

# A Study on Internet Interactive Language Variations from the Perspective of Schema Theory

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**Abstract:** *Language variation is a common phenomenon of language evolution in online interactive communication. Based on schema theory, this paper explores the forms, reasons, features and ritual functions of language variations in the context of Internet interaction. This study finds that the forms of Internet language variations are mainly embodied in: phonetic variation, semantic variation and grammatical variation, characterized by four rituals: cooperation, pluralism, universality and alignment. Internet language variations contribute to the construction of identity, relationship and order in communication. Through a systematic study of Internet language variations, this paper aims to provide some enlightenment for the ritual turn of pragmatics and the study of network linguistics from the perspective of cognitive linguistics.*

**Keywords:** Schema theory, Internet interaction ritual, Language variations, Pragmatics.

## 1. Introduction

Language variation under online interactive rituals is a common language phenomenon in online communication. After undergoing language variation, online language, under the use of Internet communication users and the dissemination of news media, penetrates from virtual platforms into language communication in real situations, posing a challenge to the norms and usage rules of traditional language expression. Online language communication is a recurring formalized behavior that builds order through interaction based on moral conventions, beliefs and ideologies of social groups. It is a kind of interactive ritual. At present, there is still overlap and confusion in the classification of online language variation phenomena in academia. The analysis of the characteristics of online language variation phenomena is still shallow, and the mechanism and interactive ritual function of online language variation have not been explored from the perspective of language cognition. Based on the analytical framework of Schema Theory, this study uses online buzzwords that produce language variation as corpus to explore the form, characteristics and ritual function of online language variation, aiming to provide a reference for the study of online linguistics.

## 2. Research Subjects

### 2.1 The Phenomenon of Network Language Variation

Since the rise of the "orderly heterogeneous" language theory in the mid-20th century, language variation has become an important research object in sociolinguistics. "Language variation refers to changes and differences in language use, which are manifested by the use of various language variants" (Zhu Wanjin 1992:7). Variation occurs in various units of the language system such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. The variation process is affected and restricted by social factors while also being affected and restricted by the laws of the language itself (Guo Fenglan 2006:15). As an emerging language form based on the Internet, network language has variants in various units of the language system such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar during its evolution. With the development of the Internet, it has

successfully extended from virtual communication platforms to real language communication, and is widely popular among young people, challenging traditional language rules.

### 2.2 A Review of the Research on the Phenomenon of Network Language Variation

The research on network language is concentrated in the discipline system of journalism and communication, and the research focuses on: the study of emotional communication of network topic events (Jiang Xiaoli and He Fei 2016), the interactive ritual of network live broadcast (Xun Yao 2018) and its symbolic capital and emotional energy analysis (Huang Ying and Wang Maolin 2017) and the public relations value of network communities (Yao Xi and Li Na 2017).

Since the beginning of the 21st century, with the development of the Internet, the academic community has begun to pay attention to the variation and development of language use in the network environment, and the research focuses on five aspects: 1) Classification of network language variation phenomena, such as the phonetic variation types of network language (Hao Yue 2017), vocabulary variation types (Song Peijie 2012; Hao Yue 2017) and syntactic variation types (Wu Kunhu 2016); 2) Analysis of the characteristics of network language variation phenomena and actual application effects, such as the characteristics of network language phonetic variation phenomena and pragmatic effects (Lu Huihui 2003), the characteristics of network language semantic variation (Zhang Yingwei 2014); 3) Exploration of the essence and significance of network language variation phenomena, such as reflection on the philosophical essence of network language variation phenomena (Hu Qingqing and Li Lun 2015) and the relationship and significance of network language variation phenomena and contemporary literary transformation (Li Mingjie 2011); 4) Exploration of the causes and generation mechanisms of network language variation phenomena from multiple perspectives, covering semiotics (Meng Wei 2002), cultural linguistics (Xu Zhongning), etc. (2004), Communication (Li Yanmin, Bai Ruifen 2011), Theoretical Linguistics (Wu Haijuan, Zou Xiaoqing 2016), Cognitive Linguistics (Wu Kunhu 2016) and Memetics (Fu Fuying, Lu Songlin 2010; Wang Yanlong, Xia Sainan 2017); 5) A Standardized Discussion on the

Phenomenon of Network Language Variation (Zhang Yating 2014).

At present, the academic community has not yet reached a consensus on the classification of network language variation phenomena, and there are overlaps and confusions. This paper will attempt to re-sort and classify the common network language variation phenomena. At the same time, the existing network interactive language research presents two major shortcomings: relying on a single context and lagging research. The corpus selected for the study is limited to the single interactive context of network live broadcast, and it is special. There is a lack of research on language phenomena in universal network interactive contexts, and there is no relevant research on the variation phenomenon in the development of network language. Based on the schema theory, this paper will analyze and discuss the variation forms, ritual characteristics and ritual functions of network language.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

#### 3.1 Schema Theory

Schema theory originated from the philosophical concept of "schema" proposed by German philosopher Kant. He believed that "new concepts only become meaningful when they are connected with the knowledge people have already mastered" (Carrell & Eisterhold 1983: 553). Schema can be regarded as a structure of semantic memory, an abstract, structured and systematic knowledge representation in the human brain.

In 1932, psychologist Bartlett first proposed the schema theory in his book "Remembering". He believed that schema is a process in which information stored in the learner's brain acts on new information and the learner's knowledge base absorbs new information. In the 1980s, this theory was further developed and improved, and explained as a group of "interacting knowledge structures" or "building blocks that constitute cognitive ability" stored in long-term memory in a hierarchical form (Lei Xiaodong 2010: 150-151).

#### 3.2 Classification of Schema

The schemas that are generally accepted by academia can be divided into three categories: linguistic schema, content schema and structural schema.

##### 3.2.1 Language Schema

Language schema refers to the language foundation and is the premise for effective language use. It includes the language user's mastery of language knowledge such as vocabulary, grammar, idioms, and language use ability. Language users must have good basic language skills to achieve appropriate decoding or encoding of input or output language information and facilitate communication and interaction (Lei Xiaodong 2010: 151).

##### 3.2.2 Content Schema

Content schema is the background knowledge for understanding and using a certain language and reflecting the content of a certain topic. It tests the language communicator's

familiarity with the content involved in the communication topic (Lei Xiaodong 2010:151) and prior experience.

The impact of content schema on the understanding of communication interaction behavior can be manifested as positive promotion or negative interference. For example, when there are differences in the language and cultural background of both parties, it is easy to produce schema interference, leading to obstacles or deviations in understanding (Yu Min 2008:74). Therefore, in language communication interaction behavior, it is extremely important to eliminate content schema gaps and content schema interference.

##### 3.2.3 Structural Schema

Structural schema refers to genre framework and discourse structure (Yang Yuan and Xu Bing 2020:74), which tests the language user's understanding of genre structure and requires certain discourse knowledge and rhetoric knowledge. Structural schema knowledge helps language users analyze the overall layout of the text in the process of language use, clarify the communicator's thoughts, timely and appropriately supplement the missing or implicit information in the text, and make correct predictions about communication interaction.

The three schemas complement each other and together constitute the abstract concept construction in the language cognitive system, thereby promoting the effective development of communication interaction and achieving the purpose of communication.

### 3.3 A Study on Language Variation Based on Schema Theory

Schemas can promote understanding, but they can also hinder understanding (Cook 1999: 10). When language variation occurs, the input information is inconsistent with the schema structure in memory, and two situations may occur: one is to refuse to accept information that is contrary to one's original concept (schema), then the two parties in the interaction may face communication failure; the other is to revise or supplement the original knowledge structure to keep it consistent with the new information as much as possible (Lou Lijun 1993:42), avoiding pragmatic errors caused by inconsistent language cognitive systems, forming communication barriers, and affecting communication effects.

The core content of studying language variation from the perspective of cognitive linguistics is to sort out the schema change process of both parties in language communication, which can be specifically manifested as schema preservation (preservation) - information input conforms to the existing schema, schema reinforcement (reinforcement) - adding new information to strengthen the existing schema, and schema refreshment (refreshment) - the existing schema is revised (Stockwell 2002: 79-80).

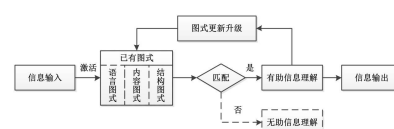


Figure 1: Schematic activity flow chart

As shown in Figure 1 (Yang Yuan and Xu Bing 2020:74), when language information is input into the brain, three existing schemas are activated. When the information matches the activated schema, a new schema can be generated to achieve the purpose of understanding communication activities. If it does not match, the schema needs to be updated and upgraded, and then the information is output through language. In the context of online interaction, the public's language schema, content schema and structural schema may change and be updated, that is, language knowledge such as vocabulary, grammar, idioms, language cultural background, discourse knowledge and rhetoric knowledge may be updated. In language variation, the two parties in language interaction communication update and supplement on the basis of preserving the original schema, that is, supplement the concept schema before language variation, and update, supplement or even replace the language knowledge such as vocabulary, grammar, idioms, language cultural background, discourse knowledge and rhetoric knowledge. In this way, the "new" information after language variation is understood, and then new information is output through language users. This theoretical premise for the occurrence of language variation phenomenon is also the fundamental reason why the "new" expression of language that has undergone language variation can be recognized and spread by the public.

#### 4. Language Variation in the Context of Online Interaction Rituals

Since the end of the 19th century, scholars in different fields have begun to pay attention to ritual research, such as anthropology (Geertz 1973; Turner 1992), sociology (Goffman 1967; Collins 2004), political science (Kertzer 1988), and linguistics (Kádár 2017; Kádár & House 2020). Among them, Goffman (1967, 1981) pioneered the study of rituals in the field of sociology. Kádár (2017: 12) borrowed Goffman's concept of "interaction ritual" and proposed in the field of pragmatics that rituals in interactive communication are formalized and recurring behaviors rooted in history, moral conventions, beliefs and ideologies of social groups, etc., and aim to construct, perceive and repair the moral order in ritual groups through interaction (Kádár 2017: 55).

Rituals have four characteristics (Kádár & House 2020): 1) Rituals participants have rights and obligations, and choose language expressions according to their identities and contexts; 2) Rituals include conventional discourse in a universal form and non-conventional discourse in the form of interaction; 3) Rituals are replicable and are an important means of achieving and maintaining moral communication; 4) Rituals are public, involving a complex participatory structure, breaking through the binary relationship between the two parties in traditional communication conversations, and third-party publics are also included in the rituals. Rituals participants must meet public expectations and form a relational connection with them. Among them, relational connection refers to the discourse attitude of the speaker in ritual behavior to strengthen inter-subjective emotions with unknown audiences in an implicit way (Kádár & Zhang 2019). The interactive ritual theory proposed by Kádár (2017) emphasizes the programmed expression rooted in social conventions, moral order, etc., and the ritual function that can reshape the social order and form a relational connection with

third-party audiences. At the level of language analysis, interaction ritual theory involves different analytical units such as vocabulary, speech behavior, and discourse.

Horgan (2019) pointed out that pragmatics presents a "ritual turn". In the field of linguistics, academic research based on the theory of interactive rituals mainly covers the following discourse categories: interrogative metadiscourse in cross-cultural rituals (Kádár & Ran 2015), ritual political advice discourse of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Liu & Shi 2019), Chinese political announcement discourse (Kádár & Zhang 2019), diplomatic avoidance discourse (Liu Fengguang and Liu Shiyu 2020), political admonitions in historical ritual procedures (Song Yulong et al. 2020), flattering language in late Qing memorials in historical ritual procedures (Zhou Xiaoting 2021), written political communication language (Zhang Sen and Liu Fengguang 2021), command discourse in military training ceremonies (Kádár & House 2021), government apology language (Yuan Zhoumin et al. 2022), political avoidance discourse (Liu Fengguang et al. 2022) and diplomatic conflict response discourse (Bi Zhuo and Liu Fengguang 2022). The selection of interactive ritual backgrounds is concentrated in the field of diplomacy and government affairs, and has not yet involved the category of network language. Below, this article will analyze the forms and causes of language variation in the context of network interactive rituals, and discuss in detail the ritual characteristics and ritual functions of popular words that have undergone language variation in the context of network interaction.

##### 4.1 Language Variation in the Context of Online Interaction Rituals

The variation of online language in the context of interactive rituals is mainly reflected in three aspects: phonetic variation, semantic variation and grammatical variation.

###### 4.1.1 Voice variation

The phenomenon of phonetic variation in network language variation is mainly reflected in the interpretation of homophonic words. For example: “鸭梨(压力)”, “蒜你狠(算你狠)”, “有木有(有没有)”, “亚历山大(压力山大)”, “火钳刘明(火前留名)”, “我好方(我好慌)”, “蓝瘦香菇(难受想哭)”, “狗带(go die)”, “怎么肥四(怎么回事)”, “冲鸭(冲呀)”, “耗子尾汁(好自为之)”, “害(语气词hai)”, “卧槽”, “栓Q(thank you)”, “你造吗(你知道吗)” and so on.

###### 4.1.2 Semantic variation

In the process of network language variation, the meaning of some words in the dictionary (hereinafter referred to as "basic dictionary meaning") and the worn meaning after actual pragmatic use have shown great differences in semantic presentation and pragmatic efficiency. These words with worn semantics are used repeatedly at a high frequency, and the degree of wear is getting higher and higher, and the semantic information has changed. The basic dictionary meaning and the pragmatic worn meaning are the "standard meaning" of a word and the dynamically changing "pragmatic meaning" of wear. The former will occur as the latter is

affected. Therefore, the basic dictionary meaning is not necessarily fixed, and the pragmatic worn meaning is not necessarily always dynamically changing.

The semantic variation phenomenon in network language variation is mainly divided into meaning variation and emotional variation.

Among them, semantic meaning variation includes: increase, decrease and change of language meaning. For example: “楼上 (semantic variation: the last person to reply)”, “白菜 (semantic variation: novice)”, “回锅肉 (semantic variation: people who have participated in talent shows more than once)”, “沙发 (semantic variation: the first post that is quickly responded to on social platforms such as blogs)”, “潜水 (semantic variation: watching on social platforms without expressing opinions)”, “不明觉厉 (although I don't understand what you are saying, it seems very powerful)”, “理中客 (semantic variation: illogical, no stance, not talking about facts and denying everything)”, “白莲花 (semantic variation: a person who looks pure on the outside, but is actually dark inside and pretends to be pure and noble)”, “绿茶 (semantic variation: a person who appears to be pitiful on the surface, but is scheming and playing with people's feelings behind the scenes)” and so on.

The semantic emotional variation includes: emotional upgrading and downgrading, which is generally manifested as the transformation of characteristics and paradigms. For example, "beautiful girl" and "handsome guy" are no longer "beautiful women" and "handsome men", but just a polite and courteous name for strangers. "Teacher" and "boss" have changed from special professional identity characteristics to the paradigm of respect.

#### 4.1.3 Grammatical variation

The grammatical variation phenomenon in network language variation is mainly reflected in language abbreviation and reduplication. Among them, language abbreviation is mostly manifested in the pinyin abbreviation of Chinese/English words, such as: “YYDS (永远的神)”, “YYSY (有一说一)”, “AWSL (啊我死了)”, “XSWL (笑死我了)”, “ZQSG (真情实感)”, “KDL (嗑到了)”, “NBCS (nobody cares)”, “DBQ (对不起)” etc.

Language overlap is mostly reflected in the repeated superposition of the same Chinese characters in language expression that violates the word class, syntactic structure or expression efficiency, such as the high-frequency overlapping use of Chinese characters with communicative attributes such as "hahahaha", "hehehe", "wooooo", and "momomo", which express tone and emotion.

### 4.2 The Causes of Language Variation in the Context of Online Interactive Rituals

#### 4.2.1 Cognitive Theory Foundation: Replacement and Update of Existing Concepts

Language variation in the context of online interactive rituals is mostly reflected in the updating, supplementation and

replacement of content and structure schemas in the language cognitive schema. In most cases, the language schema is unchanged by default. The existing new forms of online language expression do have many challenges to the original expression grammar and habits, but language users tend to classify them as incorrect use or flexible use when understanding them. In other words, both parties in language interaction do not need to subvert the original language knowledge cognition due to language variation, but to supplement and update the communication background and special context knowledge. From the perspective of language cognition, the cost and risk of language variation are low, and the "feasibility" is high, which is easy to be understood and accepted by the public.

#### 4.2.2 Advantages of language use: high expression efficiency

At the level of language expression, language texts in network communication situations need to receive the most attention and convey the most information in the smallest volume. Therefore, many network buzzwords are highly generalized and can successfully convey the target information (such as meaning, position and emotion, etc.), meeting the low-cost and high-yield expression standards. In network buzzwords, words such as “白莲花”, “白菜” and “绿茶” “回锅肉” have specific label attributes, and words such as, “火钳刘明”, “蓝瘦香菇”, “耗子尾汁” and “不明觉厉” contain specific interactive communication situation information. In the network communication pragmatic environment where rich meanings need to be expressed in limited volume, the expression cost is reduced, the information is transferred, and the network interactive ritual communication behavior is completed.

#### 4.2.3 Limitations of media expression: lack of non-verbal elements

At the language medium level, in face-to-face communication situations, non-verbal elements in communication (such as body language) are often used to assist in understanding the emotional expression behind verbal language. As a new communication situation, the Internet makes it impossible for non-verbal elements in communication to play their metaphorical function, so they are presented in the form of text as much as possible, causing the language of online communication to mutate.

### 4.3 The Ritual Characteristics of Language Variation in the Context of Online Interactive Rituals

The language variation phenomenon under the network interaction ritual has four ritual characteristics: cooperation, diversity, universality and connection

#### 4.3.1 Network interaction ritual cooperation

Participants in online interactive rituals adjusted and selected their language expressions according to their identities (non-face-to-face strangers) and contexts (lack of delayed communication platforms formed by non-verbal communication). Participants in online interactive rituals are strangers to each other, and the communication occasions are different from regular communication occasions, lacking

non-verbal communication forms such as facial expressions. Online interactive communication has a huge risk of violating the principles of politeness and cooperation. In order to reduce the offensiveness and aggression of expression, phonetic variations such as homophonic words, grammatical variations such as phonetic reduplication, and semantic variations such as ascending and descending voices have emerged, and are chosen by more participants in online interactive rituals because of their humorous and friendly communication effects.

#### 4.3.2 Diversity of online interaction rituals

Network interaction ritual discourse includes conventional discourse in a universal form and non-conventional discourse in the form of interaction. Network interaction ritual participants use and exchange texts, pictures or multimodal discourse on the Internet interactive platform to shape their own network pragmatic identity. In the process of interactive ritual, they complete the classification and affiliation of different communities' "in-groups". Grammatical variations such as language abbreviations and semantic variations in the form of meaning variations emerge. The mutated language expression forms become special conventional discourses of the in-group. The diversity of variations promotes the diversity of conventional discourses, helping network interaction ritual participants to build "unique and outstanding" "identity labels" and improve communication efficiency.

#### 4.3.3 The universality of online interaction rituals

The process of network language variation is replicable, which is an important means to achieve and maintain moral communication in ritual interaction. The way network language varies can be summarized, and it conforms to the mechanism of language evolution. It is universal in the use of network interactive platforms, with strong audience acceptance and high frequency of use. It has been widely infiltrated into daily offline communication, becoming an important factor influencing the evolution of traditional language expression rules.

#### 4.3.4 Network interaction ritual connectivity

The network interaction ritual is public and involves a complex participant structure. Thanks to the efficient information transmission method of the network medium, network interaction is not limited to the binary relationship between the two parties in traditional communication conversations. The third-party public is also included in the ritual. The participants in the network interaction ritual meet the expectations of the public and form a relationship connection with them. The mutated network discourse constitutes a new language and cultural trend in contemporary society. Even "lurkers" who do not actively participate in the interaction through text or other multimodal methods can become participants in the network interaction ritual through "forwarding" and "liking", and achieve strong connections through the network mutated language of other users.

### 4.4 The Ritual Function of Network Language Variation in Interactive Ritual Context

#### 4.4.1 Identity Construction

Pragmatic identity refers to the (real or unreal) presentation of a person (especially the speaker and the listener) in a specific context with a specific social identity. It is the result of the choice of the communicator (speaker and listener) when issuing or understanding a specific discourse or text. The identity of the social individual or group mentioned in the discourse is collectively referred to as pragmatic identity (Chen Xinren 2013; Chen Xinren 2014).

The cooperative and diverse nature of language variation under the network interaction ritual makes it possible to construct the network pragmatic identity. The network pragmatic identity (pragmatic virtual identity) is generally shaped by using and exchanging texts, pictures or multimodal discourses with network communicators. Except for special situations such as live broadcasts, in most cases, communicators in the network interaction ritual situation cannot complete identity construction with the help of multimodal methods such as pictures and videos. This poses a challenge to these users, who must pay special attention to the group needs of optimal information exchange, which usually exceeds personal identity construction (Foster 1997). Different from daily offline communication situations, communicators in online interactive ritual situations are more dependent on texts, and the original language expressions change, thereby improving the efficiency of pragmatic identity construction to meet the language application needs at the individual level.

#### 4.4.2 Relationship Building

The fundamental purpose of language use is to convey meaning. In the process of conveying meaning, individuals interact and form connections. In the era of the Internet and big data, the connectivity of language variation under online interactive rituals promotes the realization of its interpersonal relationship building function, and human social life gradually expands and extends from actual communities to virtual communities (Lv Peng 2020:41). After the pragmatic identity is successfully constructed, communicators in the online interactive ritual context complete the identity recognition of other communicators through the successful decoding of the special meaning after language variation, and conduct online community (virtual community) construction or individual community integration. The community shares a certain type of information, beliefs or interests (and the subsequent satisfaction) (Yus 2011:27) to improve the language communication attributes at the interpersonal level.

#### 4.4.3 Order formation

Network interaction rituals are the basis for the establishment of network social order. The universality of language variation under network interaction rituals lays the foundation for its function of establishing social order. Relying on the easy-to-induce and replicable language variation standardization mechanism, and benefiting from the high-frequency and strong-willed language variation application effect, language variation under network interaction rituals allows the public to gradually form conventions while conducting language communication, so as to complete the

task of establishing order at the social level.

## 5. Language Governance in the Context of Online Interaction Rituals

"Inflation" within a language will lead to the depreciation of the language, the loss of certainty and richness of its connotation, and then the loss of the beauty of the language and even the wisdom and culture it contains. The fuzziness in phonetics, semantics, and grammar has also led to the inefficiency of online social interaction. In fact, in online interactions, we often see buzzwords that are incomprehensible and inexplicable, and it is difficult to get a unified and accurate answer when searching for their meaning and usage online. The unique expressions of different communities have built a series of language barriers for online communication (Cheng Runfeng and Xie Xiaoming 2022:30-31). Taking semantic variation as an example, when one party in verbal communication strictly follows the basic meaning of the dictionary, and the other party uses and understands it according to the evolved meaning in actual pragmatics under the influence of online buzzwords, misunderstandings, differences, and conversation corrections may occur (Li Shengmei 2006:11-12). In addition, a large part of the semantic variation in the context of online interaction presents the characteristics of childishness. On the surface, it is the pursuit of cute and relaxed expressions. However, when we cannot find other words in our minds to express rich emotions, the decline and poverty of language expression is essentially the solidification of expression and the degeneration of thinking. Behind it is the degeneration of the entire social thought and the retrogression of aesthetics.

Language variation is a natural phenomenon that conforms to the laws of cognition in the historical process of language change. In the Internet information age, the rise of online platforms can also be regarded as a major driving mechanism for language variation in modern society. But this does not mean that when language variation is excessive, language users are completely helpless. Language users also have the responsibility to be good language maintainers. As pointed out, language is like a garden. If it is not carefully cared for at all times, it will soon become rampant (Burrige 2002: 2). Internet language governance should be based on the "three-life governance system" (Internet language ecology, Internet language life and Internet language production), formulate Internet language planning and normative standards at different levels and in different domains, and have laws to rely on and govern according to law (Wang Jianhua 2022: 136). Increase the efforts of multiple subjects at different levels to perform specific tasks, carry out active language practice in an open and dynamic network environment, combine top-down and bottom-up, coordinate and cooperate, purify, optimize and beautify the network language ecology (Li Yi and Zhi Yuling 2022: 105), actively intervene in and guide language life, and be a practitioner and innovator of standardized and rational network language.

The variation of language in the process of use, and the emergence of new expressions that follow, is a universal law of language development. Because the expression and simplicity of language are a pair of irreconcilable contradictions. The two are always in conflict, and they are

always seeking to reach a relatively consistent balance point (Wu Lihong 2005: 20). Every time a new word appears, the freshness and impact it brings to the audience will be weakened. To a certain extent, language users will turn to look for new words (Wesile 2016: 151). This process is repeated, and the language is constantly updated. What we need to do is to protect the diversity of traditional expressions, pay attention to and guide the appropriate use of new buzzwords after language variation (including frequency of use and occasions of use). Only in this way can we avoid the language expansion of "ten thousand sentences are equal to one sentence" and the language scarcity of "one sentence is equal to ten thousand sentences".

## 6. Conclusion

Based on the clarification of the intrinsic correlation between network language variation and interactive ritual, this study systematically analyzed the forms, causes, characteristics and ritual functions of network language variation based on cognitive linguistic schema theory. The forms of network language variation in the interactive ritual context are mainly reflected in phonetic variation dominated by homophonic words, semantic variation manifested as meaning variation and emotional variation, and grammatical variation concentrated on language abbreviation and reduplication. Variant network language is cooperative, diverse, universal and connected. Participants in network interactive rituals realize pragmatic identity construction at the individual level, relationship building at the interpersonal level and order formation at the social level through network language variation. The study also reflects on language variation in the context of network interactive rituals and puts forward relevant suggestions for language governance. In subsequent research, the study can also explore the interactive ritual operation mode of network variant language, and provide inspiration for the expansion of language variation research and the ritual turn of pragmatics research.

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