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New Chinese Words in 2014 – A Study of Word-formation Processes

Author: Peter Warell
Supervisor: Man Gao
Examiner:
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Abstract: 随着社会的发展，尤其是互联网的发展，很多语言每年都涌现出了不少新词汇。词语是每个语言最基本也是最重要的组成部分，因此分析这些新词汇的结构特点以及构词法是很有意义的。这篇文章分析了2014年出现在中文里的新词汇和它们的构词方式，论文的目的是为了更好地了解中文词汇的发展和特点。本文以《2014汉语新词语》中公布的2014年出现的新词汇作为语料进行分析，发现了以下两个主要特点：第一，合成法，派生法，缩略法是2014年产生的新词汇的主要构词方式；第二，百分之七十二的新词汇是多音节词（包含三个或者三个以上音节），而百分之八十的是名词。这些特点说明中文词汇现阶段的特点和发展趋势，跟传统的中文词汇有不同之处。

The aim of this thesis was to investigate how new Chinese words are formed and to examine the linguistic patterns among them. This thesis focused on the analysis of Chinese words formed in 2014. The quantitative data for the analysis included a collection of 423 new Chinese words from the book 2014 汉语新词语 (hànyǔ xīn cíyǔ) by Hou and Zhou. Parts of speech and number of syllables in the new words were investigated, although the focus was on word-formation processes. A discussion of derivation, blending, abbreviation, analogy, borrowing, change of meaning, compounding and inventions is also included. The share of each word-formation process used for each of the new words was presented statistically in order to reveal the significance of each word-formation process. The analysis showed that compounding, derivation and abbreviation were the major word-formation processes in 2014. The study also suggests that words formed by derivation and analogy were much more frequent in 2014, in comparison to previous studies. Furthermore, the ways words are formed in Chinese are changing and evolving, as some word-formation processes are becoming more frequently used in the formation of new words.
Keywords: Words, new words, word-formation processes, contemporary Chinese, part of speech, syllables, blending, abbreviation, borrowing, blending, analogy, derivation, compounds, language change, quasi-affixes.
# Table of Contents

1. Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 4  
   1.1 Problem Description ......................................................................................................... 4  
   1.2 Research Aim .................................................................................................................. 5  

2. Literature Review .................................................................................................................. 6  
   2.1 Characteristics of Chinese Words .................................................................................... 6  
   2.2 Chinese Word-formation Processes .................................................................................. 7  
      2.2.1 Derivation in Chinese ............................................................................................... 7  
      2.2.2 Blending in Chinese .................................................................................................. 8  
      2.2.3 Abbreviations in Chinese ......................................................................................... 9  
      2.2.4 Analogy in Chinese Word-formation Processes ......................................................... 10  
      2.2.5 Borrowing in Chinese ............................................................................................. 10  
      2.2.6 Compounding .......................................................................................................... 10  
   2.3 Previous Analysis of New Chinese Words ........................................................................ 11  

3. Method .................................................................................................................................. 13  
   3.1 Organisation of Data ....................................................................................................... 13  
   3.2 Classifying the Data ....................................................................................................... 14  

4. Analysis and Discussion ....................................................................................................... 15  
   4.1 Number of Syllables ....................................................................................................... 16  
   4.2 Parts of Speech ................................................................................................................ 17  
   4.3 Word-formation Processes .............................................................................................. 18  
      4.3.1 Derivation ................................................................................................................ 19  
      4.3.2 Blending .................................................................................................................. 23  
      4.3.3 Abbreviations .......................................................................................................... 25  
      4.3.4 Analogy .................................................................................................................... 27  
      4.3.5 Borrowing ............................................................................................................... 28  
      4.3.6 Change of Meaning Among Words ....................................................................... 29  
      4.3.7 Compounding ......................................................................................................... 30  
      4.3.8 Inventions ............................................................................................................... 31  
      4.3.9 Words Involving Two Word-formation Processes .................................................. 32  
   4.4 Discussion ....................................................................................................................... 33  

5. Summary and Conclusion .................................................................................................... 37  

Works cited ............................................................................................................................... 39  
   English .................................................................................................................................. 39  
   Chinese ................................................................................................................................ 40  

Appendix ................................................................................................................................... 42
1. Introduction

1.1 Problem Description

Languages are in a constant phase of development and change, grammar changes overtime, new words are formed and words might even disappear and be replaced by new words (Task 92). These changes and developments take place constitutently in all living languages. For example, in Chinese at least hundreds of new words are created in the Chinese language every year (Hou & Zhou).

Words in Chinese are constituted differently compared to those in European languages (Wang 1). In Chinese, each morpheme is a syllable and each syllable can be written with a character (Lin 52). Additionally, most characters in Chinese can also be an independent word with its own meaning, which differs from European languages. For example, English is a language that depends largely on derivation when constructing new words (Yule 58). This stands in contrast to Chinese as some linguists might even argue that Chinese is a language of compound words (Arcodia 79).

New words can be formed in different ways using different methods such as clipping, blending, analogy, compounding, abbreviation, and derivation. New words can also be loanwords from other languages or old words but which have acquired a new meaning or broadened their original meanings. In theory, an infinite number of words can be created and formed in any language. Thus, it is of interest, from a linguistic perspective, to investigate the word-formation processes in a particular language. Equally interesting is the analysis of the characteristics of a particular language with regard to the formation of new words, as understanding words is essential in order to understand language. Moreover, knowledge of word-formations might be helpful for teachers and learners as learning vocabulary is one of the key pillars in language learning. It is also of importance to examine new words in order to
understand how their development might change the way in which a language’s lexicon evolves.

1.2 Research Aim

This study will aim to analyze and provide an overview of recently formed Chinese words, a total of 423 words will be analyzed. The year 2014 is chosen as it is the year with the most recently published data of new Chinese words when this study was conducted.

This thesis will analyze how the new Chinese words listed in 2014 汉语新词语 (hàn yǔ xīn cí yǔ) by Hou and Zhou (1-145) are formed and analyze how the formation of new words in Chinese might be changing by investigating the prevalence of different word-formation processes. The focus of this thesis will mainly be on the new words’ word-formation processes and their linguistic patterns, but parts of speech and number of syllables will also be investigated.
2. Literature Review

2.1 Characteristics of Chinese Words

Chinese morphology and the characteristics of Chinese words are introduced and discussed in Lin’s book (52). A very specific characteristic of Chinese words is that all native morphemes in Chinese only contain one syllable (Lin 52). To clarify, a morpheme is the smallest unit in a language which contribute meaning and which cannot be divided into a smaller unit (Yule 67). Some examples of words constituted of one morpheme are 会 (huì), 书 (shū) and 蓝 (lán). In comparison, most morphemes are polysyllabic in English. What is more, morphemes in Chinese are not smaller than a syllable aside from for the diminutive retroflex -儿 (r). Lin further stated that Chinese does not have sub-syllabic morphemes such as the plural suffix –s in English (52). Due to these specific characteristics of the language, Chinese is often called a monosyllabic language (Lin 52).

In Chinese, most words are made up of at least two morphemes. How to define a word is hard and it is “is not precisely definable” (Lin 55) in Chinese. Lin stated that linguists often define a word in Chinese such as a working unit that follows morphological patterns (55). Words containing at least two morphemes are called complex words whereas words which only contain one morpheme are called simplex words. In fact, 74% of all words in Chinese are disyllabic words, 12 % are monosyllabic, 14 % are polysyllabic words. Due to the fact that each morpheme contains just one syllable, Chinese is a language which is “characteristically disyllabic at the word level” (Lin 55). However, a free morpheme added with a word-formative affix such as the diminutive retroflex 儿 (r) can still be a simple word (Wang 1).
The characteristics of Chinese words have also changed over time. Zhou stated that in ancient Chinese most words were predominantly monosyllabic words (18). Before 200 BC, around 80% of all the words were monosyllabic words (Arcodia 83). However, this has changed, and in early twentieth century, most new words are constructed using two syllables. After the reforms and opening up of China during Deng Xiaoping, the majority of new words were constructed using three or more syllables (Zhou 18).

2.2 Chinese Word-formation Processes

2.2.1 Derivation in Chinese

The process by which words can be formed using an affix such as a suffix, prefix or an infix and this is a process called derivation. Lin stated that Chinese does not have a large number of affixes due to the fact that, in contrast to European languages which frequently employ derivation in the formation of new words, Chinese lacks many bound morphemes (56).

Lin defined true affixes in Chinese as affixes that have completely lost their original meanings (57). For example, the affix 子 (zi), in words like 桌子 (zhuō zi) and 椅子 (yǐ zi), has lost its meaning ‘child’ when it was a free morpheme in ancient Chinese. These affixes can serve a grammatical function such as building a noun or a prosodic function, that is, construct a complex word.

Chinese suffixes mentioned by Lin (57-61) are: -子 (zi), -儿 (r), -们 (men), -头 (tóu), -巴 (bā), -者 (zhě), -化 (huà), -学 (xué). There are fewer prefixes than suffixes in Chinese. Only the prefix 第- (dì) which is an ordinal number prefix can be regarded as a productive prefix. The prefix 初- (chū) is also often used with numbers. Additionally, the morpheme 老- (lǎo) can also work as a prefix which indicates seniority, colloquialism, affection or
familiarity. However, Lin claimed that 老 (lǎo) can also work merely as a free morpheme such as in the words 老人 (lǎo rén) ‘old man’ or 老朋友 (lǎo péngyǒu) ‘old friend’ (61). The last prefix Lin mentioned is 阿- (ā) which is a prefix without much meaning, however, it might be used for giving “a sense of affection” (62).

Furthermore, Wang and Fu discussed the ambiguity related to affixes in Chinese and they states that many of the affixes in Chinese should be regarded as quasi-affixes (类词缀 lèicízhui). To clarify, a quasi-affix is a unique characteristic of Chinese morphology and is regarded to be somewhere between a true affix and a root morpheme which is a morpheme stripped from inflectional and derivational affixes (Wang and Fu). Zeng and Wang mentioned that there is a disagreement among linguists regarding the defining characteristic of a quasi-affix (53). However, three criteria for quasi-affixes were listed by Zeng and Wang: “degree of morphological productivity, fixation of positioning and semantic bleaching” (54). Productivity refers to a certain morpheme is frequently used in the formation of new words. Positioning refers to where the morpheme is usually positioned in a word, for example, at the beginning or at the end of words. Semantic bleaching refers to the fact that the present usage of a morpheme is to indicate a grammatical structure as opposed to the original meaning of the morpheme which has been, at least partially, lost.

2.2.2 Blending in Chinese

Words can also be formed by blending, a process by which an element or morpheme of a word is merged with an element or morpheme of another word. However, blending is a rare word-formation process in Chinese. Renner, Maniez, and Arnaud only found 17 blends among the 600 words that they investigated (130). In Chinese, the preferred method is to abbreviate words and not use blending when new words are formed by shortening (Renner, Maniez, and Arnaud 130). The few blends in Chinese are due to the fact that Chinese is
considered to be an isolating language (Renner, Maniez, and Arnaud 130). Two examples of blends that Renner, Maniez, and Arnaud mentioned were 白骨精 (bái gǔ jīng) ‘a successful, tough professional woman’, not to be confused with the character from The journey to the West, formed from the words 白领 (báilǐng) ‘white collar’, 骨干 (gǔgàn) ‘backbone’ and 精英 (jīngyīng) ‘elite’. Another example is 驴友 (lǘ yǒu) ‘backpack tourist’, formed from 旅友 (lǚyǒu) ‘travel companion’ and 驴 (lǘ) ‘donkey’ (136).

2.2.3 Abbreviations in Chinese

A common word-formation process is abbreviation and Zhou stated that the number of abbreviations have recently increased in Chinese (18). Normally, new abbreviations are formed by taking the first syllable of each word in a phrase and then combining the syllables together and, thus, creating a new word. Sun mentioned examples such as 地铁 (dì tiě) ‘subway’ formed from 地下铁路 (dì xià tiě lù) ‘subway’ and 抗战 (kàng zhàn) ‘war of resistance’ formed from 抗日战争 (kàng rì zhàn zhēng) ‘war of resistance’ (18). However, some abbreviations do not follow this pattern, because it might lead to ambiguity. In these words, other syllables are instead used. Furthermore, two-syllable abbreviations are often preferred over abbreviations containing more than two syllables. Some acronyms can also be formed by just omitting a syllable. Another common type of abbreviation is numeral abbreviation where a common element from different words is added with a referential number which is then put in front of the common element, two such abbreviations are 四化 (sì huà) and 三步走 (sān bù zǒu) (Zhou 18). Chinese has also borrowed abbreviations from English and these are often related to IT, for example, WIFI and PC.
2.2.4 Analogy in Chinese Word-formation Processes

Zhou, Liu and Li mentioned that forming new words by analogy is a common word-formation process among new Chinese words (Zhou 19; Liu 33; Li). This means that new words are formed by imitating other words and the new words are shaped by following the patterns that are already used among existing words. Zhou gave different examples of morphemes which are used when constructing new words by analogy, for example, the usage of 哥 (gē) ‘brother’, 姐 (jiě) ‘sister’ and 盲 (máng) ‘blind’ (19). Zhou further stated that the use of common morphemes in the formation of new words is a rather new word-formation method (19). Zhou also claimed that some morphemes which are frequently used when forming new words have evolved to act as affixes (19).

2.2.5 Borrowing in Chinese

New words can also derive from other languages and this is called borrowing. Hoffer stated that “Chinese has generally been resistant to loanwords as units” (60) and that “most modern terms have been native creations or loan-translations” (60). In other words, Hoffer argues that Chinese has not borrowed a lot of new words into the language and Chinese has not relied on borrowing when naming new terms. However, that seems to change due to “the spread of International English as the language of the Internet and the emphasis placed on English in Chinese schools suggest that more and more English loanwords will be imported in mainland Chinese over the next few decades” (Hoffer 61).

2.2.6 Compounding

A very common word-formation process in Chinese is compounding. According to Lin “it would not be an exaggeration to say that Mandarin is a language of compounded words” (62). A compound word is defined as a word which consists of two or more words (Arcodia
A compound’s meaning is most of the times related to the meanings of the parts in that particular compound (Lin 62).

There are several different types of compounds in Chinese and the following categories which Lin examined are: coordinative compounds, endocentric compounds, verb-object compounds, verb-complement compounds, subject-predicate compounds, non-classifier compounds, multisyllabic compounds and newer compounds (63-68). Additionally, as stated by Zhou, compound-words using three or more syllables are increasingly common in Chinese (17).

### 2.3 Previous Analysis of New Chinese Words

The new words in which entered the Chinese language between the years 2011 and 2013 was examined by Liu (33-35). The majority of new words were constructed using three or more morphemes, thus polysyllabic words were most common among new words from 2011-2013. Liu examined how new words were formed through analogy and metonymy (33). Liu also examined the increase of abbreviations in new Chinese words (34). New abbreviations in Chinese were often formed from phrases, with the help of numbers, letters or with the help of English words. Common words and morphemes which were used in creating new words between 2011 and 2013 were also clearly described and exemplified in the article. For example, many new words used 门 (mén) ‘door’ and 二代 (èr dài) ‘second generation’ at the end of words. The suffix 体 (tǐ) ‘style’ was also common among new words. The word 最美 (zuì měi) ‘most beautiful’ was common at the beginning of new words. Liu also found that there were many new words borrowed from English as well as words which meanings have changed (34-35).

New words might also derive from the internet where ever more communication is conducted. Li examined that there were primarily seven different word-formations which
dominated among the new words: compounding, homonyms, emulating, phonetic loaning, meaning change, reduplication and words which do not follow any word-formation patterns. The most common word-formation was compound-words and there were five different types of compound-words. Li stated that the usage of homonyms was also very common when forming new words, one such example was 竹叶 (zhúyè) ‘bamboo leaf’ which is a homonym to 主页 (zhǔyè) ‘home page’. Another common way of constructing a new word was by imitating words which often resulted in a more humorous connotation, for example, 钓虾 (diàoxiā) ‘fish shrimp’ which mean 女追男 (nǚ zhuī nán) ‘girl chase boy’. Furthermore, Li also mentioned that many words were formed by using existing morphemes, but adapting them in a new way. This was used both for monosyllabic and polysyllabic words.

Zhou also analyzed new word-formations in Chinese and listed three characteristics of new Chinese words. First of all, abbreviations have increased in contemporary Chinese (18). Secondly, Chinese also have borrowed English abbreviations such as WIFI and PC (18). Thirdly, many new word-formations in Chinese were formed or partly formed by analogy as well as following common word-formations.

It should be noted that these previous studies only examined some of the word-formation processes which were prevalent among new words. These studies did not include any clear picture or provide an extensive overview of how active the different word-formation process were in the formation of new words. Furthermore, none of these studies included any extensive quantitative analysis of the word-formation processes to clarify the importance of each word-formation process when forming new words. Thus, these studies failed to some extant effectively reveal a clear pattern of how new words are formed through different word-formation processes and the prevalence of the different word-formation processes that are active in the formation of new Chinese words.
3. Method

In this thesis, all of the words and data which were analyzed were from the book 2014 汉语新词语 (hànyǔ xīn yǔ) by Hou & Zhou and thus the book is this thesis’ primary source. The book listed 423 new Chinese words and phrases which were used for the first time during the year 2014. Explanations, contexts, usages and example sentences were provided with the new words in the book. These words were used as the quantitative data for the analysis. However, note that these new words were found to be in use in the media, internet or spoken language. Most of them have not been listed in official dictionaries.

3.1 Organisation of Data

The approach chosen for organizing the data is a statistical approach meaning that the analysis investigated the share of each of the different linguistic aspects that were analyzed. The statistical approach was used in order to provide a picture over the prevalence of the different word-formation processes. The words from the primary source was organized according to different categories, thus, making it easier for statistic analysis and for comparisons. Each word was listed with the following information added: the number of syllables, the part of speech and word-formation process. If more than one word-formation processes were used, that information was also added to the word. Background information related to the word-formation process that was used was also presented if needed.

Furthermore, only how the new words were formed was analyzed. A new word, mostly longer polysyllabic words, might have an internal structure with elements which have been created previously. However, this was not included in the analysis as the focus was on the newly formed words.
3.2 Classifying the Data

The analysis of the different word-formation processes has been conducted by closely investigating how the words are constituted as well as looking at the meaning of the words. Using the knowledge of how other research analyzed and defined words’ word-formation and the definitions of word-formation processes provided by Yule have been applied when determining how the new words in the data collection have been formed and which word-formation process was active.

Several different resources have been used in order to achieve a correct classification of the data. The primary source was also used as it contains context and sentences provided for the words. In some cases, a native speaker was consulted. Search engines have also been used to find additional information which was needed for an accurate classification of the words and to accurate classify the word-formation process which was active. For example, search engines have been used when investigating whether a word was formed by analogy.
4. Analysis and Discussion

There are 423 words that will be analyzed from 2014 汉语新词语 (hàn yǔ xīn cí yǔ) (Hou and Zhou). These words are examined, however, not all the words will be mentioned in this paper due to the large quantity of the data. A few examples will be mentioned for illustration purposes. The full list of words can be found in the appendix.

The words’ semantic domains are presented in the book (Hou and Zhou 4). The analysis of the semantic domains is shown in figure 1 below, which displays the distribution of these words in percentage. Words related to life or lifestyle are the most common types among the new words (Hou and Zhou 4). Words related to economy and anti-corruption are also rather common and we see that these contemporary topics are indeed a hot topics of discussion in China which result in formation of new words. New words are formed because there is a demand to name things and naturally there are more demand for new words in domains which are more prevalent than others.

![Semantic Domains](image)

Figure 1: Semantic Domains (adapted from Hou and Zhou (4)).
4.1. Number of Syllables

Among these new words in 2014, only 119 are disyllabic words. In other words, 28.1% of the new words are disyllabic. This stands in sharp contrast to the lexicon of Chinese as disyllabic words represents 74% of all the words in the Chinese lexicon (Lin 55). There are 179 words containing three syllables among the new words and thus trisyllabic words are the most common type. Words constituted of three syllables accounted for 42.3% of all the new words. Moreover, words formed with four syllables accounted for 23.2%, words with five syllables accounted for 5% and words with six syllables accounted for 1.2% of all the new words. Furthermore, there was also a word that contained 13 syllables and thus accounted for 0.2% of the words. The polysyllabic words accounted together for 71.9% of the new words. In contrast, only 14% of the words in the Chinese lexicon are polysyllabic (Lin 55). Note that there are no new words that are monosyllabic. In the Chinese lexicon, 12% of the words are monosyllabic. As can be seen, new words tend to be longer compared words in the existing Chinese lexicon.

Figure 2: Words sorted after number of syllables.
According to Zhou, the trend with longer words can be traced back to the time when China opened up its economy to the world (18). This trend has stabilized as most new words are constructed using three or four syllables. Polysyllabic words will constitute a larger part of the Chinese lexicon if the trend continues in the future.

4.2 Parts of Speech

The new words formed in 2014 are mostly nouns. Nouns account for 80% of the words, see figure 3. Furthermore, 14% of the new words are verbs, 3% are classified as phrases, 2% adjectives.

Figure 3: Part of speech among the new words.
There are some words presented in the primarily source that are not really words, a more accurate definition would be phrases or clauses.

4.3 Word-formation Processes

In this part, the word-formation processes will be presented and analyzed. The word-formation processes that will mainly be discussed are the following: derivation, blending, abbreviations, loanwords, analogy, meaning-change, compounding and inventions. Word-formation processes and their share of the new words are illustrated in figure 4. In some cases, two word-formation processes are active and in those instances both of the processes are accounted for.

Figure 4: Share of each word-formation process among the new words.
4.3.1 Derivation

Derivation is the second most frequently used word-formation processes among new words in 2014. 21% of the new words are formed by derivation, see figure 4.

In Chinese, there are both true affixes and quasi-affixes. The main difference between these two types is that quasi-affixes keep meaning whereas real affixes have lost their meanings in the derived words. Among these new words, the affixes are all identified as quasi-affixes.

Furthermore, there are a couple of tests which are used in order to identify these quasi-affixes. Wang and Fu mention different types of tests. One test is to analyze if a certain morpheme still contains the same meaning when used with other elements and analyze if the morpheme can be reduced. Wang and Fu mention one example using 鱼 (yú) ‘fish’. The phrases “买了一条鲤鱼” (mǎi le yī tiáo lǐ yú) and “买了一条鲩鱼” (mǎi le yī tiáo huàn yú) both contain a word that ends with 鱼 (yú). These two phrases can both be reduced to the phrase “买了一条鱼” (mǎi le yī tiáo yú) which still hold and represents similar meaning, and it means that 鱼 (yú) is not an affix. However, applying this test to words that are derived from quasi-affixes would not be correct. Another test concerning semantic bleaching is to investigate how the affix can be used in different amounts. The phrase “晚宴上的一条鲤鱼只吃了一半” (wǎn yàn shàng yī tiáo lǐ yú zhī chī le yī bàn) can be reduced to the phrase “鱼只吃了一半” (yú zhī chī le yī bàn), however, the phrase “晚宴上请的语言学家只来了一半” (wǎn yàn qǐng de yǔ yán xué jiā zhī lái le yī bàn) cannot be reduced to “家只来了一半” (jiā zhī lái le yī bàn). Thus, 家 (jiā) is probably a quasi-affix but not 鱼 (yú). Apart from using these tests when analyzing quasi-affixes, examining the positioning of morphemes, the productivity of the morphemes and examining whether morphemes have partially lost their original meaning are also used when testing which morphemes are
functioning as quasi-affixes (Zeng and Wang 54). Moreover, most of the quasi-suffixes are often not combined with a single morpheme, quasi-affixes are predominantly used in polysyllabic words (Wang and Fu).

To illustrate how quasi-affixes are determined in this study: 一个族 (yī gè zǔ) ‘one classifier ethnicity’ cannot substitute the new word 抢包族 (qiāng bāo zǔ) ‘people who snatch red envelopes’ as it do not represent the same meaning. 不要做抢包族 (bú yāo zuò qiāng bāo zǔ) and 不要做课堂低头族 (yāo zuò kè táng dī tóu zǔ) cannot correctly be substituted by 不要做 (bú yāo zuò). Furthermore, the phrase “晚宴上请的课堂低头族只来了一半” (wǎn yàn shàng qǐng de kè táng dī tóu zǔ zhǐ lái le yī bàn) cannot be reduced to “族只来了一半” (zǔ zhǐ lái le yī bàn). In addition, -族 (zǔ) is found in the same position in all of new the words that contain it. The morpheme is also productive when forming words and it is mainly used in polysyllabic words. For these reasons, -族 (zǔ) is considered to be a quasi-affix.

Figure 5: Share of prefix and suffixes among words that are formed by derivation.
Suffixes are more common than prefixes which can be observed in figure 5. This is not unexpected as there are also more true suffixes compared to true prefixes in Chinese (Lin 61). All the words that are formed with a suffix are nouns. The most common suffixes among the new words are -族 (zú), -体 (tǐ), -险 (xiǎn), -令 (lìng), -党 (dǎng), -粉 (fěn), -码 (mǎ) and -宝 (bǎo). There are also other suffixes which are not as common among the new words, such as -工 (gōng), -客 (kè), -男 (nán), -群 (qún), -帖 (tiē), -门 (mén) and -货 (huò).

The most common suffix is -族 (zú). In total, there are 14 words formed with -族 (zú) in 2014. The suffix is predominantly used when forming words containing three morphemes, for example:

1. a. 避孩族 (bì hái zú)
   b. 单人族 (dān rén zú)
   c. 陪跑族 (péi páo zú)

The word 族 (zú) has been used for a long time to form new words and it used to indicate a certain nationality or race. In the new words, the suffix is used to indicate a certain social group or group of people. Similarly, Zhou’s and Li’s findings also showed that -族 (zú) was common in new word-formations. In 2014, this suffix continues to be productive when forming new words.

Other common suffixes found are the following:

2. a. 存金宝 (cún jīn bǎo)
   b. 点赞党 (diǎn zàn dǎng)
   c. 喂药门 (wèi yào mén)
d. 服务码 (fú wù mǎ)
e. 别哭体 (biè kū tǐ)

2a is formed with the affix 宝 (bǎo). 宝 (bǎo) originally means treasure or jewel. The suffix 宝 (bǎo) has another meaning when used in new words: it refers to different types of e-wallets. The suffix 党 (dǎng) in 2b is similar to the suffix 族 (zú) as both are used to indicate a certain group of people. The suffix 门 (mén) in 2c means ‘gate’ as in the meaning connected to a scandal. 2c refers to a scandal where children were illegally given medicine in kindergartens. Li also found 门 (mén) to be used among new word-formations (34). In 2d, 码 (mǎ) is a suffix referring to QR-codes, or other types of codes. The suffix 体 (tǐ) in 2e means ‘style’, and it is a productive suffix in 2014 which was also true between 2011-2013 (Li 34). The words constructed with suffixes are predominantly polysyllabic, 82% of the these are words constituted of three syllables. Merely 12% are disyllabic. This corresponds with the characteristics of quasi-affixes which is mentioned by Wang and Fu as they stated that most of the words formed with quasi-affixes are polysyllabic.

The prefixes used to construct new words in 2014 are 秒 (miǎo), 零 (līng), 微 (wēi), 裸 (luǒ) and 反 (fǎn). One common prefix is 秒 (miǎo) and words formed with this prefix are all disyllabic verbs, two examples are:

3.
   a. 秒光 (miǎo guāng)
   b. 秒赞 (miǎo zàn)

The prefix 秒 (miǎo) is used to indicate that an action takes place in a very short time period. 秒 (miǎo) is a very productive prefix as it can easily be added to verbs and form new words.
That the prefix 秒 (mìǎo) is only formed with one other morpheme is different from the common characteristics of quasi-suffixes observed above. 秒 (mìǎo) is used to only form disyllabic words may be explained by the fact that words derived from it are verbs, and many verbs in Chinese are, in fact, monosyllabic. In 2014, 秒 (mìǎo) is a very productive prefix, however, this prefix was not mentioned in previous studies.

Other examples of words which are formed with the help of prefixes are the following:

4.
   a. 零翻译 (líng fān yì)
   b. 裸骂 (luǒ jiò)
   c. 微沙龙 (wēi shā long)

The prefix 零 (líng) in the word 4a is also a productive prefix that is used to construct words containing three syllables. The prefix 零 (líng) has also gone through a semantic bleaching as the word usually means zero or fractional but as a quasi-affix it is used for negation which has a similar meaning to 没有 (méi yǒu) ‘have not’. The word 4a is a verb that refers to when something should be expressed in Chinese but the foreign language is instead used without any translation.

4.3.2 Blending

There are a total of six words that are formed by blending. They are predominantly nouns and all are disyllabic. Many of the blends are formed by taking one morpheme from a word containing two morphemes and another morpheme from another word containing two
morphemes. However, only 1% of the new words are formed through blending. Some of the blends among are listed below:

1.
   a. 康商 (kāng shāng)
   b. 虎蝇 (hǔ yíng)
   c. 腐利 (fǔ lì)

1a 康商 (kāng shāng) is formed by taking the last morpheme in 健康 (jiàn kāng) ‘healthy’ and adding it to the last morpheme from the word 智商 (zhì shāng) ‘IQ’. The word describes someone who has great knowledge about how to have a healthy lifestyle. The word 1b 虎蝇 (hǔ yíng) is formed from the words 老虎 (lǎo hǔ) ‘tiger’ and 苍蝇 (cāng yīng) ‘fly’. The new word refers to a corrupt low ranking official who is involved in high levels of corruption. 虎 (hǔ) in the new word refers to the appetite of a lion whereas 蝇 (yíng) refers to the small wings of a fly (Hu and Zhou 46). 1c 腐利 (fǔ lì) is formed from the words 腐败 (fǔ bài) ‘corrupt’ and 福利 (fú lì) ‘welfare’ and means that a person’s wealth and welfare derives from corruption.

Similar to Renner, Maniez, and Arnaud findings, only a few words were found to be blends, Renner, Maniez, and Arnaud found that 2.8% of the words they analyzed were blends (130). In contrast, only 1% of the new words are blends in 2014. Renner, Maniez, and Arnaud stated that it is not surprising that there are few Chinese words which are formed through blending as Chinese has similar traits to an isolating language (130). This is even more true for ancient Chinese which in essence was an isolating language (Bynon 265). The difficulty of constructing blends in Chinese is due to internal structure of Chinese words (Renner, Maniez, and Arnaud 130). Each syllable in Chinese is a morpheme and each
morpheme is represented by a logographic character. Except for tone changes, morphemes in Chinese cannot be modified (Renner, Maniez, and Arnaud 130). Thus, syllables cannot be split up or extended. In contrast, it is easier for languages that are not considered to have traits of an isolating language when constructing blends. For example, in English it is much simpler. One example is the word *smog*. The word is formed by using the onset and vowel in the syllable *smoke* and the coda in the syllable *fog* to form a new syllable. This type of blends is not possible in Chinese as the syllables cannot be altered with like in English. It also means that blends in Chinese cannot be monosyllabic.

### 4.3.3 Abbreviations

Abbreviation is a common word-formation process among the new words. The words formed through abbreviation accounted for 15% of the new words, see figure 4.

There are different abbreviation methods used when forming new words by abbreviation. Mainly four different types are identified. The new words are derived from individual words, phrases which were abbreviated with the help of numbers, sentences and phrases.

Words formed from a list of words are quite common among this set of new words. This type of abbreviation often takes the first morpheme of each word and then combines them into a new word. Some examples are provided as follow:

1. a. 高洋上 (gāo yáng shàng) (高端, 洋气, 上档次 (gāo duān, yáng qì, shàng dàng cì))

   b. 讲懂守 (jiāng dòng shǒu) (讲诚信, 懂规则, 守纪律 (jiāng chèng xìn, dǒng guī zé, shǒu jǔ lǐ))
Another type of abbreviation which have resulted in many new words are derived from longer list of phrases. A numeral word is included and the numeral represents the number of phrases from which the new word is derived from. Examples of this type of abbreviations are:

2.

a. 三项清单 (sān xiàng qīng dān) (权力清单, 责任清单, 负面清单 (quán lì qīng dān, zé rèn qīng dān, fù miàn qīng dān))

b. 三严三实 (sān yán sān shí) (既严以修身, 严以用权, 严以律己, 又某事要实, 创业要实, 做人要实 (jì yán yǐ xiū shēn, yán yǐ yòng quán, yán yǐ lǜ yǐ, yòu mǒu shí yào shí, chuàng yè yào shí, zuò rén yào shí))

The third type is abbreviations from sentences, which is not common. Among the new words, there is only one example of an abbreviation from a sentence:

3.

a. 不作不死 (bú zuò bù sǐ) (不作死就不会死 (bú zuò sǐ jiù bù huì sǐ))

The fourth type is abbreviation from a long phrase. It is often noun or verb phrases that are abbreviated. The following are some examples of this type:

4.

a. 汉听 (hàn tīng) (中国汉字听写大会 (zhōng guó hànzì tīng xiě dà huì))

b. 弃考承诺书 (qì kǎo chéng nuò shū) (放弃参加高考的承诺书 (fāng qì kǎo cān jià gào kǎo de chéng nuò shū))

c. 女位 (nǚ wèi) (女士专用停车位 (nǚ shì zhuānyòng tíng chē wèi))

d. 占中 (zhàn zhōng) (占领中环 (zhàn lǐng zhōng huán))
The words 4a, 4b and 4c are derived from noun phrases whereas 4d is derived from a verb phrase.

**4.3.4 Analogy**

In 2014, 29 new words are formed through analogy which is the method of imitating existing words. Some examples are:

1. a. 半婚 (bàn hūn)
   b. 床东 (huáng dōng)
   c. 腐点 (fǔ diǎn)
   d. 纵蝇为害 (zòng yíng wéi hài)

半婚 (bàn hūn), 1a, follows the pattern of other words such as 裸婚 (luǒ hūn) and 摆婚 (bǎi hūn). 床东 (chuàng dōng) ‘Someone who rents out beds’, 1b, is imitating the word 房东 (fáng dōng) ‘landlord’. The word 腐点 (fǔ diǎn), 1d, is formed in similar structure as the words 爱点 (ài diǎn) and 笑点 (xiào diǎn). 纵蝇为害 (zòng yíng wéi hài), 1e, is similar to the Chinese idiom 养虎为患 (yǎng hǔ wéi huàn) ‘to nurture a tiger invites calamity, to indulge one’s enemy is asking for trouble’.

1a, 1b, 1c and 1e are all disyllabic words, in fact, 48% of all the words formed through analogy are disyllabic. These words follow the pattern or structure of existing words, thus it is not surprising that most of the words are disyllabic as most words in the Chinese lexicon are disyllabic.
4.3.5 Borrowing

There are a total of 18 loanwords, or 4%, of all the new words in 2014. Some examples of loanwords are the following:

1.
   a. 标签女 (biāo qiān nǚ)
   b. 冰桶挑战 (bīng tǒng tiǎo zhàn)
   c. F2O
   d. 深媒体 (shēn méi tǐ)
   e. 雾计算 (wù jì suàn)
   f. 彩虹跑 (cǎi hóng pǎo)
   g. T2O

1a-1f are all loanwords from English and all the words except 1c and 1g are examples of loan translations. Loan translation is the most common type of borrowing among the loanwords.

The words F2O (1c), and T2O (1g), are English abbreviations. F2O means focus to online and T2O means television to online. These two loanwords are related to IT, which is common among loanwords in Chinese and many of them are abbreviations such as PC, WIFI and CD. Liu stated that many English abbreviations incorporated in Chinese derived from the internet (25).

The words 1a, 1b, 1d, 1e and 1f are examples of loan translations from English. Most of the loanwords are originally from English, which shows the increasing impact of English on Chinese.

There are also two loanwords from Japanese which entered into Chinese in 2014:

2.
   a. 壁咚 (bì dōng)
b. 雷金 (léi jīn)

The word 壁咚 (bì dōng) is borrowed from the Japanese word kabe-don which is a term from anime and manga that describes the act when someone is slapping a wall as kabe in Japanese means wall and don describes the sound. Thus, 壁咚 (bì dōng) is a loan translation. 2b, 雷金 (léi jīn) is a loan from the Japanese word rejin which is a name of a computer game. The two characters in 雷金 are direct translations from the Japanese pronunciation. These two words, 2a and 2b, are both derived from the entertainment industry. Naturally, through consuming Japanese media and entertainment, Chinese also borrowed new words from the Japanese language.

4.3.6 Change of Meaning Among Words

There are seven words, 2% of the words in total that have gone through a semantic change and received new meanings and usages. Some examples are:

1. 上山虎 (shàng shān hǔ)
2. 下山虎 (xià shān hǔ)
3. 专车 (zhuān chē)

These words have undergone a semantic widening as they still can be used to refer to their original meanings. The words 上山虎 (shàng shān hǔ) ‘Tiger climbing up a mountain’ and 下山虎 (xià shān hǔ) ‘Tiger climbing down a mountain’ are used to refer to traditional Chinese paintings that portray a tiger who goes up or down a mountain. The new meaning of the word 1a, refers to a young official who are advancing in his career but are involved in corruption.
The word 1b refers to an official who left his office but is under investigation for corruption. These two words’ meanings have nothing to do with the words’ original meaning, except on metaphorical level. The word 专车 (zhuān chē), 1c, original meaning is ‘a car for private use’ or ‘a special car’. The word is now used to mean private cars that are used as taxis and that are booked through a smartphone. Thus, the word’s new meaning is, to some extent, also related to its original meaning.

4.3.7 Compounding

Compound words constitute the greatest part of the new words in Chinese. This is not surprising as compounding is one of the main word-formation processes in Chinese. There are several different types of new compounds in 2014. Noun and verb compounds are most prevalent among these words.

The verb compounds are mainly formed in two ways. One way is combining a verb with a noun:

1.  
   a. 扫款 (sǎo kuǎn)  
   b. 约饭 (yuē fàn)  
   c. 走课 (zǒu kè)

These types of verb compounds are primarily disyllabic. They are formed by combining a verb, which functions as the head, with a noun. Another method which used when forming verb compounds is combing an adjective as a head with a verb:

2.  
   a. 盲接 (máng jiē)
b. 雅赠 (yǎ zèng)

Most of the new compounds are nouns, some examples:

3.

3a. 人情贪腐 (rén qíng tān fù)
3b. 影子员工 (yǐng zi yuán gōng)
3c. 二孩经济 (èr hái jīng jì)
3d. 垃圾短信车 (lā jī duō xìn chē)

Polysyllabic words account for 89% of all noun compounds. Noun compounds constituted of three or four syllables are most common. The compounds are often formed by combining two words such as 3a and 3b. Some are formed through combining more than two words, for example 3c and 3d.

Similar to Zhou’s paper, new compounds in Chinese are predominantly constituted of three or four syllables (17). Thus, the trend which Zhou mentions continues in 2014.

4.3.8 Inventions

There are several words that are not formed through any of the word-formation processes above, but are instead invented. Most of these words are names of different things. Three of these inventions are names of applications or software:

1.

1a. 滴米 (dī mǐ)
1b. 花呗 (huā bài)
1c. 云罐 (yún guàn)
Two other examples of words are formed through combining an alphabet letter with a character:

2.
   a. Q骗 (piàn)
   b. Q仔 (zǎi)

2a and 2b are both from a popular chat program called QQ and the ‘Q’ in these two words derive from the name.

Moreover, there are two words that are formed with the help of reduplication:

3.
   a. 萌萌哒 (méng méng dā)
   b. 习大大 (xí dà dà)

Reduplication of a morpheme creates a sort of cute and affectional association to the meanings of the words in 3a and 3b.

4.3.9 Words Involving Two Word-formation Processes

A few new words which are formed through using two different word-formation processes.

For example:

1.
   a. 亚太梦 (yà tài mèng)
   b. 跑男 (páo nán)
1a is an abbreviation from the phrase 亚平洋地区共同繁荣进步的梦想 (yà zhōu tài píng yáng dì qǔ gòng tóng fù róng jìn bù de mèng xiǎng), however, 1a is also an analogy to words such as 中国梦 (zhōng guó mèng). 1b is a borrowed from the word running man, it is a loan translation which uses the quasi-affix -男 (nán) when translating the word into Chinese. Thus, two different word-formation processes are also used in the formation of 1b. For this group of words, they are counted for both word-formation processes when generating the statistics for this paper.

4.4 Discussion

The most important finding from the analysis in this thesis is that there were three primary word-formation processes, apart from compounding, identified among new Chinese words in 2014: abbreviation, analogy and derivation. Zhou predicts that the number of abbreviations in Chinese will increase rapidly (18). The increase in abbreviations in Chinese is due to the faster pace of life in the modern world, and influence from both English and technology (Zhou 18; Li 34). Previous studies, however, have not conducted any quantitative analyses comparing various word-formation processes. Therefore, it is not possible to make any conclusion regarding whether the number of abbreviations has, in fact, increased. We can only conclude from the current findings that abbreviation is indeed a common word-formation process among new words in Chinese. We might also assume that abbreviation will continue to be a major word-formation process in Chinese in the future, as the fast pace of life in society will not decelerate. Instead, people expect greater efficiency in different aspects of life, which goes hand in hand with the rapid development of technology. Hence, there will be a desire to shorten verbal communication, likely resulting in the need to abbreviate more words. It will result, abbreviation will become more active in the formation of new words in Chinese.
In 2001, Zhou found that 10% of words were formed through analogy or derived from quasi-affixes (19). In 2014, analogy and derivation accounted for 27% (21% and 6%, respectively) of the new words, a much greater proportion compared to Zhou’s findings in 2001 (19). Thus, analogy and derivation constitute a more active role in forming new Chinese words. Li also mentions that analogy is a common word-formation process among new words (34). However, there are many more words formed through derivation than analogy in this study. This finding shows that different word-formation processes might be more frequently used when forming new words during different times. This study further illustrates the changing patterns of Chinese word-formation processes since Zhou’s 2001 study. The demand to rapidly create new words is not only due to a faster pace in society, but also because of the greater importance of information technology in people’s lives. Using quasi-affixes or form new ones are effective and convenient ways to form new words that share similar meanings. Moreover, this study has identified several productive quasi-affixes, which might be beneficial for both learning and teaching vocabulary. Teaching word patterns is an efficient approach when it comes to broadening students’ vocabulary, but it also helps to increase students’ reading proficiency (Rasinski et al. 133). It will become more necessary to teach these quasi-affixes to students as quasi-affixes will become more commonly used when forming words.

The finding that loanwords are mainly derived from English is not surprising. English is the international language of the world, and learning English is very popular among Chinese. There are around 300 million Chinese currently learning English (Yang and Zhang 18). As China becomes more international and integrated into the globalized world, the influence of English on China will undoubtedly increase. Under these circumstances, more new words will be borrowed from English. This is something that has already happened in Hong Kong (Hoffer 66). Still, loanwords in Chinese are often not easily detected, as most
loans are loan translations and not direct loans, with the exception of English abbreviations. This might change in the future, however, as more Chinese will be proficient in the English language and thus will be more inclined to borrow words directly into Chinese from English without translating them.

Polysyllabic words accounted for 71.9% of all new words. In contrast, only 14% of the words in the Chinese lexicon are polysyllabic (Lin 55). If the trend of polysyllabic words continues—and it will probably will—the Chinese language and its lexicon will develop and change. It has been said that Chinese is a disyllabic language; as seen in the investigation, however, this is changing. New words in Chinese today are predominantly polysyllabic and it is a trend that has been persisting since implementation of the reforms, which opened up China to the world by Deng Xiaoping (Zhou 18). That new Chinese words are becoming longer is a natural development, as there are a limited number of Chinese characters. New characters are almost never invented, which results in a limited combination of words formed using two characters. This limitation will certainly lead to a greater share of new words gradually becoming longer. The greater demand of forming new words due to rapid changes in technology and society are also factors that result in the likelihood that new words might tend to be longer. Only using two syllables to form new words is not enough when it comes to the growing need of naming new ideas, things and aspects in a more complex and multifaceted world; this is something Zhou mentions as well (18). Moreover, the use of two or more compound words to form many new compound words is also a reason as to why there are many new polysyllabic words. Zhou also mentions that these types of compound words are a source for words becoming longer in Chinese (18). Furthermore, derivation is an increasingly important process when forming new words, and words formed with quasi-affixes are generally polysyllabic. For these reasons, the Chinese language in the future will
probably become a more diverse language on a syllabic level due to the characteristics of the new words.

Additionally, it is also worth remembering that the data used in this study do not represent any kind of official data of words that were entered into any official, published dictionaries. Many of these new words might rarely be used and many words will probably fade away. Some of the words might even be out-dated and no longer used shortly after their formation. Such examples might be words that are names or names of certain contemporary policies that might only have been valid in 2014.
5. Summary and Conclusion

The aim of this study was to examine word-formation processes and provide an overview of how words have been formed in 2014. The investigation of the new words has shown that the Chinese lexicon is evolving and changing. New words formed in 2014 show some particular characteristics that differ from how words in the Chinese lexicon are constituted. This study helps to identify how active each word-formation process is when forming new words in 2014, through an analysis of word-formation processes.

This study has shown that most of the new words were formed by compounding. However, derivation and abbreviation were major word-formation processes in 2014. The analysis of derivation focused on quasi-affixation, which is quite unique in Chinese. There were several different quasi-affixes identified that were productive when constructing new words. In comparison to other studies, words formed through of derivation and analogy were much more frequent in 2014. Moreover, there were four particular types of abbreviations among the new words. Abbreviations were derived from individual words, phrases, and sentences, as well as from a list of phrases with the help of numbers. The study also found that in 2014, Chinese borrowed words mainly from English, but also from Japanese. Furthermore, the trend of words becoming longer in Chinese is continuing, as the study observed that most of the new words were polysyllabic. This stands in contrast to the Chinese lexicon where most words are disyllabic. If the trend continues in the future, the proportion of disyllabic words among Chinese words will decrease in the long term.

Moreover, this thesis has investigated new words during a particular year and the most commonly used word-formation processes. Further studies in this area should examine any potential differences between different periods and years. A comparative study over a long period of time in order to clearly identify trends and differences would be an interesting area of study. A comparative study comparing new words in Chinese with another language
and examining similarities and differences of word-formation processes might also be a study worth undertaking. However, these further studies should also be focused on quantitative data, as this thesis has, in order to make accurate statistical comparisons.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Nr of Syllables</th>
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<th>Second process</th>
<th>Part of Speech</th>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Loan</td>
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<tr>
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房耗子
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分享经济
蜂巢城市
服务码
扶我卡
腐点
腐利
副科病
港股通
高冷
高铁动卧
高风险
高洋上
耕地宝
工士学位
公存公贷
公务的士
咕咚效应
挂名饷
管保保
光脚院士
国家公祭日
国家宪法日
国民大哥
国民男神
国民岳母
海投党
海外购
汉昕
合体剧
合作型保障房
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筷搜
垃圾短信车
蓝翔体
老常态
老老虎
雷金
良心剧
良心帖
两带一路
两微一端
劣迹令
猎狐 2014
临终关怀师
零窗口
零翻译
零解聘
零裸官
零钱宝
零梯度
零威亚
零佣通
流量比
流量钱包
流量银行
楼改
楼亲亲
鲁甸地震
路转粉
裸驾
裸年
裸诉
绿色广场舞
妈妈小屋
码上店
霾表
霾症
卖赞
蛮拼的
慢数据
盲接
盲目疗法
媒体码
萌贱
萌经济
萌萌哒
萌值
迷马挑战
绵羊墙
免密工号
秒懂
秒光
秒空
秒拍
秒抢
秒赞
秒转
民赖
民新指数
默舞
南京大屠杀死难者国家公祭日
脑洞大开
逆迁徙
暖爸
虐星
偶遇外交
跑男
陪跑族
配售型保障房
配租型保障房
拼脸
拼妈风
屏社交
Q骗
Q仔
弃访转法
弃考承诺书
弃疗
弃星
千万别说体
迁黑
钱包价
欠幕
抢包族
且行且珍惜体

2 Compound Adjective
3 Compound Noun
3 Invention Adjective
2 Compound Noun
4 Abbreviation Noun
3 Loan Noun
4 Compound Noun
2 Prefix Verb
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13 Compound Noun
4 Compound Verb
3 Abbreviation Verb
2 Analogy Noun
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4 Compound Noun
2 Loan Suffix Noun
3 Suffix Noun
6 Compound Noun
6 Compound Noun
2 Compound Verb
3 Abbreviation Noun
3 Abbreviation Verb
2 Invention Verb
2 Invention Noun
4 Abbreviation Phrase
5 Abbreviation Noun
2 Abbreviation Verb
2 Abbreviation Verb
5 Suffix Noun
2 Compound Verb
3 Compound Noun
2 Compound Verb
3 Suffix Noun
6 Suffix Noun
亲缘腐败
轻奢
轻众筹
清房改革
清霾
请假病人
权力兼职
权力烟瘾
全面二孩
全深改
全医卡
群发送礼
人情贪腐
任性
任性体
融 e 购
融十条
软联通
三项清单
三严三实
三走活动
扫款
晒四公
闪拍
上海金
上山虎
烧脑剧
舌尖外交
深改
深改元年
深媒体
师德红线
施予受
实人认证
食强险
始发仓
收礼罪
手兽
首腐
刷活
刷墙
刷阅族
双移送

4 Compound  Noun
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2 Analogy  Name  Verb
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3 Suffix  Noun
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小冰 2 Compound  Name  Noun
小官巨腐 4  Compound  Noun
小青柠 3  Compound  Noun
携程宝 3  Suffix  Noun
心常态 3  Compound  Noun
心塞 2  Abbreviation  Adjective
新常态 3  Compound  Noun
新平庸 3  Compound  Adjective
新乡贤 3  Compound  Noun
薪金煲 3  Compound  Noun
薪金宝 3  Suffix  Noun
薪政 2  Abbreviation  Noun
星星迷 3  Compound  Noun
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学癌 2  Suffix  Noun
学残 2  Compound  Noun
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雅赠 2  Compound  Verb
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亚投行 3  Abbreviation  Noun
烟草腐败 4  Compound  Noun
颜值 2  Compound  Noun
央四条 3  Abbreviation  Noun
央五条 3  Abbreviation  Noun
阳光族 3  Abbreviation  Noun
一带一路 4  Abbreviation  Phrase
一剧两星 4  Compound  Phrase
医老 2  Analogy  Verb
医疗理财师 5  Compound  Noun
医疗码 3  Suffix  Noun
医养工 3  Suffix  Noun
依然体 3  Suffix  Noun
壹钱包 3  Compound  Name  Noun
益蚊  2  Analogy  Noun
阴天  3  Suffix  Noun
隐形  3  Compound  Noun
蝇贪  2  Blend  Noun
影子户  3  Compound  Noun
影子员工  4  Compound  Noun
硬联通  3  Compound  Noun
佣金宝  3  Suffix  Noun
幽灵户口  4  Compound  Noun
有偿沉默  4  Compound  Noun
有钱任性  4  Compound  Phrase
语声笔  3  Compound  Noun
语言癌  3  Compound  Noun
语言恐惧症  5  Compound  Noun
玉兔车  3  Compound  Noun
约饭  2  Compound  Verb
云按揭  3  Compound  Noun
云罐  2  Invention  Name  Noun
晕岗  2  Abbreviation  Verb
砸锅党  3  Suffix  Noun
赞营销  3  Abbreviation  Noun
宅医送  3  Compound  Noun
占中  2  Abbreviation  Verb
朝露妆  3  Compound  Noun
证途  2  Compound  Noun
政务日  3  Compound  Noun
职二代  3  Analogy  Suffix  Noun
志愿云  3  Compound  Noun
智腐  2  Abbreviation  Verb
众症时代  4  Compound  Noun
昼颜妻  3  Compound  Noun
抓常  2  Abbreviation  Verb
专车  2  Meaning-change  Noun
自发自还  4  Analogy  Verb
自干五  3  Abbreviation  Noun
自家虎  3  Compound  Noun
自由快递员  5  Compound  Noun
纵蝇为害  4  Analogy  Phrase
走工  2  Compound  Verb
走课  2  Compound  Verb
走走族  3  Suffix  Noun
租壳  2  Compound  Verb
最后一步路  5  Compound  Noun