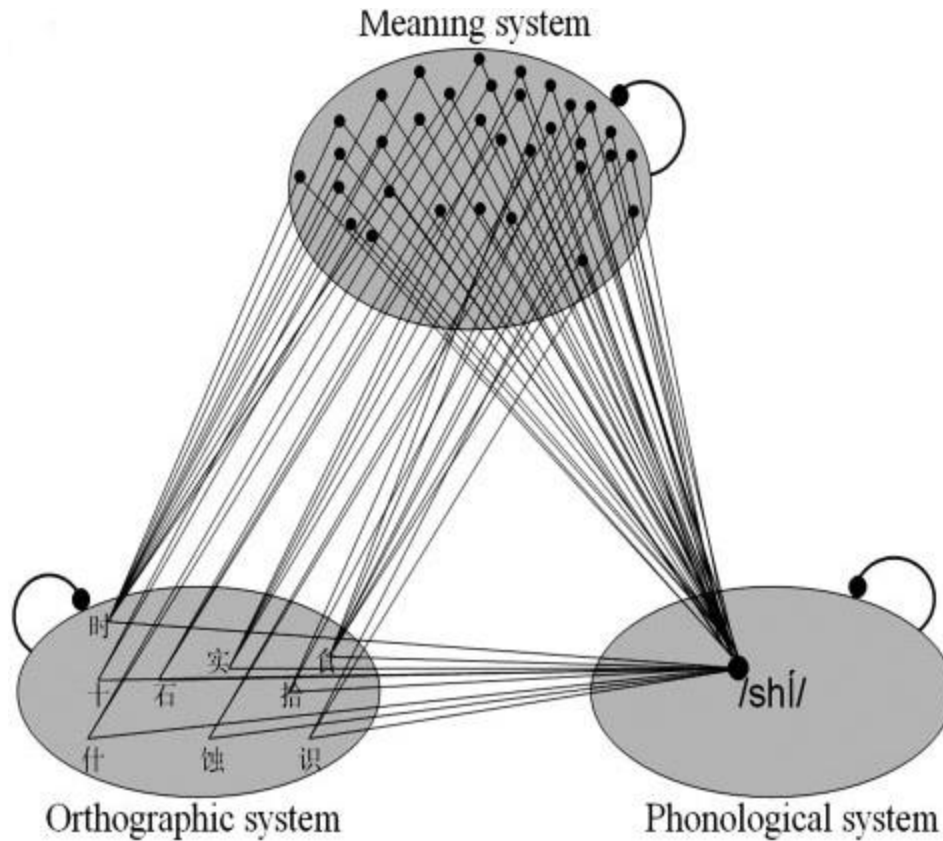
versus

1334 syllables (CGVV or CGVC structure) in Modern
Standard Mandarin (Duanmu 2008).

1334 syllables, 60.370 dictionary head entries

- ✚ 80% of the monosyllables from the Modern Chinese Dictionary correspond to more than one meaning.
- ✚ 55% correspond to 5 or more homophones.
- ✚ Some syllables represent a lot more morphemes than others do (e.g., [yi4] represents 63 common morphemes or about 90 morphemes if rare words are included).

Complex relationships of visual, orthographic, phonological and semantic systems in Chinese



shí:

时 'time', 十 'ten', 什 'assorted', 石 'stone', 实 'real', 蚀 'eclipse', 拾 'collect', 食 'food', 识 'knowledge'

Strategies and phoneme substitution patterns

(1) Faithful mapping

English	Pīnyīn 拼音 ⁶	IPA	MSM	Gloss
a) Puma	<i>bíāo-mǎ</i>	/pjau-ma/	彪马	tiger.like-horse
b) Patagonia	<i>bā-tǎ-gē-ní-yà</i>	/pa-tʰa-kɤ-ni-ia/	巴塔哥尼亚	python-tower-elder.brother-peaceful-Asia
c) Columbia	<i>gē-lún-bǐ-yà</i>	/kɤ-luən-pi-ia/	哥伦比亚	elder.brother-human.relations-be.near.to-Asia
d) Lacoste	<i>lā-kē-sī-tè</i>	/la-kʰɤ-sz-tʰɤ/	拉科斯特	to.pull-science-this-unique
e) Adidas	<i>ā-dí-dá-sī</i>	/a-ti-ta-sz/	阿迪达斯	mountain-to.follow-to.reach-this
f) Nike	<i>nài-kè</i>	/nai-kʰɤ/	耐克	endure-overcome

Strategies and phoneme substitution patterns

(2) Deviant adaptations of consonants

a) Kappa	<i>kǎ-pà</i>	/k ^h a-p ^h a/	卡帕	card-scarf
b) Lotto	<i>lè-tú</i>	/lɿ-t ^h u/	乐途	happy-journey
c) Reebok	<i>ruì-bù</i>	/zuei-pu/	锐步	vigorous-walk
d) Geox	<i>jiàn-lè-shì</i>	/tɕien-lɿ-ʂɿ/	健乐士	healthy-happy- laudable.person
e) Woolrich	<i>wò-ě-r-lǐ-qí</i>	/wo-ə-li-tɕ ^h i/	沃尔里奇	fertile-2SG-inside- unusual
f) Timberland	<i>tiān-bó-lán</i>	/t ^h ien-po-lan/	添柏岚	to.add-cypress- mountain.haze
g) Under Armour	<i>ān-dé-ā- mò</i>	/an-tɿ-a-mo/	安德阿谟	safe-virtue-mountain- sword
h) Clarks	<i>qí-lè</i>	/tɕ ^h i-lɿ/	其乐	3PL-happy
i) Converse	<i>kuāng-wēi</i>	/k ^h uɑŋ-uei/	匡威	frame-prestige
j) Arena	<i>ā-ruì-nà</i>	/a-zuei-na/	阿瑞娜	mountain- auspicious-graceful
k) Rapido	<i>lì-pī-dào</i>	/li-p ^h i-tao/	雳霹道	thunderclap- thunderclap-way
l) Belstaff	<i>bèi-dá-fú</i>	/pɛi-ta-fu/	贝达弗	shell-to.reach-correct

Strategies and phoneme substitution patterns

(3) Adaptations of vowels

a) ASICS	<i>yà-sè-shí</i>	/la-sʏ-ʂʑ/	亚瑟士	Asia-majestic- laudable.person
b) Fila	<i>fēi-lè</i>	/fei-lʏ/	斐乐	elegant-happy
c) The North Face	<i>lè-sī-fēi-sī</i>	/lʏ-sz-fei-sz/	乐斯菲斯	happy-this- luxuriant-this
d) Gap	<i>gài-pú</i>	/kai-pʰu/	盖璞	to.cover- unpolished.jade
e) Nautika	<i>nuò-dī-kǎ</i>	/nuo-ti-kʰa/	诺帝卡	to.promise- emperor-card

Calques

(4.1) Morpheme-by-morpheme translation

a) The North Face	<i>běi liǎn</i>	/pei-lien/	北脸	north-face
b) Canada Goose	<i>jiānádà é</i>	/tɕianata-ə/	加拿大鹅	canada-goose
c) Champion	<i>guànjūn</i>	/kuanɕyn/	冠军	Champion
d) Fjällräven	<i>běijí hú</i>	/pəitɕi-xu/	北极狐	North.Pole-fox
e) Old Navy	<i>lǎo hǎijūn</i>	/lau-xaitɕyn/	老海军	old-navy

(4.2) Holistic renditions

a) Arc'teryx	<i>shǐzǔniǎo</i>	/ʂɕtsunjəu/	始祖鸟	'Jurassic fossilized bird'
b) Jack Wolfskin	<i>láng zhuǎ</i>	/lan-tɕua/	狼爪	'wolf-paw'
c) Lacoste	<i>Fǎguó èyú</i>	/fakuo-ɤy/	法国鳄鱼	'French- crocodile'

Graphic loans

(借形词, lit. 'words with the borrowed shape')



美津濃 Mizuno > 美津浓 *Měijīnnóng* /mèi-tçin-nuŋ/

Variabilities

Lacoste: (1) Faithful mapping

d) Lacoste */ā-kē-sī-tè/* */la-kʰʅ-sz-tʰʅ/* 拉科斯特 to.pull-science-this-unique

(4.2) Holistic renditions

c) Lacoste *Fǎguó èyú* */fakuo-ʅy/* 法国鳄鱼 'French-crocodile'

In P.R. China: (1) Faithful mapping

e) Adidas *ā-dí-dá-sī* */a-ti-ta-sz/* 阿迪达斯 mountain-to.follow-to.reach-this

In Taiwan: *ài-dí-dá* / *ai-ti-ta* / 愛迪達 (simplified 爱迪达) 'to.love - to.follow - to.reach',

Creating Chinese brand names: numerical superstitions

Water



Metal

Soil

Wood

Fire

Table 1. Auspicious and inauspicious number of strokes

1 (O)	2 (X)	3 (O)	4 (X)	5 (O)	6 (O)	7 (O)	8 (O)	9 (X)
10 (X)	11 (O)	12 (X)	13 (O)	14 (X)	15 (O)	16 (O)	17 (O)	18 (O)
19 (X)	20 (X)	21 (O)	22 (X)	23 (O)	24 (O)	25 (O)	26 (X)	27 (X)
28 (X)	29 (O)	30 (X)	31 (O)	32 (O)	33 (O)	34 (X)	35 (O)	36 (X)
37 (O)	38 (H)	39 (O)	40 (X)	41 (O)	42 (X)	43 (X)	44 (X)	45 (O)
46 (X)	47 (O)	48 (O)	49 (X)	50 (X)	51 (X)	52 (O)	53 (X)	54 (X)
55 (H)	56 (X)	57 (O)	58 (H)	59 (X)	60 (X)	61 (O)	62 (X)	63 (O)
64 (X)	65 (O)	66 (X)	67 (O)	68 (O)	69 (X)	70 (X)	71 (H)	72 (X)
73 (H)	74 (X)	75 (H)	76 (X)	77 (X)	78 (X)	79 (X)	80 (X)	81 (O)

(adapted from Cheng and Lii 2008, p. 525)

Phonological adaptations

(5) Faithful *pīnyīn* adaptations

English	<i>Pīnyīn</i>	IPA	MSM	Strokes	Gloss
a) Anta	<i>āntà</i>	/an-tʰa/	安踏	6 + 15 = 21 (O)	safe-to.step.on
b) Erke	<i>(hōngxīng)</i> <i>ěrkè</i>	/xuŋ-ɕiŋ-ə- kʰɤ/	simpl.: 鸿星 尔克; trad.: 鸿星爾 克	simpl.: 11 + 9 + 5 + 7 = 32 (O); trad.: 17 + 9 + 14 + 7 = 47 (O)	swan-star- 2SG - overcome
c) Li-Ning	<i>Lǐ Níng</i>	/li-niŋ/	simpl.: 李宁; trad.: 李寧	simpl.: 7+5=12(X); trad.: 7+14=21 (O)	plum-peaceful



Old logo



New logo

Phonological adaptations and calques

(6) Deviant *pīnyīn* adaptations

a) Deerway	<i>dé'ěrhui</i>	/tɿ ə-xuəi/	simpl.: 德 尔惠; trad.: 德爾 惠	simpl.: 15 + 5 + 12 = 32 (O); trad.: 15 + 14 + 12 = 41 (O)	virtue-2SG- benefit
b) PEAK	<i>pīkè</i>	/pʰi-kʰɿ/	匹克	4 + 7 = 11 (O)	be.equal.to- overcome



Calques

(7) Calques

a) Xtep	<i>tè bù</i>	/tʰɿ pu/	特步	10 + 7 = 17 (O)	special-step
b) 361°	<i>sānlǐùyī</i> <i>dù</i>	/san-liou- yi-tu/	三六一度	3 + 4 + 1 + 9 = 17 (O)	three-six-one- degree



Giants are not immune to gaffes: cultural blunder

福



The message expected to convey the meaning
‘wealth and happiness arrive’
turned out to be an euphemism for
‘putting on weight’



Acronyms deriving from *pīnyīn* spelling of the relevant words

E.g.1: **GB** for *guójiā biāozhǔn* 國家標準 ‘national standard’;

E.g.2: **ZRG** for *Zhōnghuá Rénmín Gònghéguó* 中華人民共和國 ‘People’s Republic of China’

Adidas: is NMD the brand's Chinese mistake?



‘**NMD**’ was seen as an acronym of the expletive

nǐmāde 你媽的 ‘your mother!’.

Thank you

謝謝

