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Yorqin NURMATOV,
Oriental universiteti katta o'qituvchisi
E-mail: nurmatovyorkin@gmail.com

Toshkent davlat sharqshunoslik universiteti, PhD. L.A. Sultanova taqrizi asosida

FEATURES OF CHINESE LANGUAGE TERMINOLOGY

Annotation

The theory of traditional Chinese medicine is totally different from that of modern medicine and has a unique system of its own. Some of the terms are rather difficult to express in other languages, nor is it easy to find an exact translation of the original. Some words that convey the concept of the Chinese terms convey it only in part.

Key words: Medical concepts, mi'an ch'i (面赤), b'ai t'ai (白苔), f'u m'ai (浮脉), t'ou t'ong (头痛), f'eng h'an (风寒), f'eng sh'i (风湿), Chinese medical concepts, English and Chinese terminology.

ОСОБЕННОСТИ ТЕРМИНОЛОГИИ КИТАЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА

Аннотация

Теория традиционной китайской медицины полностью отличается от теории современной медицины и имеет уникальную систему. Некоторые из терминов довольно сложно выразить на других языках, и нетрудно найти точный перевод оригинала. Некоторые слова, которые передают понятие термина «китайский», передают его лишь частично.

Ключевые слова: Медицинские концепции, mi'an ch'i (面赤), b'ai t'ai (白苔), f'u m'ai (浮脉), t'ou t'ong (头痛), f'eng h'an (风寒), f'eng sh'i (风湿), китайские медицинские концепции, английская и китайская терминология.

XITOIY TILI TERMINOLOGIYASI XUSUSIYATLARI

Annotatsiya

An'anaviy xitoy tabobati nazariyasi zamonaviy tibbiyot nazariyasidan butunlay farq qiladi va o'ziga xos tizimga ega. Ba'zi terminlarni boshqa tillarda ifodalash ancha qiyin va asl nusxaning aniq tarjimasini topish qiyin emas. Xitoy terminlari tushunchasini bildiruvchi ba'zi so'zlar uni faqat qisman ifodalaydi.

Kalit so'zlar: Tibbiy tushunchalar, mi'an ch'i (面赤), b'ai t'ai (白苔), f'u m'ai (浮脉), t'ou t'ong (头痛), f'eng h'an (风寒), f'eng sh'i (风湿), xitoy tibbiy tushunchalari, ingliz va xitoy terminologiyasi.

Certain characteristics of Chinese medical terminology are attributable to features of the Chinese language in general, which should be discussed before proceeding any further. Since the terminology of Chinese medicine has evolved over more than 2,000 years, we must be aware of the features of the Chinese language in their diachronic aspect.

The terminology established in the H'an Dynasty evinces features of Old Chinese, whose written form is usually referred to as Classical Chinese, while that of later centuries bears characteristics of literary Chinese. Chinese as an isolating language: Chinese (especially classical Chinese) is usually considered to be a typical isolating language (or analytical language) (Lyovin 1997: 14–15). Grammatical functions are not marked by inflections but by additional words and by syntax (Norman 1998: 10, 84). Relationships between elements of a sentence are expressed in syntax and in a small number of prepositions, while aspect and tense are expressed, if at all, by the addition of adverbial and sentence-final markers. Word-Classes: In Classical Chinese, the basic functions of language on the one hand to name things and on the other to describe qualities/states and actions/processes are reflected in two open word-classes, nouns and verbs. The category of verbs can be divided into what are known as stative and active verbs, the former corresponding to the adjectives of European languages. Stative verbs are not considered strictly to be an independent class (Lyons 1977: 448), because in Classical Chinese (though less so in the modern language) they require no copulative in the predicative position (e.g., 面赤 mi'an ch'i, [the] face [is] red) and the syntactical constructions they appear in are indistinguishable from those of intransitive active verbs. The term stative verb is

nevertheless somewhat misleading since words of this class denote permanent qualities as well as transient states, but I retain these terms in deference to tradition.

The Chinese bipartite division of open classes into nouns and verbs as opposed to the European tripartite division of nouns, adjective, and verbs is not a mere matter of idle classification; it is of great significance in the general structure of expression and in the terminology of Chinese medicine. John Lyons notes that in Indo-European languages the difference is essentially one of form rather than of content (Lyons 1977: 448). In these languages, adjectives have affinities with verbs in that they can be used predicatively with a copulative. Nevertheless, they also have affinities with nouns in that on the one hand (in most European languages) they agree with nouns, and are frequently used attributively in noun phrases, and on the other a seemingly large proportion of them are derived from nouns (in Latin, an adjective is formed from almost any noun). In Classical Chinese, stative verbs have greater affinity with active verbs because, like these, they are typically used in predicative positions, and their attributive use is limited. While it is acceptable for multiple stative verbs to appear one after the other in the predicative position, it is not acceptable in the attributive position. Thus, whereas 舌苔白黏膩 sh'e t'ai b'ai ni'an n'i ('[the] tongue fur [is] white, sticky [and] slimy') is acceptable, *白黏膩舌苔 *b'ai ni'an n'i sh'e t'ai ('white sticky slimy [or sticky slimy white] tongue fur') is not. On this latter point, modern Chinese differs from Classical Chinese in that multiple-verb attributive qualifiers are have become permissible, no doubt to some extent as a result of the influence of Western languages. Classical

Chinese shows a strong tendency to allow only short verb phrases to appear in the attributive position and to require the interposition of the subordination/qualification marker 之 zhī with multiple-character phrases (see Norman 1988: 104): 白苔 bái tāi, white fur, 浮脈 fú mǎi, floating pulse, 微數之脈 wēi shù zhī mǎi, slight and rapid pulses. The semantic significance of this—though I have never found any description of Classical Chinese in which this view is stated—would appear to be that the predicative form is that habitually used to describe the object represented by the subject noun, while the attributive form is used rather to indicate a distinct type of the object represented by the head noun. It is noteworthy, as has recently been suggested (Wiseman & F'eng 1999), that in the realm of sphymological discourse, the use of the qualifier + noun (e.g., 浮脈 fú mǎi, floating pulse, 數脈 shù mǎi, rapid pulse) is not to be found in the earliest literature, and appears to have been an innovation introduced by W'ang Sh' u-H'e (王叔和) in the third century. In the first chapter of his M'ai 脈經 (Pulse Canon), W'ang lists twenty-four pulse terms with unprecedentedly detailed descriptions. In so doing, he was introducing the idea of set pulse types labelled by noun phrases and furnished with formal definitions. From this time on, sphymological literature discussed pulses under qualifier + noun (. . . 脈, . . . pulse) headings, although descriptions of pulses involving multiple qualities (as, say, in case studies) continued to use the predicative form (脈 . . . , pulse [is] . . .). So far I have not mentioned adverbs. In both Chinese and European languages, adverbs are a varied class. Chinese has a small group of words whose only function is adverbial, but verbs, especially stative verbs, are generally used to qualify active verbs (usually without marking in Classical Chinese, but often with additional isolated marker in the modern language). This is roughly similar to the situation in European languages, where adverbs are derived, with relative freedom, from adjectives (e.g., happy, happily; spontaneous, spontaneously, but not red, *redly).

Words and phrases may change word-class, and this happens without any marking. Classical Chinese is renowned for the ability of words to act in any class, but in medical texts word-class changes, although highly frequent, are by no means unlimited in nature. Verbs (stative and active) regularly nominalise and appear in positions in the sentence normally occupied by nouns (subject or object) (e.g., 浮 葛風 fú gē fēng, floating [quality of the pulse] is/means wind). Much more rarely, nouns are used as verbs (e.g., 足 zú, foot → sufficient; 脈芤 mǎi kōu, the pulse [is] scallion-stalk[-like]). Verbs may act as adverbs (妄行 wàng xíng, move frenetic[ally]). A change in word-class is often seen in subject + predicate phrases, e.g., 目干澀 mǔ gān sè, the eyes [are] dry → dryness of the eyes (or dry eyes); 頭痛 tóu tòng, head hurts → headache. Verb + object and subject + predicate phrases are commonly used in both their active senses as well as in a nominalised senses. Thus, for instance, 風火上炎 fēng huǒ shàng yán can be used in its active sense of 'wind-fire flames upward', or in a nominal sense of 'liver fire flaming upward' or 'upward flaming of liver fire'. We should note that although the nominalisation process in English can involve a change of word forms or word order, no such change takes place in Chinese.

目干澀 mǔ gān sè, the eyes [are] dry → dryness of the eyes (or dry eyes)

頭痛 tóu tòng, head hurts → headache

解表 jiě biǎo, resolve the exterior → resolving the exterior (or exterior resolution)

潛陽熄風 qián yáng xī fēng, subdue yáng and extinguish wind → subduing yáng and extinguishing wind

Similarly, phrases of this kind can also form a qualifier to another noun. For example,

清熱瀉火 qīng rè xiè huǒ, clear heat and drain fire, can also be used as a qualif 之 zhī 就、 、 、 、 、 、 ings rè xiè huǒ zhī jī, heat-clearing fire-draining formula. Here again, the change is performed in Chinese without any change in word order, although in this example a qualifier particle 之 zhī is inserted.

Indo-European languages differ from Chinese in that word-class changes typically require marking (English undoubtedly being the language in which this requirement is weakest). Formal marking appears to allow a greater scope for word-class change than in Chinese. Many English words (particularly ones of Latin origin) have many different forms in different word-classes, e.g., saliva, salivate, salivation, salivatory. Notably, Chinese has no exact equivalent of the adjectives derived from past participles observed in European languages (e.g., depressed, dissipated, depleted). Transitive verbs may be used in a passive sense (as will be explained shortly), but when they are used as stative verbs, it is rather by a direct switch of word-class from transitive to intransitive (rather as the English sell as in sell books and books sell); verbs describing qualities or states in Chinese are essentially active rather than passive. Syntax: Chinese, classical and modern, follows a subject-verb-object word order. The Chinese subject has no such close relationship with the verb as in European languages; hence it is often referred to as the topic. The topic has three principal features: (1) It can be an item other than the logical subject (which may be unstated): 症見發熱, 惡寒 zhèng jiàn fā rè, wù hán lit. 'pathoconditions, see fever [and] aversion to cold', i.e., as to patho5. conditions, one sees fever and aversion to cold. (2) The topic can be the logical object of a transitive verb, as in 手不可舉 shǒu bù kě jǔ, lit. 'arm cannot lift', i.e., one cannot lift one's arm. (3) The topic may introduce a predicate which itself is a subject + verb phrase: 婦人月經不調 fù rén yuè jīng bù tiáo, lit. 'women, menstruation [is] irregular', women have irregular menstruation (or more often 'women with irregular menstruation'); 病人熱、陰傷 bìng rén rè shēng yīn shāng lit. 'patient, heat [is] exuberant, yīn [is] damaged', i.e., the patient (who) has exuberant heat and damaged yin.

One major exception to the subject + verb + object is the nominal sentence, which is an equational sentence without a verb. In the nominal sentence, the subject and predicate are sometimes marked by final particles, e.g., 肝者, 木臟也 gān zhě, mù zàng yě, lit. '[the] liver particle [is the] wood viscus particle', the liver is the wood viscus. The nominal sentence was replaced by verbal sentences using the copulatives wéi and later 是 shì. Nominal constructions are a matter of general expression more than terminology; I mention them here because they appear in a number of phrases from the classics which arguably have status as terms.

Parataxis: Related to the isolating quality of Chinese is parataxis, that is, the arrangement of clauses and phrases each after the other without coordinating connectives. Examples in English are loveme, lovemy dog; I came, I saw, I conquered; in for a penny, in for a pound.

Plentiful examples of parataxis are to be found in the language of Chinese medicine.

風寒 fēng hán, wind and cold, wind-cold

風濕 fēng shī, wind and dampness, wind-damp

多寒少熱 duō hán shǎo rè, [aversion to] cold more pronounced than heat [effusion]

益氣解表 yì qì jiě biǎo, lit. 'boost qì, resolve exterior' boost qì and resolve the exterior

Very often, parataxis also involves greater ellipsis than a missing conjunction:

朝食暮吐 zhāo shí mù tǔ, lit. 'morning eat, evening vomit', vomiting in the evening of food eaten in the [previous] morning

飲一溲二 yǐn yī sǒu èr, lit. 'drink one, urinate two', passing twice as much fluid as is drunk

重按無力 zhòng àn wú lì, lit. 'press hard, no strength', (of the pulse) forceless under heavy pressure

重衣不得溫 chóng yī bù dé wēn, lit. 'double clothing, cannot obtain warmth', inability to get warm despite extra clothing

Monosyllabism giving way to polysyllabism: In Old Chinese, morphemes were almost entirely monosyllabic, and most words were also monomorphemic (Norman 1988: 84).

Although compounding was common the components rarely fused and were free to be used independently. Despite its monosyllabic nature, Old Chinese was rich in reduplicates and semi-reduplicates (Norman 1988: 83–85). In Chinese medicine, we see examples such as 逍遙 xiāo yáo, 'free and unfettered' (as in 逍遙散 xiāo yáo sǎn, 'Free Wanderer Powder'), and intensifiers such as 綿綿 mián mián, 'continuous', and 漉漉 lù lù, 'gurgling'. Although many

reduplicates were descriptive, a few are nouns, e.g., 膀胱 p'ang guāng, bladder, 盯瞤 dīng n'ing, earwax, 蝦蟆 h'a m'a, toad (as in 蝦蟆瘟 h'a m'a wēn, toad-head scourge), 癲癇 dī'ān xi'an, epilepsy, and 頤頤 h'ang s'ang, palate.

Changes in the language toward the end of the H'an period (2nd-3rd century a.d.) are considered to mark the end of the Old Chinese period. In the spoken language, phonological attrition, that is, a reduction in the number of distinct syllables in the language, gave rise to the ever more frequent use of compounding (Norman 1988: 86), a tendency that has continued into the present. As any modern dictionary shows, disyllabic and trisyllabic words now abound. Nonetheless, the number of bound compounds may not have increased greatly (Norman 1988: 154). After the Old Chinese period, the written language continued to take Classical Chinese, the written form of Old Chinese, as its model, but new literary styles evolved that reflected changes in the spoken language, and in particular, the greater use of noun and verb combinations. In the literary Chinese of medicine, the choice between single-character or double-character noun phrases and verb phrases was often conditioned by two- or four-character euphony. Compare 面色紅赤 mi'ān s'è h'óng ch'ì, red facial complexion and 面赤 mi'ān ch'ì, red face.

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