A Study of Suffixation in Tianjin Dialect

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ABSTRACT

Tianjin dialect is known for its similarities to Putonghua in terms of vocabulary and grammar. The study of the vocabulary of this dialect dates back to the 1980’s. The linguists who carried on morphological studies have discussed affixation in the vernacular words of this dialect, defining suffixes as the morphemes which have lost lexical meaning, and that are bound to the roots.

This paper explores the issues of suffixation in Tianjin dialect. In analyzing new data collected from this dialect, the author argues that suffixes did not lose all their lexical meanings when they are grammaticalized into suffixes, but still have lexical meanings or grammatical functions preserved until now. The analysis is put forward mainly from two steps. Firstly, the overall characteristics of the vernacular suffixes in Tianjin dialect are examined. The traits that all suffixes share are inspected from the aspects of phonology, semantics as well as syntax. And the most productive four suffixes are explored one by one in detail. Their old forms are referred to, which provide evidence for the process of grammaticalization, for the correlations are easy to detect.

The method applied in this paper offers a new perspective on lexical study of dialects. What’s more, the author observes that Tianjin dialect is in a quickly changing process, in that many traits are not steady.

Key Words: Tianjin Dialect   Suffixation   Grammaticalization   Lexical meaning
摘要

一直以来，天津方言都被人们认为在词汇及语法方面与普通话是极其相似的，而该方言词汇方面的研究开始于20世纪80年代。在其形态学领域进行研究的语言学家们大都会提到在词缀方面的研究，因为词缀是反映该方言特性的一个重要部分。这些语言学家在研究中对词缀给出定义，即附着于词根，失去本身词汇意义的黏着语素。

本文旨在探索天津方言中后缀的性质。从新收集的语料中总结出一个新的假设：天津方言中的后缀在语法化过程结束后，并没有完全失去全部语汇意义，而是保留了部分词汇意义和语法功能。这个假设将会在对词缀的分析上从两个方面给予证明。首先，文章将对该方言后缀从整体上做出分析，这个分析将从语音，语义以及句法几个方面出发。然后，作者选出四个较能产的后缀进行详细的阐述，其中，文章还比较了这些词缀在古代和现今的意义，以此证明这些词成为后缀是一个逐步的语法化的过程。最后，文章通过对这些词缀整体和细节上的研究对比发现该假设在此方言中成立。

本研究采用的方法可以对今后方言中的词汇研究提供一定的借鉴。此外，作者还发现，天津方言中还有很多词汇的形式和性质仍然很不稳定，从而说明该方言仍然处在一个快速发展的过程中。

关键词：天津方言 后缀 语法化 词汇意义
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1. INTRODUCTION

Affixes are bound morphemes that are attached to the roots. They do not form words by themselves, while they have to be added on to a stem. Affixes can be divided into two groups: one is derivational affixes which participate in the formation of words, and they will change the category of the roots; and the other is inflectional affixes that are not involved in the process of word formation. They are those which mark the grammatical functions like gender, number, case with nouns, and person, tense, aspect, mood, voice with verbs. Taking the adjective *deep* as an example, the addition of the derivational suffix *-en* to it results in a verb *deepen*; the addition of the derivational suffix *-th* results in a noun *depth*. On the other hand, the verb *deepen* inflected for the present and past tense remains a verb; or the noun *depth* inflected for gender, number and case remains a noun.

For different languages, the conditions of affixation are different. Take the comparison of English and Chinese as an example: Coates (1999: 50) claims that ‘true infixation is absent in English’, while some linguists pointed out that there are morphemes which can be analyzed as infixes in Chinese, like the infix *de* expressing probability in the word *nadedong* ‘able to carry’, and the infix *li* which indicates negative meanings in the word *hulihutu* ‘soft in the head’ (Tang 1988: 10). And as to the various dialects of Chinese, the conditions of affixation have also got many differentias. Some affixes are so representative of one dialect that a stranger from another province will misunderstand the meaning expressed by the speaker. Hence, this point gives the way for this paper.

This paper discusses the conditions of affixation in Tianjin dialect. Because there are more suffixes than prefixes in this dialect, the focus of this research is on the study of suffixation. The first part of this paper reviews some concepts which are relevant to suffixation and what former linguists have done in this field. In the second part, we will discuss the characteristics of some typical suffixes that are relatively productive in Tianjin dialect. The distinguishing characteristics are analyzed from the perspectives of sound system, morphological meaning, as well as the syntactic context. Lastly, based on the analysis above, the author gives rise to a hypothesis, which is that the suffixes in Tianjin dialect not only function as grammatical units, but also donate lexical meanings to the words.
2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Suffixes

Suffixes are bound morphemes which are attached at the end of the free morphemes. The study of suffixation has carried on by many linguists from different perspectives. The conditions of suffixation in different languages are different. We will take English and Chinese as a comparison and review what has been done in this literature.

2.1.1 Suffixes in English

In earlier times Randolph Quirk et al. (1985: 1546–1558) have introduced the conditions in English suffixation. Their treatment of suffixes is on a grammatical basis rather than a semantic basis, because suffixes play a small semantic role in word-formation, and their primary function is to change the grammatical function of the base. They group the suffixes according to the word class that results when they are added to a base. Therefore we have Noun Suffixes, Verb Suffixes, etc. And, more specifically, they also concerned with the particular word classes of the bases the suffixes are attached to, so we have Denominal Suffixes, De-adjectival Suffixes, etc. For example, -ness is to be analyzed as a “de-adjectival noun suffix” in that it forms nouns from adjectives such as gracious.

When it comes to the characteristics of suffixes, they concluded that ‘a suffix is more often an unstressed addition to a base’ (Quirk et al. 1985: 1547). But as for the borrowed words from other languages, their suffixation is slightly different from the vernacular ones. ‘The suffixation with originally foreign items is often accompanied by stress shifts and sound changes determined by the foreign language concerned… some of the originally foreign suffixes require originally foreign bases, and there has traditionally been some inhibition about forming “hybrids”.’ (Quirk et al. 1985: 1547)

Bauer and Huddleston (2002: 1667) gave a precise definition of affixes: affixation is the process of forming a new base by the addition of an affix. Their emphasis is on the syntactic effect of affixes. They analyzed three main types: affixes which change the primary category (like -ness added to an adjective creating a noun and -able to a verb creating an adjective), affixes which change the subclass (like star being a concrete count noun, whereas suffixed stardom being an abstract and
non-count noun), and affixes which have no effect on the syntactic distribution (like the suffix -ish makes adjective green into another adjective greenish, and the suffix -ess makes a noun tiger into another noun tigress).

They also found that affixes have an order when they form words. They set the example of the suffix -hood, which can follow other suffixes, as in magic-ian-hood, but can never be followed by another derivational affix, so that *child-hood-ic is ungrammatical.

And finally they also confirmed that affixes, especially suffixes, may affect the position of the stress. There are four types of stress lying on the words, although some exceptions might appear sometimes. The first one is a rule for simple words. They made a comparison of the words with and without suffixes added on with the sound pattern of the word America (in which the stress falls on the third syllable from the end – the antepenult) and ve'randah (in which the stress falls on the second syllable from the end – penult). If the word has the same phonological structure with America, its stress will be on the antepenult, and if it is comparable to verandah, the stress will be on the penult. The suffixes -al, -ive, -ous behave in this way. And the second condition is that the stress falls on the syllable preceding the suffix. Examples are like -ify in purify and -ity in purity. The third is the stress on the suffix itself. The suffixes –ana, -ation, -ee, -er, -eer and –ese contain long vowels of the distinguishing kind so that they can attract stress to themselves. And the last type is stress-neutral suffixes. The suffixes in this group have no effect on the stress, so the stress falls on the same syllable as in the base. Examples are like -ness, -dom, -er, -hood, -ise, -ish, -ly and adjectivalising -y.

2.1.2 Suffixes in Chinese

Lu (1957: 131) was one of the earliest linguists who have studied on suffixes. He discussed the suffixes as -er, -zi, -tou, -men, and -de which are the commonest in Mandarin. Besides, he incorporated -zhe, -le and -guo into the group of suffixes. The first group are the suffixes that constitute nominals (nouns or pronouns), while the second group are the ones to make up verbal or adjective words.

In his study, which was based on Beijing dialect, he investigated the phonetic and semantic characteristics of the suffixes. The phonetic traits of the suffixes were examined from the changes after they became bound morphemes. And from the perspective of morphology, Lu analyzed the differences that lied in the suffixes.
among the words with monosyllabic roots, disyllabic roots and multisyllabic roots. What’s more, he compared different words with the same suffixes and examined the parts of speech of both the roots and the whole words after suffixes added on.

What should be paid attention to is that the morphemes -de, -zhe, -le and -guo belonged to suffixes in his study, but not sentence final particles like that in the sentence (1).

(1) 他 是 昨天 来 北京 的。

`he is yesterday come Beijing SFP`

‘It is indeed yesterday that he came to Beijing.’

And he denied the morphemes like -zhe, -jia, -hua, -ge, -la, -teng, -ba, -lai, -ran and -hù as suffixes. Lu claimed that they function like suffixes, for they are also the elements that are added to other constituents, but actually they are not suffixes in the words. But at last he did not give any definition to them.

Chao Yuen-Ren (1980: 120) generalized the conditions of suffixation in Chinese. What was different from Lu was that he raised a new idea of ‘zero suffix’, which aimed to make teaching convenient. This idea would make the words with or without suffixes into one class, as the nouns mao ‘cat’ (with zero suffix) and shìzi ‘lion’ (with the suffix of zi), ou ‘root of lotus’ (with zero suffix) and taozi ‘peach’ (with the suffix of zi) can be incorporated into one group.

He also pointed out that for the suffixed words, their meanings are not just the addition of meaning of the root plus meaning of the suffix on the surface. For instance, the word baode (adopted) does not mean bao ‘hug’ plus de ‘is’, but it gets an implied meaning in this word. In this book, Chao illustrated in detail the characteristics of the noun suffixes -er, -zi, -tou, -ba, -men and the verb suffixes -le, -zhe, -qilai and -xiaqu which shows aspects of verbs. Besides, he also discussed the modal suffix -mo, adverb suffix -jie and some not so common suffixes.

Tang (1988: 10) has made a thorough study into the field of affixation in Chinese. He defined affixes as the morphemes that cling to their roots and that show additive meanings like marking the category of the word. When it came to suffixes,

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1 SFP: Sentence Final Particle.
they are the morphemes that appear behind the root, like the second constituents in the disyllabic words *haizi* ‘child’, *huar* ‘flower’, and *gutou* ‘bone’.²

He classified suffixes in Chinese into two types: one is derivational suffixes which include some special suffixes that denote specific categories (like *-zi*, *-er*, *-tou*) and the suffixes that can change the category of the stem it attached to; The other is inflectional suffixes which can only attach to some specific categories and that cannot alter the parts of speech of the original roots. Examples for the former type is like the suffix *-hua*, which will make the roots to be verbs after adding this suffix, and like the suffix *-xing* that will change the words into nouns no matter what category the roots belong to. And the plural suffix *-men* that follows human pronouns and the aspect markers which follow verbs like *-le*, *-zhe* and *-guo* exemplify the latter type. They will not affect the category of the roots.

In his later work, Tang (1992: 19) concluded four rules to determine a morpheme to be an affix: (1) it must be bound; (2) it does not have definite lexical meanings but only grammatical meanings; (3) it is the center of the word which determines the category for the word; (4) it has active productivity and can produce new words continuously. And he put all the words with suffixes into different groups. The groups are arranged by the category of words after adding the suffixes: like noun suffixes *haizi* ‘child’, *xuezhe* ‘scholar’; adjective suffixes *hongdehua* ‘red flowers’, *zhengshi* ‘formal’; verb suffixes *lvhua* ‘afforestation’, *wanr* ‘to play’; adverb suffixes *turun* ‘suddenly’, *ou’er* ‘occasionally’; preposition and conjunction suffixes *genzhe* ‘then’, *guanyu* ‘as to’.

### 2.2 Suffixation in Tianjin Dialect

Li Xingjian and Liu Sixun (1986) have done initial work into the words with affixes in Tianjin dialect. The focus of their study is to list all the vernacular words in Tianjin dialect. And they made a small research on the characteristics of the sounds. They found out that the initial sounds *zh-, ch-, and sh-* in Beijing dialect is controversial in Tianjin dialect, as to some people pronounce them as above, while some pronounce them as *z-, c- and s-*. Besides, they concluded the phonetic characteristics in Tianjin dialect: there are 22 initial sounds (including zero initial),

² The morphemes in bold are suffixes in their words. Below are the same.
39 final sounds and 5 tones in this dialect. What’s more, they found out that there are also 21 -er final sounds, such as ar, iar, uar, ier, ur, yer, or, iər, etc.

Han Gendong has made a detailed study into Tianjin dialect. In the book *Tianjin Dialect* (Han 1993), he explored the dialect in the perspectives of phonology, vocabulary and culture. Words that are vernacular in Tianjin dialect are listed in this book, in which he picked out the words with particular suffixes and made a preliminary study into them.

He generalized the characteristics of the suffixes: they are the constituents attached to the roots; they are always in neutral tones; and they can denote that they belong to a certain category or that they can add some color to the words. In his analysis, he examined each suffix from its phonological characteristics, and the conditions such as attaching to what category of roots, forming what category of words, denoting positive, negative or neutral colors, and expressing what kind of meanings. For example, in the analysis of the suffix -jia, he listed all the words including that suffix, and summarized the common traits from the examples. The suffix is in neutral tone. It attaches to noun roots. It constitutes nouns in the form of Ajia\(^3\) or ABjia\(^4\), showing a group of people. And it is neutral in terms of emotional color.

Later in another article of his (1993: 75–79), he analyzed the conditions of suffixation in details. In this work, he found out all of the words with vernacular suffixes. And he found some new methods to analyze them. He divided the suffixes into three types: monosyllabic suffixes like -ci forming disyllabic verbs Acì, disyllabic suffixes like -buda forming trisyllabic adjectives Abuda, and trisyllabic suffixes like -buliudiu forming tetrasyllabic adjectives Abuliudiù.

In his interpretation, the suffixes have lost all their original lexical meanings, which totally become the accessories of the roots. And he reiterated that the suffixes can add colors to the words. For instance, the suffix -liur in the word form Aliur will add a positive color to the word it is involved in, like shunliur ‘a little bit shapely’, xiliur ‘a little bit thin’, guangliur ‘a little bit smooth’, etc. What’s more, he has observed that some suffixes can exist concurrently with several categories at the

\(^3\) In the analysis of words, we use capital letters A and B as roots, and X and Y as suffixes.

\(^4\) All the native words from Tianjin dialect in this paper have their corresponding forms in the following appendix.
same time. Like the suffix -*ba*, it can fit for three categories, like a noun zhuba ‘a stupid guy like a pig’, a verb siba ‘tear up’ and an adjective shouba ‘a little bit slim’.

And Li Shiyu (2004: 27) also mentioned about suffixation in Tianjin dialect. In his book, he considered more about the influence of culture on this dialect, rather than focus on the linguistic patterns, so we will not discuss more about it here.
3. **OVERVIEW OF SUFFIXATION IN TIANJIN DIALECT**

Before we take a closer look at the properties of individual suffixes in the next section, it seems necessary to discuss some of the properties that larger sets of suffixes have in common. Dealing with these general properties has the advantage that certain properties of suffixes need not be stated for each suffix individually, because some properties are partially predictable on the basis of the common properties the suffixes shared.

In Tianjin dialect, these properties which are shared by the suffixes are mostly of a phonological nature. Firstly, the suffixes should be in neutral tones. But it is quite complicated in different conditions. For the monosyllabic suffixes like *-ba*, they will surely be in neutral tones. But for the disyllabic suffixes like *-buji*, the neutral tones will be sometimes on the first character, and sometimes on the second character according to the emphasizing point of the speaker. When it comes to trisyllabic suffixes, like *-buliudiu*, it gets even more difficult to determine which character or which two characters should be in neutral tones.

Secondly, the suffixes which can be further followed by the suffix *-er* are mainly ended with vowels. We should consider this in the realm of prosodic structure. In the syllabic structure of the suffixes, if the final part of the rime is a vowel, then an *-er* suffix can be added to the end. But this is not a necessary condition. The suffixes which can take er-suffixation⁵ are all vowel-ending, but not all vowel ending suffixes can be further er-suffixed.

The er-suffixation can follow roots, forming words like *tang-duir* (candied gourd), and it can follow suffixes as we mentioned above, like in the word *meibuzir* (happy). No matter it is in which condition, the er-suffixation cannot be regarded as a separate syllable. It is only a retroflex consonant [-r] attached to the last morpheme of the word.

What’s more, in the perspective of morphology, the er-suffixation can add some extra meanings to the words it modifies. After comparing the words with further er-suffixed suffixes and the words without further er-suffixation, we found that the former group has got some positive meanings. As we can see from the examples below:

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⁵ We name what the Chinese linguists called “儿化” as “er-suffixation”.
In (2), it is obvious that the speaker does not like the character of the girl (slow or like nattering) whom they are talking about, but the situation is just on the opposite for (3). The word *re-hur* has a positive color for the sentence so that the speaker wants to drink the soup seizing the right moment. This function is mainly gained from the er-suffixation.

Another common property is for the words which take a bound morpheme *-bu*-. According to Chao (1980: 138), it is an infix like *li* in the word *hulihutu* ‘soft in the head’. There are many words in Tianjin dialect that have *bu* in the suffixes, some of which can also exist without *bu*, as we can say both *tiansirsir* ‘a little sweet’ and *tianbusirsir* ‘a little bit sweet’, with no big difference in meaning. The infix *-bu* is in neutral tone. And it has lost its original negative meaning when it is in the middle of roots and suffixes. It only occurs after monosyllabic roots, where it functions to complement the syllables of the roots.

Fourthly, as the suffixes constitute words, and the words play important roles in sentences, we can see how different suffixes in different words function in sentences. Verbs with suffixes like *-ba, -ci* function as predicates in sentences. They can be modified by adverbs, quantifiers (like *jixia* ‘several times’). As for the nouns which take certain suffixes like *-ge* and *-jia*, they have the same functions as what for ordinary nouns. They can be subjects and objects in a sentence, and they can also modify other nouns. And for the adjectives, most of the suffixed adjectives should exist with *de*, like *shabulaji-de* ‘a little stupid’ and *tianbujiji-de* ‘a little bit sweet’. It seems strange when they work in sentences without *de*. They can modify nouns, pronouns and some adverbs. What’s more, the adjectives can also function as adverbs in sentences. But that will depend on the context. Look at the example below:
‘Do not describe it so exaggerating. It is not so serious.’

In this sentence, the suffixed word xiehu ‘strange’ modifies the predicate shuode ‘say’, so it functions as an adverb. But when we put it into another context like (5) below, the word with the same form as in (4) should be considered as an adjective predicate, in which it is obviously an adjective.

(5) 这 事儿 可 真 是 邪乎！

‘The matter is really strange.’
4. CHARACTERISTICS OF SUFFIXES

From this chapter, we will study the suffixes which are relatively productive in Tianjin dialect. The suffixes such as Ajia, Achi and Abu seem to have closed their categories in that they have already ceased to absorb new words into their groups. Our focus is on the suffixes that can produce more words. Different from Han’s idea, we hypothesize that the suffixes still have meanings in the words. And when they become suffixes, they contribute their own characteristics as well as meanings to the words so that they change the characteristics and meanings of the roots.

We will examine the suffixes from their phonological, semantic and syntactic characteristics.

4.1 -ba

According to Ci Hai (1999: 39), -ba was a free morpheme in the ancient times. It could be a noun, which is a country’s name or a snake’s name. It could also be a verb, which has three meanings: climb, approach or expect. But as the development of the language, it has grammaticalized into a bound morpheme which cannot stand alone. And when it comes into Tianjin dialect, it has evolved into a suffix.

The suffix -ba in Tianjin dialect is always in the neutral tone. It can make up words of three categories, which are verbs, nouns and adjectives. When adding to the roots of different categories, the suffix will denote different meanings, so we put -ba₁, -ba₂ and -ba₃ to make them distinguished. And forming what kinds of words depends on what kinds of roots they follow.

4.1.1 -ba₁

The suffix adds to verbs, forming new verbs. So we call it verb suffix. The verb suffix -ba₁ has constrains for its roots. The roots should be monosyllabic verbs, and they cannot be stative verbs, as *xiangba ‘think+ba’, *aiba ‘love+ba’ and *tingba ‘listen+ba’ are ungrammatical. What’s more, the subjects of the words suffixed by -ba₁ should be people, or at least animate living things. In the domain of these constrains, the suffix is productive comparing with other suffixes. Let’s see some examples first:

(6) zhaba₁ ‘wink’
那个 女孩 眨巴着 大眼睛 看着 我。

nage nvhai zhabazhe dayanjing kanzhe wo

That girl wink big eyes looking at me

‘That girl is winking at me in her big eyes.’

(7) rouba  ‘knead’

你 那 哪 叫 洗衣服 啊？ 捏巴 两下 就完了？
ni na na jiao xiyifu a rou-ba liangxia jiuanle

You that where call washing clothes SFP knead twice (classifier) over

‘You kneaded the clothes so carelessly. That is really not good!’

In the two examples, the verbal roots zha  ‘wink’ and rou  ‘knead’ are dynamic verbs, and both of their corresponding subjects are human (for 6 is ‘that girl’, and for 7 is ‘you’). The subject for (6) can be changed into animals, but the same case for (7) is not good, because animals cannot make the action of kneading, but as to winking, living creature having eyes can do this.

In (6), if we replace the word zhaba with the phrase zhale-yixia/ liangxia‘wink once/twice’, the sentence can still be accepted, but the meaning changes. The suffix -ba denotes a meaning of keeping doing things once and once again, not like the adverbs yixia or liangxia ‘once or twice’ making that action for only one or two times. And for sentence (7), the word rouba ‘knead’ at first still get the meaning of keeping “kneading”, but after the adverb liangxia ‘twice’ modifying it, the meaning changes to just washing it carelessly, forming a tone of blaming (because the listener was not supposed to do so). If we change the phrase into roule-liangxia ‘knead twice’, we can also accept the sentence; however, the degree of the blaming will get lower. It seems like for the latter phrase, the listener was not supposed to do so well, so he is not quite wrong as in the condition of (7). Hence, in the replaced case, the color gets weaker than the previous one.

Besides, there is another semantic meaning denoted by the suffix -ba, that is, the action is not done continuously, but with a form of making and breaking, like doing it once, twice, the third time and …
When it comes to the syntactic characteristics of the verb \(Aba_1\), firstly, it has all the traits ordinary verbs have. It functions as the predicate in the sentence. And it has another specialty. The word \(Aba_1\) can be reduplicated in the form of \(Aba_1Aba_1\). As for the examples (6) and (7), the words can be changed into \(zhabazhaba\) ‘wink and wink’ and \(roubarouba\) ‘knead and knead’, forming sentences like below:

(8) 她睁着大眼睛，眨巴眨巴的。

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ta zhengzhe da yanjing} & \quad \text{zha-ba-zha-ba} \\
\text{She open big eyes} & \quad \text{wink and wink SFP}
\end{align*}
\]

‘She is continuously winking in her big eyes.’

(9) 这件衣服不脏，好歹揉巴揉巴就行了。

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{zhejian yifu buzang} & \quad \text{haodai rou-ba-rou-ba} \\
\text{This cloth not dirty casual knead and knead} & \quad \text{jiu-xing-le}
\end{align*}
\]

‘This cloth is not quite dirty, so you can just wash it roughly.’

We can see from above examples that the reduplicated form expresses even more repeated movements, which emphasize more on the degree of the original words. What’s more, we observe that all of the members in this subclass can be reduplicated into the form of \(Aba_1Aba_1\).

### 4.1.2 \(-ba_2\)

The noun suffix \(-ba_2\) can make up words like \(guoba\) ‘crispy rice’, \(zuiba\) ‘mouth’ and \(xiaoba\) ‘chin’, which also belong to the vocabulary of Putonghua. Except those mentioned above, there are some words with \(-ba_2\) that are specifically in Tianjin dialect, such as \(yaba\) ‘deaf’, \(keba\) ‘stammer’ and \(haba\) ‘splay legs’. The suffixes are all in neutral tones.

The suffix does not contain obvious meanings in the words like \(zuiba\) and \(guoba\), but the suffix in \(keba\) and \(haba\) denotes a kind of contempt. The latter ones are rarely used in writings, unless when quoting an informal dialogue between two Tianjin people. The suffix is not productive as the previous one, in that it can only constitute words we discussed here.

### 4.1.3 \(-ba_3\)

The suffix \(-ba\) can derive a new category \(-ba_3\) which did not happen for the free morpheme \(ba\) in the old period that we mentioned before. That is the adjectival \(-ba_3\),
in which it attaches to adjective roots, and forms new adjectives. This subgroup is quite limited in that it has only a few members. But we will show that the adjectives are actually derived from the verb suffix -\textit{ba}1.

As we can see from the appendix, the adjective \textit{jinba} ‘tight’ appears to be in the same form with the verb. We can see their similarities in meaning from the sentences below:

\begin{enumerate}[label=(\arabic*)]
\item We tight and tight waist band days flash pass
\end{enumerate}

‘If we make our expenditures short, we will pass the hard times.’

\begin{enumerate}[label=(\arabic*)]
\item Those days live is short of money a little but we not still all good
\end{enumerate}

‘Those days were indeed hard (for short of money), but we are still quite good now.’

In the two sentences, the two words express quite a similar meaning – the verb in (10) means tightening the expenditure to make it shorter, while the adjective in (11) means being short of money. Then we can presume that there must be one part of speech of the two coming first. When we go back to the analysis of Han’s (1993), we found that he did not mention the category of adjective \textit{Aba}3. So the adjective form might occur just in recent years, which may derive from the verb form \textit{Aba}1. The appearance of this new category is to fit for the circumstances when people in talking need a new form to meet their satisfactions.

What’s more, the adjective suffix -\textit{ba}3 denotes a different meaning from the verb forms. It has a similar meaning to the adverb \textit{youdian}9 ‘slightly’, in which it contributes a diminutive meaning to the words it modified. The words with suffix -\textit{ba}3 and the words modified by the adverb \textit{youdian} have got a similar degree, only for that the former one is more native for the Tianjin people.

4.2 -\textit{da}

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnote{9 有点. So the example (11) can be replaced with another sentence: ‘那段日子过得是有点紧，但我们不是还都好好的嘛！’ (Those days were a little bit hard (for short of money), but we are still quite good now).}
\end{footnotesize}
The free morpheme *da* in ancient times is a frequently used word. It can be a verb (meaning reach, express or understand), an adjective (meaning common or rich), a noun (meaning a place for storing food or a person who have knowledge and morality) and an adverb (meaning totally). (*Xinbian Gujin Hanyu Cidian*, 1994: 199)

When it grammaticalized into a suffix, these meanings lost gradually. Now in Tianjin dialect, it has some special traits which are different from those in Putonghua.

4.2.1 *-da*₁

(12) *guaida* ‘pat on something’

```
这地毯不用洗，乖达几下就行。
```

```
This carpet need not wash pat several times then ok
```

‘This carpet needs not to be washed. I think just patting it will be ok.’

(13) *chouda* ‘sob’

```
她坐在那边抽达呢，你过去劝劝她吧！
```

```
She sit there sob ne (SFP) you go persuade her ba (SFP)
```

‘She is sitting there sobbing. Go and try to console her, won’t you?’

Actually, in this subclass, we have merged the suffixes which have the same sounds into one group. Originally the suffix *-da*₁ in (12) comes from the content word *da* (beat)¹⁰, contributing its meaning “beat” to the word.¹¹ But as the morpheme has grammaticalized into a suffix, we can incorporate it into the group which have the same phonetic pattern (the pronunciation of the suffix is [ta]), and we find a new simply written morpheme to replace the various forms (*-达*). We have another suffix of this kind that can also be merged into this group, which is *-da*₁², which formerly matches with *dida*¹³ ‘the sound of tick-tock’ and *cida*¹⁴ ‘denounce’ (for it is related to people’s speaking). That suffix which has a mouth part may have come from the onomatopoeia.

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¹⁰ 打.
¹¹ Some linguists claimed that as a bound morpheme which was in its original tone changes into the neutral tone, it has become a suffix.
¹² 嗤.
¹³ 嘟嗒.
¹⁴ 喳嗒.
The suffix -da₁ in Tianjin dialect is in neutral tone, with two forms: [ta] or [tə]. For the verbs forming by verb roots added by the suffix -da₁, there are also restrictions for the roots: they should be monosyllabic dynamic verbs.

In this group, the meaning of some words denotes from the basic meaning of the roots, while some get their implied meanings. For example, the verb chouda ‘sob’ does not mean chou ‘whip’ and da ‘beat’, but it gets the implied meaning – ‘sobbing’. The words of this kind in this group are saida and tuoda. Saida is the word composed by the free morpheme sai which means ‘stuff’ and the suffix -da₁, but the word’s meaning is that one always contradicts others which shows great disrespect. And tuoda is made up of by the morpheme tuo meaning ‘carry on the back’ and the suffix -da₁, but getting an unrelated meaning of them which is ‘nagging’. The words of this kind are not so many in the dialect. The rest words in this group gain their meanings from the basic meanings of the roots, so our discussion below will not include the three special words we mentioned here.

The suffix -da₁ implies a meaning of ‘slightly’, which contributes a diminutive meaning to the target verbs. It diminishes the degree of the verb roots, which is similar to the adverb youdian ‘slightly’ in terms of degree, but to replace the suffixed words Ada with youdianA is not acceptable in this dialect.

Most of the words suffixed by -da₁ get their meanings from the roots. What is special for this group, the words have their meanings quite similar to the roots when they are free morphemes, but only with a difference in the degree (the suffixed words get a diminutive degree from the suffix -da₁). We can see this from the two sentences below:

(14) 他 爸爸 可 真 够 狠的，掴了 他 一个 大 耳光子。
    ta  baba  ke  zhen  gou  hende  guale  ta  yige  da  erguazi
    ‘His father is really fearful. He gives his son a real slap on the face.’

(15) 他 爸爸 也 就是 吓唬吓唬 他，就 掴达了 他 两下。
    ta  baba  ye  jiushi  xia-hu-xia-hu  ta  jiu  guadale  ta  liangxia
    ‘His father just wants to frighten his son, giving him a slight slap.’
We can judge the difference from the two examples. The father in (14) must be quite angry (he give a real big slap to the son), while the one in (15) is to fulfill his role to be a father (just to admonish his son).

The words in this group can be reduplicated into the forms of $Ada_1Ada_1$ and $AAAda_1da_1$. The examples of the reduplicated words can be like those below:

(16) 晚上 吃 的 那么 多, 咱们 出去 蹦跶蹦跶 吧!

Evening eat de that much we out stroll SFP

As we have so much in the evening, I think we should go out to have a walk.

(17) 都 这么 晚了 他 也 不 着急, 还 在那 蹦蹦达达 的。

All so late he also no hurry still there stroll is

It is getting so late, but he is still not hurry up!

The reduplicated forms express the meaning of keeping making the action. As for the suffix $-da_1$ has added a meaning of “slightly” to the words it modify, the reduplicated forms make this meaning emphasized. The reduplicated forms get different meanings when they exist in different forms. The form in (16) denotes repeating the action of strolling, which is in the neutral tone. However, for the form in (17), the reduplicated form expresses a meaning that the person being referred to deliberately slows down the speed of walking, for the reason of draw others’ attention or else. It forms a negative tone, which shows the dissatisfaction of the speaker.

4.2.2 $-da_2$

Which is similar with the conditions for $-ba_3$, the adjectives suffixed by $-da_2$ are also derived from the verbs. The roots are adjectives, and they form new adjectives. But it is a derivational suffix as they have derived new words which have different meanings and functions from the roots. As to the meaning, which is similar to the one of $-da_1$, it contributes a diminutive meaning to the words.

This subclass is unproductive, in that it only form quite limited words listed in the appendix. Hence, we will not discuss more here.

4.3 $-la$
The suffix -la is another suffix out of the most productive ones in Tianjin dialect, for it includes various kinds of -la.

4.3.1 -la₁

In the article published by Han (1993: 76), he gave the examples that noun roots like hai ‘sea’, shen ‘god’, ren ‘person’, tie ‘iron’ and huo ‘fire’ form adjectives after adding the suffix -la₁, like haila ‘plenty of’, shenla ‘like a miracle’, renla ‘to be a man or like a person’, tiela ‘relationship between two people is strong’ and huola ‘some business (like the one in a restaurant) is busy’.

(18) 我们俩的关系可铁啦, 这点事求他, 肯定没问题的!

women liade guanxi ke tiela zhe dian shi qiu ta kending

We two relationship really good this small matter beg him surely no problem is (SFP)

‘We are very good friends, so he will surely help me to solve this small matter.’

(19) 他们饭馆的菜做得好吃, 生意可火啦!

tamen fanguan de cai zuode haochi shengyi ke huola

Their restaurant is dish cook delicious business really busy

‘Their restaurant runs quite well, because they could make savory dishes.’

In these two examples, the suffix -la₁ functions like the sentence final particles a and ne¹⁵. Both of the examples are exclamatory sentences. They do not connect quite closely to the adjectives right before them, as we can replace the sentence (19) with another one: shengyi zhende henhua ‘The business is quite good’¹⁶, which does not have the suffix -la₁. But Han incorporated -la₁ into the group of suffixes because the adjectives mentioned above can only match the particle -la₁. The word *huo-a or *huo-ne is not accepted as a word in Tianjin dialect. It seems that -la₁ is in its way to become a suffix.

This suffix is a special one denoting an intensified meaning. The noun roots become positive descriptive adjectives after adding it. What’s more, the roots which fit for -la₁ have closed the door to other morphemes. The suitable morphemes have listed in the appendix.

¹⁵ 啊 and 呢.
¹⁶ 生意真的很火。
4.3.2 \(-la_2\)

The verbs like `di` ‘lift’, `hua` ‘push’, `ba` ‘dig’ and `dou` ‘shake’ can make verbs with the suffix \(-la_2\), like `dila` ‘lift up’, `huala` ‘pull and push’, `bala` ‘dig up’ and `doula` ‘shake out’. In these cases, \(-la_2\) is a real suffix, for it is not optional in these words like for \(-la_1\). And the restrictions are also like the ones for the suffix \(-ba\). The roots should be monosyllabic dynamic verbs. What’s more, the suffix \(-la_2\) functions like an adverb in these words, which shows the degrees and the results of the actions.

We can examine the degree that the suffixes expressed in the words comparing the verbs with and without suffixes. Taking the verb `di` as an example, we can compare the two sentences below:

(20) 那个包 太 重 了, 他 怎么 提 也 提 不 起 来。

nage bao tai zhong le ta zenme di ye di bu qilai

‘That bag is too heavy. He cannot lift it up however he tried so many times.’

(21) 他 提 拉 起 包 来 就 跑。

ta dilaqi bao lai jiu pao

‘He lifts the bag up and then runs away.’

In sentence (20), the verb root `di` cannot be substituted by the suffixed word `dila`, but sentence (21) can use another word `di` to substitute the original one. The reason is obvious, that the suffixed word `dila` has shown the result (the bag has been lifted up), and the verb `ti` can denote both meanings (the bag can or cannot be lifted up) according to the context. Besides, the suffix denotes a degree that doing that action is not quite arduous. As the words with this suffix always appear in the colloquial sentences, they show that it is easy to do the actions. Hence, we can know the suffix \(-la_2\) is the one denoting diminutive meaning in the word, which contributes a meaning of ‘slightly’ to the words it modified.

4.3.3 \(-la_3\)

The words discussed here are a new category that derived from the former verb type. The suffix \(-la_3\) is bound to adjective roots, then forming new adjectives. The typical example is the word `dala` ‘stroop’. The words can be both a verb and an adjective, as we can see from the following examples:
这种狗耳朵总是耷拉的。
This kind dog ears always droop.
‘The dog is of that kind that has drooping ears.’

这个人整天耷拉着个脸，也不知道他是怎么的了。
This man all days slouch a face also don’t know he is how le (SPF)
‘The man slouched unhappily all day. Nobody knows what happened to him.’

The word in (22) is an adjective, which is a predicative in that sentence. For the verbs are used early by the native people, this adjective might derive from the verb forms.

This suffix -la is different from the former two suffixes we have discussed before. The various forms come form different origins. And until now what has been clarified is that Tianjin dialect is in a quickly changing process. It absorbs new words ceaselessly, and the members in this system will change their roles according to the need of the context. And following this, we will discuss another group which has much more various forms produced as the development of the dialect.

4.4 -buji
This group is the most productive one of the suffixed adjectives. Until now it has derived various kinds of adjectives, such as Abulaji, Abujii, Abujir, Alegeji and Alebaji. The adjectives are constituted by adjective roots and the various kinds of suffixes of -buji. We can see some examples first:

(24) 你 怎么 傻不拉叽 的，这么 简单的 事 都 弄 不 明 白！
You why stupid is such simple matter all make not understand
‘Why are you so stupid? Even for such a simple thing you cannot understand?’

(25) 你 还 别 说，这个 东西 甜不叽儿 的 还 挺 好吃 的！
You still not say this thing sweet is still really delicious SFP
‘Seriously, this thing is a little bit sweet so that it is delicious.’
In (24), the suffixed word *shabulaji* ‘stupid’ is to satirize the hearer he cannot understand the matter they are talking about, so the emotional color is a little bit negative. But in (25), the rhotic suffix shows that the speaker likes the flavor as he tastes the dish. We found that we can only add the rhotic suffix -*er* to the suffixes which contain two characters like -*buji*, but not others that have three characters, as the word *tian-bu-la·ji·r* is not allowed.

The roots are all monosyllabic adjectives. They can be the kind of adjectives that describe the characteristics of somebody, or the state of something, or the taste of something eating or drinking. The suffix is productive in that it can make up unlimited words in this domain.

The same roots can occur with different suffixes, as the words *tianbujji, tianbujir, tianbulaji, tianlegeji* and *tianlebaji* are all acceptable. These suffixes contain similar meanings, which are “a little bit sweet”, but with different emotional color. Only the one with er-suffixation got a positive meaning, while other three denote negative meanings. And different roots can occur with the same suffix, like *shabuji* ‘a little bit stupid’, *shibuji* ‘a little bit wet’, *hongbuji* ‘a little bit red’ and *tianbuji* ‘a little bit sweet’. And there are some words with particular roots corresponding to particular suffix, like *banlegeji* ‘a little bit stumble’ and *houlebaji* ‘a little bit naughty’.

As for the suffixes denotes a diminutive meaning, the words suffixed by them can be substituted by *youdian*. But the sentences with this replaced phrase will have a neutral color, in which the attitude of the speaker is not clearly shown from the words. For instance, in the following two sentences:

(26) 今天 的 菜 味道 淡 不 吻 吻 的。

*jintian de cai weidao dan-bu-ji-ji de*

The flavor of the dishes today is a little bit weak (so that I do not like it).

(27) 今天 的 菜 味道 有 点 淡。

*jintian de cai weidao youdian dan*

The flavor of the dishes today is a little bit weak.

The two sentences are quite similar from both the structure and meaning. But the native speakers can conjecture that the sentence (26) shows that the speaker does not
like “the weak flavor”, and it even denotes a kind of blaming to the hearer. But for sentence (27), we cannot judge out the speaker’s attitude as there is no context following this clause. And the attitude depends mostly on the following clause. As we can give a complete sentence for (27):

(28) 今天的菜味道有点淡，我不太喜欢。

jintiande cai weidao youdian dan wo butai xihuan
today’s dish flavor slightly weak I not really like

‘The dishes today have got a weak flavor. I don’t really like it.’

Hence, we can find that the suffixed adjectives have their original color included in the suffixes.
5. A HYPOTHESIS ON SUFFIXATION IN TIANJIN DIALECT

From all of the suffixes we have discussed, I found that the suffixes are not just grammatical constituents in words which have lost all their lexical meanings like Han has claimed in his article. ‘The suffixes in Tianjin dialect are the parts which changed from content words and have lost all their lexical meanings.’ (Han, 1993: 75) Even some linguists claimed that the suffixes are only the parts sticking to the roots, which only function to complement the syllable of the words and do not have any meanings. Actually these sayings are too absolute. I will show that the suffixes in Tianjin dialect still contain content meanings, and they have contributed indispensable functions to the words.

5.1 Rao’s Insights

I get this idea from Rao’s insights. He considered that the suffix -XX can not be analyzed as a suffix, because he observed that it is not a word-composite marker which only lies at the end of the word, having no lexical meanings and only showing grammatical functions.

He gave examples to show the lexical meanings of the suffix. In the words like lengbingbing (冷冰冰) ‘cold’, jingjiji (静寂寂) ‘quiet’ and guangshanshan (光闪闪) ‘clinquant’, the suffixes (in bold) got similar meanings to the roots, as bing ‘ice’ has similar meaning to leng ‘cold’, ji ‘quiet’ is similar to jing ‘quiet’ and guang ‘light’ is similar to shan ‘flash’.

And he also explained that the meaning of -XX could be analyzed from the perspective of visual, hearing and smell, like the words huimengmeng ‘grey’, luanchonghong ‘in noisy disorder’ and xiangpenpen ‘savory’. What’s more, he raised another method to prove the practical meaning of the suffixes. The meaning of lengbingbing-de equals to bingleng-de. Similarly, jingjiji-de is jijing-de, and liangshanshan-de is shanliang-de.

5.2 The properties in Tianjin dialect

Rao doubts about the function of –XX as suffix, because it contains lexical meanings in the words. But it is bound to the roots, and it has derived new words, so it is indeed suffix. Hence, in my opinion, it is the definition of suffix has problems, rather than the suffixes themselves.
We can see the example which Han has used to illustrate his idea, the suffix -
you\textsuperscript{17}. He claimed that the free morpheme you (the meaning is ‘people or animals
move in water’) is different from the suffix -you in that they do not take up the same
linguistic unit, and the latter one only functions as a grammatical unit in the word.
But in terms of why the two forms are the same, he thought that ‘written characters
are only to record languages’ (Han, 1999: 78), and the suffixes are recorded by the
linguists who study the dialects.

But for my part, the written forms are not randomly distributed. They are the
forms grammaticalized from the lexical forms. And as the process of
grammaticalization of the suffixes is going on, some of the meanings become weaker
and weaker. But some meanings and functions are still reserved. For the suffix -you,
the meaning ‘move’ is still reserved in the word. This can be seen from the words it
makes up: huangyou ‘sway’, chanyou ‘shake’, zhuanyou ‘move around’ and
guangyou ‘stroll about’. As we can see from these words, all of them can denote a
meaning of moving, no matter the scope of the movement is large or small. And as
for the monosyllabic roots are different, that meaning should not derived from the
roots, then it must be from the other part – the suffix -you.

We can examine the hypothesis from the examples we have listed and discussed
in the previous sections. We have found that the suffix -ba contains a meaning that
doing the actions once and once again. The suffix -da denotes a meaning of ‘slightly’,
which is similar to the phrase youdian. The suffix -la includes a meaning of degree
(which is intensified) and showing the results, which functions like an adverb
modifying the verb roots. And for the last suffix -buji which derives adjectives, it
also contains a meaning of ‘a little bit’, although different variants have different
colors.

And I can also prove this hypothesis from the relatively unproductive suffixes
which we have not discussed until now. Like the suffix -bu we have listed in the
appendix. From the words it constitutes, zhaobu ‘make up the insufficient’, dianbu
‘complement temporarily’, the suffix denotes an implied meaning of ‘supplement’,
as the suffix must add its meaning to the words it makes up. Another example is for
the suffix -dao. This morpheme has a ‘mouth’ part in character and so it gives the
sign of ‘speaking’. As it can derive the word like shaodao ‘chatter’, niandao ‘talk

\textsuperscript{17} -you.
about something again and again’, *shuodao* ‘nag’ and *laodao* ‘prate’, we found surprisingly that these words have quite similar meanings. These meanings are denoted from the suffixes, and the roots are the parts to describe the various forms of speaking.

5.3 *Summary*

The structure of words can also be analyzed as the structure of the phrases. We can put the roots to the position of modificand, and the suffixes as modifier. They come to form words, being the contributor. But they cannot be regarded as only a follower who does not do anything. From the evidence we talked about until now, I think it is convincing to say that the suffixes are also the meaning-containing parts in the words.

In Tianjin dialect, some of the suffixes are from lexical items that had practical meanings before they become suffixes. They come to the words because some of their meanings are useful to the words. And after they become suffixes, some of them preserve their original meanings (like the suffix -*bu*), some reserve part of their original meanings (like -*ba* and -*you*), or some derive new meanings from the original (like the suffix which derive classifier -*baor*). But there are some suffixes we cannot find their origins, like the suffix -*chi*, -*ke* or -*ge*. They may come from other dialects, or they may from some of the words which are in ancient times that we have not traced back to. We might further consider some other languages like Mongolian or Manchu.
6. CONCLUSION

This paper aims to study the characteristics of suffixes in Tianjin dialect. It studies them mainly from the perspective of phonology, semantics and syntax. The method used in this paper is to list all of the suffixes which are vernacular in Tianjin dialect, but not in Mandarin, and then analyzes the relatively productive ones respectively in order to find out some common characteristics.

The field of suffix is an idiographic part in Tianjin dialect. Nowadays many suffixes from Tianjin dialect has been absorbed into Mandarin, so that even the native Tianjin people cannot distinguish some suffixes that have been universally used. I think the origin can be found out using historical study. But this paper is mainly diachronic, which studies the suffixes existing in the contemporary times.

The Tianjin dialect developed quite fast, which has profoundly influenced the suffixes in this dialect. This can be seen from the phenomenon that there are many forms of suffixes denoted from a basic suffix. Like the suffix -buji, it has derived many related different suffixes like Abulaji, Abuji, Alebaji and so on. The reason is the language change. When the dialect is transferred from person to person, some of the parts have changed al little bit. And gradually the changed forms have been accepted by other people, so that so many forms emerged.

And in the last part, the paper gives out a new idea that the suffixes can also denote meanings, as well as have grammatical functions the former linguists have observed. Many examples are given to illustrate that hypothesis. So this will implant new blood to the original definition of suffixes. But it also needs further inspecting and verifying.
REFERENCES


Dictionary:


APPENDIX

1. 家 (-jia): 人~, 亲~, 女人~, 老人~, 姑娘~, 小孩子~
2. 拉 (-ci): 扒~, 砍~, 翻~, 写~, 画~, 剃~, 咬~, 呕(wai)~, 奔~, 抹~, 涂~
3. 不达 (-buda): 甜~, 苦~, 酸~, 涩~, 美~, 笑~
4. 不溜丢 (buliudiu): 酸~, 灰~, 黑~, 滑~, 光~
5. 溜儿 (liur): 滑~, 顺~, 瘦~, 均~, 光~ (A)
6. 出~ (V)
7. 巴 (-ba): -ba1 耍~, 跽~, 剁~, 碾~, 团~, 抹~, 吱~, 嘎~, 拉~, 嘎~, 紧~, 淋~, 撕~, …
   -ba2 锅~, 嘴~, 下~, 噰~, 磨~, 哈~ (腿儿)
   -ba3 紧~, 皱~, 瘦~
AA 巴巴: 累累~, 皱皱~, 瘦瘦~, 紧紧~
8. 不叽 (-buji): 傻~, 淡~, 湿~, 红~, 愣~, 甜~, …
   -不拉叽 (-bulaji): 甜~, 傻~, 湿~, 脏~, 臭~, 黑~, …
9. (不)丝儿 (-sir): 甜~, 笑模~
   -丝丝 (~sisi): 甜~
   -(不)丝儿丝儿 (~sirsir): 甜~, 辛~, 辣~, 凉~
10. 各 (-ge): 大前儿~, 前儿~, 昨儿~ (夜儿~), 今儿~, 明儿~, 后儿~, 大后儿~, 自儿~
11. 尺 (-chi): 刀~
12. 补 (-bu): 垫~，找~
13. 达 (-da): -da₁ 甩~，蹦~，扭~，抽~，跺~，摔~(打)，乖~(打)，呲~，
    捂~，抹~，踹~，塞~，驮~，嘀~(嗒)，敲~，...
    -da₂ 颠~，驮~
    A 达 A 达: 甩~甩~，蹦~蹦~，扭~扭~，抽~抽~，跺~跺~，摔~摔~，
    乖~乖~，呲~呲~，捂~捂~，抹~抹~，踹~踹~，塞~塞~，嘀~嘀~，敲~敲~
    ~，...
    AA 达达: 胖胖~~，甩甩~~，蹦蹦~~，扭扭~~，抽抽~~，跺跺~~，
    摔摔~~，嘀嘀~~，...
14. 拉 (-la): -la₁ 海拉，神拉，人拉，铁拉，火拉
    -la₂ 划~，提~，挤~，豁~，扒~，滴~甩挂，耷~，胡~，抖~，呲~
    ~，打~，...
    -la₃ 倒拉，门儿拉
    AA 拉拉: 离离~~
15. 游 (-you): 晃~，磨~，逛~，转~，嘎~，哈~
16. 叨 (-dao): 勺~，数~，唠~，念~，说~，叨~，唠~
17. 抱儿 (-baor): 三~
18. 克 (-ke): 全~ (A)
    疼~ (V)