

The Distribution of the Neology (Old Words with New Meanings) of the Verb “Shuā” (刷) and Its Outward Spread



Zhou Lianying¹, Zhang Hao^{1,*}, Han Jiahe²

¹Institute of International Chinese Language Teaching, Beijing Language and Culture University, Beijing 100083, China

²College of Chinese Language and Literature, Beijing Normal University, Beijing 100875, China

Abstract: With the advancement of technology and the development of new media, contemporary Chinese vocabulary is rich and colorful. One of its manifestations is the emergence of neologies (new meanings for old words) and the resulting large number of new vocabulary, which are frequently used and rapidly spread. This paper takes the verb “Shuā” (刷) as the research object, and based on BCC corpus, Zhongqing online corpus, and microblog corpus, explores the distribution of new meanings, core semantic elements, additional colors of “Shuā” (刷) and the cognitive mechanisms of semantic change, searches its overseas use through Chinese news corpus such as Xingzhou.com, Lianhe Zaobao, and Australia News, and summarizes the causes of the emergence and wide spread of new meanings. The study reveals that the verb “Shuā” (刷) has acquired seven new items. These novel senses are used far more frequently than the original one, with the item (6) showing the highest token frequency. The prototype remains ‘to clean or smear with a brush’. The item (6) combines both manner and purpose and is the only one to carry a derogatory connotation; the rest remain neutral. Metonymy and metaphor serve as the principal mechanisms driving this polysemous expansion. Externally, the new senses have achieved an 85.71% diffusion rate, spreading rapidly across registers. Their emergence results from the interplay of intra- and extra-linguistic factors: internally, pressures of linguistic economy and heavy reliance on context; externally, the convergent impetus of technological innovation, psychological preferences, and broader social dynamics.

Keywords: “Shuā” (刷); Distribution of New Meanings; Core Semantic Elements; Overseas Dissemination; Origins

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1 Introduction

The evolution of word meanings is an important aspect of lexical development.

The most unique pattern of semantic expansion in contemporary Chinese is the phenomenon of neologies (old

words with new meanings)¹ which involves using exist-

¹ This phenomenon is also known as “旧词载新义” (Yao Hanming, 1998), “旧枝发新芽词语” (Chen Guanglei, 2008), “旧瓶装新酒” (Liu Bei, Liu Zhongfu, 2012), and “旧形赋义” (Diao Yanbin,

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*Corresponding author: Zhang Hao, Zhanghao@blcu.edu.cn

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ing words to express new meanings, thereby increasing the semantic range. The Chinese verb “shuā” (“刷”) is a high-frequency word, and its phenomenon of new meanings is particularly evident in the context of contemporary new media. On this basis, it has been revitalized, giving birth to many new words with high frequency of usage. For example:

(1) The video generation model Sora, released by OpenAI on February 16th, has been sweeping the Internet in recent days. It seems that the AI era is not just about competing in computing power. Core technologies still have their value. (BCC)

(2) On some online shopping platforms, the credibility of product sales volume, reviews, and store ratings, which are important references for online shopping, is questionable. The situation of “water armies” brushing good reviews and sales volume still exists in large quantities. [1]

(3) Dr. Wang Bing, a Ph.D. in Psychiatry from Peking University, recalls that when he first arrived in Beijing to attend university, one of his roommates, a local Beijinger, took him to a video hall to “spend the whole night” (刷夜) by bicycle in the evening. This was something he had never thought of doing before. [2]

*The Dictionary of New Chinese Words*², hereinafter referred to as *New Words*, has included six new meanings of the word “shuā” (“刷”): ❶ to pay with a bank card; ❷ to browse or flip through, such as “shuā diànnǎo” (刷电脑, browse the computer), “shuā wēixìn” (刷微信, browse WeChat), and “shuā péngyǒu quān” (刷朋友圈, browse Moments); ❸ to confirm by scanning, such as “shuā liǎn” (刷脸, facial recognition), “shuā yǎn” (刷眼, eye scanning), and “shuā shēnfèn zhèng” (刷身份证, ID card scanning); ❹ to spend time or experience, such as “shuā yè” (刷夜, stay up all night); ❺ to do something thoroughly without omission, such as “shuā fàndiàn” (刷饭店, go through all the restaurants), “shuā shāngchǎng” (刷商场, go through all the shopping malls), and “shuā kǎotí” (刷考题, go through all the exam questions); ❻ to perform a certain action to bring about a change, such as “shuā zàn” (刷赞, like-brushing), “shuā liúliàng” (刷流量, traffic-brushing), “shuā cúnzài gǎn” (刷存在感, presence-brushing), and “shuā yuèdú liàng” (刷阅读量,

view-brushing). It has also included 27 new words formed by these new meanings, such as “shuā bǎng” (刷榜), “shuā bào” (刷爆), “shuā cúnzài gǎn” (刷存在感), “shuā dān” (刷单), “shuā fēn” (刷分), “shuā fěn” (刷粉), “shuā jiē” (刷街), “shuā liǎn” (刷脸), “shuā liàng” (刷量), “shuā mǎ” (刷码), “shuā piào” (刷票), “shuā píng” (刷屏), “shuā qiáng” (刷墙)³, “shuā tí” (刷题), and “shuā zàn” (刷赞).

Upon further search, it is found that item ❺ is not comprehensive enough and item ❻ can be further refined. In fact, “刷” also has the meaning of “update” or “refresh”. For example:

(4) You are living a really carefree life... No wonder he has broken his own record again, go ahead and share it. (BCC)

(5) The number of Steam users online has broken records for three consecutive days. The highest number yesterday exceeded 2.41 million, while the figures for the previous two days were 2.35 million and 2.22 million respectively. [3]

Based on this, this paper will sort out the new meanings of “shuā” (“刷”), count the usage of each meaning, analyze its core semantic features, the situation of overseas spread, and the reasons for its wide use.

2 The New Meanings and Their Distribution of the Verb “Shuā” (“刷”)

2.1 Sorting Out the New Meanings

In the 7th edition of the *Modern Chinese Dictionary* (hereinafter referred to as *the MCD*), the verb “shuā” (“刷”) has two meanings: ❶ to clean or apply with a brush; ❷ to eliminate or disqualify. According to Tyler & Evans’s discussion on semantic networks and prototypes [4], combined with the dictionary definitions and actual usage examples, it can be determined that “to clean or apply with a brush” is the prototypical meaning of the verb “shuā”, which serves as the basis for the derivation of its new meanings. The new meanings of “shuā” (“刷”) are summarized as follows:

2020).

² Hou Min, Teng Yonglin. *The Dictionary of New Chinese Words*. Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2022.

³ It refers to writing commercial advertisements, slogans, and the like on walls everywhere.

Table 1 New-Meaning Summary of the Verb “shuā” (“刷”)

No.	New Meanings	Examples
(1)	Swipe cards for payment, such as bank cards, credit cards and so on.	Swipe card for consumption, swipe card transaction, swipe bank card, swipe credit card, swipe for water, swipe for electricity, swipe for medical insurance, swipe for gold card, swiped 4000 yuan
(2)	Swipe the screen to browse, flip through sth.	Browse Weibo, browse Bilibili, browse TikTok, browse Kuaishou, browse WeChat, browse WeChat Moments, browse dynamic, browse Taobao, browse mobile phone, browse news, browse short videos, browse funny clips, browse Xiaohongshu
(3)	Scan or identify sth.	Scan ID card, scan code to buy tickets, scan code to ride, scan QR code, scan ticket entry, scan card entry, scan face to enter the station, scan face to check in, scan face to visit the park, scan face to go home
(4)	Spend time, go through. It often refers to staying up late.	Stay up late (刷夜)
(5)	(Not emphasizing purpose) Repeatedly do something frequently	Immerse oneself in exercises, browse screens, browse bomb screens, browse images, N+ browse (N as a number)
(6)	Quickly gain or increase sth. by repeated operations.	Brush rankings, brush lists, brush fans, brush tickets, brush levels, brush reviews, brush evaluations, brush equipment
(7)	Update, refresh	Refresh scores, refresh records, update systems.

Among them, the term (1) “swipe cards” does not refer exclusively to bank cards and credit cards; it includes medical insurance cards, public transit cards, smart cards, gold cards, platinum cards, and so on. Since swiping cards for payment has become a common method of transaction, the combination of “swipe” (“刷”) with various types of cards has taken on the connotation of “spending”. Therefore, the usage of “swipe + amount” is also quite common. For example:

(6) Where is the best place to travel? The answer is Beijing! If you want to go to the Great Wall, go to the Great Wall; if you want to go to the Forbidden City, go to the Forbidden City. Swipe a 40-cent public transport card, and I'll just lie down on the back seat!... It should have been 40 cents per person, but it turned out to be 60 cents per person. (BCC)

The item (2) is primarily used to denote the action of swiping through computer pages or mobile phone screens to browse information on websites or platforms. The objects it is often combined with include mobile apps such as WeChat, Xiaohongshu (Little Red Book), TikTok (Douyin), Kuaishou, Taobao, and web pages like Weibo. There are also instances where “browse” (“刷”) is followed by the content or the medium of the content, for example:

(7) The results show that over 80% of college students frequently browse short videos, nearly 30% spend 2 to 5 hours browsing them daily, over 60% enjoy browsing funny clips, more than 90% browse short videos for entertainment and relaxation, and over 70% are concerned about becoming addicted. [5]

(8) No matter how much I browse Weibo, I can't find

the content I want. I saw the fisherwoman has arrived at the seaside. (BCC)

The item (3) is mainly combined with relevant identification documents and QR codes. Since 2020, facial recognition technology has been widely used, hence the term “face scan” has become quite common. Additionally, palm-scan payment methods have also quietly emerged. For example:

(9) Compared to face payment, palm payment is safer and more accurate because it uses palm vein recognition technology, avoiding the risks of replication, forgery, and exposure. [6]

The item (4) has a relatively fixed usage and is less frequently used. In the corpus, only the term “shuā yè” (刷夜) was retrieved, which means to stay up late or pull an all-nighter. For example:

(10) On the demand side, parent-child outings favor overnight stays, achieving both companionship and experiential education at the same time. The energetic “post-90s generation” especially takes the practice of staying up all night to the extreme. [7]

The item (5) primarily refers to the repeated, extensive, or large-scale performance of an action, commonly seen in expressions like “binge-watching” (刷剧) and “immerse oneself in exercises” (刷题), and can also be used for reading books multiple times. In addition to the verb-noun structure, it has also formed the “N (number) + ‘shuā’ (“刷”)” combination, for example:

(11) “Willow Boat Chronicles” has truly met my expectations as a detail-oriented person. After the first watch, I happily indulged in the sweetness of Cui Xingzhou and Liu Miantan's relationship. Upon a second watch, I found

that there were even more hidden sweet details about the Cui-Mian couple. [8]

(12) Some books that I thought were really good when I read them back then, I can't seem to get into now. It's either because the writing is too simplistic or the expressions are odd. So being able to read a book for the second or third time is really a high compliment. [9]

(13) Why has “N (number) + ‘shuā’ (“刷”)” become fashionable? From “rereading classics” to “N (number) + ‘shuā’ (“刷”): “repeated appreciation” has evolved to have new meanings in the internet age. Repeatedly appreciating literary and artistic works is not a new topic. [10]

The item (6) also has the core semantic meaning of “repetitive operation”, but unlike the item (5), it emphasizes “acquiring or enhancing something through the relevant operations”, achieving a quantitative change from none to some or from low to high. For example:

(14) I'm saying, how many people are trying to grab tickets? They're all afraid they won't be able to swipe tickets, and they're already posting early to buy tickets. It looks like next week's ticket swiping will be a tough battle... (BCC)

(15) In the last level of Earth Defense Force 5, I couldn't beat that white “god” after two tries. A group friend said I should play on hard mode to swipe better equipment. The problem is... I can't beat it on hard mode! So there's no equipment. [11]

(16) Don't pay attention to this attention-seeker; he's swiping his presence here to earn creation incentives. Without this incident, he would remain obscure forever. [12]

(17) I suddenly noticed that last week, Brother Cardi's ranking on this Digital V Influence List rose quite quickly to 25th. It seems that Weibo is no longer relying on swiping followers and inflating rankings; it's starting to focus on quality? [13]

(18) Swiping diamonds, swiping crowns, swiping positive reviews; swiping sales, swiping credibility, swiping levels, all are scams!!! Be cautious when chatting online,

don't click on unfamiliar links, online swiping orders are fraud, trying to earn small money can lead to a big loss! [14]

(19) Currently, I've played more than 30 times and passed Guangzhi (without deliberately swiping experience to level up). At first, I chose a strategy of immobilizing for 4 times to drag out the battle, but later found that after 4 rounds of output, Guangzhi would still have a bit of health left. [15]

In these examples, (14)-(16) refer to “frequent and rapid operations to obtain”, which is from none to some; examples (17)-(19) refer to “repetitive operations to enhance”, which is from low to high.

The item (7) mainly refers to the state change from old to new, commonly seen in expressions like “refresh scores” (刷分) and “update records” (刷记录). For example:

(20) Although I had planned to boost my score later, passing the exam this time was surprisingly exhilarating. [16]

(21) In the first half of this year, the United States has been caught in a whirlwind of breaking records for gun violence: As of June 28th, there have been 332 mass shootings across the country, higher than the 293 during the same period in 2022. [17]

2.2 Distribution of New Meanings

After clarifying the new meanings of the verb “shuā” (“刷”), we further searched and statistically analyzed the usage of each meaning in the corpus. The main sources of the corpus were the BCC (Bilingual Corpus of Contemporary Chinese) corpus, Weibo, and China Youth Online. Using systematic random sampling, we extracted 1000 valid entries taken from each (excluding the noun usage of “刷”). The distribution of old and new meanings was then statistically analyzed. This paper focuses on examining the distribution of the new meanings of “刷”, so the quantities of the old meanings were combined and not further detailed.

Table 2 Distribution of New and Old Meanings of the Verb “shuā” (“刷”)

Items	Old Meanings	New Meanings						
	To clean or apply with a brush; to eliminate, to remove	(1) Swipe cards for payment, such as bank cards, credit cards and so on.	(2) Swipe the screen to browse, flip through sth.	(3) Scan or identify sth.	(4) Spend time, go through. It often refers to staying up late.	(5) (Not emphasizing purpose) Repeatedly do something frequently	(6) Quickly gain or increase sth. by repeated operations.	(7) Update, refresh
Quantity	609	363	654	192	12	207	801	162
Percentage	20.3%	12.1%	21.8%	6.4%	0.4%	6.9%	26.7%	5.4%

From Table 2, it is evident that among the 3,000 new media samples selected, the usage frequency of the new meanings of the verb “shuā” (“刷”) is significantly higher (79.7%) compared to the usage frequency of the old meanings (20.3%). This reflects the expansion of the verb “刷” beyond the definitions provided in the authoritative dictionary “*Modern Chinese Dictionary*” (*the MCD*), indicating that the new meanings are widely used and have a high frequency, showing new vitality. Looking internally at the new meanings, the most frequently used is the item (6), followed by the item (2), then the item (1), and the least frequently used is the item(4) .

3 Core Semantic Features,
Additional Colors and Cognitive
Mechanisms

3.1 Core Semantic Features

As previously mentioned, the prototypical meaning of “刷” is “to clean or apply with a brush”, and its semantic features can be summarized as (+brush tool) (+contact surface) (+repetition) (+motion) (+coverage) (+state change), reflecting the object of the action, method, tool, and purpose. This serves as the basis for the derivation of new meanings.

The core semantic features of the item(1) are (+motion) (+contact surface), indicating that a person swipes a card across a contact surface to complete a payment. For example:

(22) Nowadays, more and more people are choosing to pay by swiping cards—a method that reduces the circulation of cash and facilitates consumption, making it an internationally accepted modern payment tool. But is it safe

to use a POS machine for swiping cards?

In this context, the object held is a bank card, and the contact surface is the POS machine, emphasizing the action of swiping.

The core semantic features of the item (2) are (+motion) (±contact surface), which is based on “motion” combined with visual tracking to form the semantics of “browsing”.

The core semantic features of the item (3) are (+motion) (±abstractness). For example:

(23) During the morning and evening rush hours entering and exiting the subway station, have you ever been stuck at the gate? When swiping your card or scanning your code to enter the subway, have you ever been pinched by the gate?

In this context, “swiping a card” involves a contact surface and a dynamic motion process, whereas “scanning a code” only involves the motion process without a contact surface. The latter’s motion process has a certain degree of abstractness in terms of displacement.

The core semantic feature of the item (4) is (+passage/completion), and looking at its collocation domain, this meaning has metaphorically mapped from the spatial domain to the temporal domain. The core semantic feature of the item (5) is (+repetitive action), that of the item (6) are (+repetitive action) (+increase in quantity), and that of the item (7) is (+change in state).

In summary, the items (1) -(3) are extensions focusing on the action itself, the item (4) is an extension focusing on the process of the action, the item (5) is an extension focusing on the manner of the action, the item (7) is an extension focusing on the result of the action, and the item (6) is an extension focusing on both the manner of the action and the purpose of the action. The table of core semantic features for the new meanings of the verb “shuā” (“刷”) is as follows:

Table 3 Core Semantic Features for the New Meanings of the Verb “Shuā” (“刷”)

New Meanings	(1) Swipe cards for payment, such as bank cards, credit cards and so on.	(2) Swipe the screen to browse, flip through sth.	(3) Scan or identify sth.	(4) Spend time, go through. It often refers to staying up late.	(5) (Not emphasizing purpose) Repeatedly do something frequently	(6) Quickly gain or increase sth. by repeated operations.	(7) Update, refresh
Core Semantic Features	[+motion] [+contact surface]	[+motion] [±contact surface]	[+motion] [±abstractness]	[+passage/completion]	[+repetitive action]	[+repetitive action] [+increase in quantity]	[+change in state]
Derivation paths	action	action	action	progress	method	method and purpose	result

3.2 Additional Colors

In the process of developing new meanings, the verb “shuā” (“刷”) has experienced changes in connotation, particularly in terms of stylistic and emotional nuances. The new meanings of “刷” have come into being in an era marked by the rise of new media and diverse communication platforms, and they are extensively utilized across various mainstream online networks, thereby acquiring a colloquial stylistic tone. As Shen Jiaxuan noted, subjectivity is inevitably interwoven into language when speaking [18]. Among the new meanings of “刷”, the item (6) has a negative connotation, whereas the other meanings remain neutral. For example:

(24) If only I had come here sooner and seen this for myself, I might have avoided that brush-ordering (刷单) scam altogether. [19]

(25) As “pets-in-cabin” flights flood the screen (刷屏), China’s railways are also making fresh strides in pet transport. [20]

The term “brush-ordering” originally meant “to swipe a card to pay a bill”. As online shopping grew, its sense shifted: it now refers to merchants inflating sales figures or reviews to gain unwarranted trust and boost real sales—a form of cut-throat competition. Consequently, its connotation slid from neutral to derogatory. “Sweep social media” first described the act of flooding a platform with repetitive posts in a short time, carrying a clearly negative tone. With the spread of digital life and heavier use of social media, however, the word’s coloring has leveled out to neutral. These swings in emotional hue reveal how people’s acceptance and perception of certain words evolve.

3.3 Cognitive Mechanisms of Semantic Changes of the Verb “Shuā” (“刷”)

Language and society coexist and co-evolve; cognition and socioculture shape each other in a continuous, two-direction interaction [21]. During verbal communication, speakers often innovate semantically to achieve more effective expression. Such innovation is not arbitrary; it is grounded in specific cognitive foundations. In verbal communication, speakers often innovate semantically to achieve more effective expression. Such innovation is not arbitrary; it is grounded in specific cognitive foundations [22-24].

In recent years, the verb “shuā” (“刷”) has become exceptionally frequent, covering a wide semantic range and combining with diverse elements; it displays strong semantic tension and high pragmatic vitality. Structurally, the pattern “刷 X” can yield either new words or new phrases. When X is monosyllabic, the result is a new word, most often a verb-object formation (e.g., “flood the screen” “face-swipe” “grind practice questions”), a verb-complement one (e.g., “swipe until it explodes out” “swipe to the limit”). When X is polysyllabic, “刷 X” functions as a verb-object phrase, such as “scroll one’s phone” “browse Weibo” “spam virtual gifts” “seek visibility”, etc. Semantically, the X-slot accommodates varied roles—object, time, location, purpose, degree—illustrating the construction’s rich combinatory possibilities.

Cognitive linguistics believes that archetypal meaning is a highly abstract semantic generalization of conceptual structures, which reflects its semantic frame and the prominence of different core semantics in the archetypal meaning can promote the emergence of new meaning [25-27]. In the “brush” (“刷 X”) of the newIn the process of meaning derivation, metonymy and metaphor are two important derivation mechanisms of word meanings.

The items (1) -(3) are all products of metonymic extension. The item (1) departs markedly from the prototypical sense, yet retains and foregrounds the core feature (+motion); within the physical-spatial domain it yields the sense “to swipe / drag across a surface”. The item (2) retains the motion of “swipe” but couples it with a scanning gaze; the same feature of (+motion) is profiled, now metonymically anchored in the vertical or horizontal trajectory inherent in the prototype. This trajectory licenses the derived sense of ‘browse’. The item (3), like the item (1), keeps (+motion) in focus and is likewise motivated by the path schema of the prototype, while the difference lies in the shift from a concrete, observable trajectory to a virtual one. Hence the item (3) can be regarded as a variant of the ‘motion’ instantiated by the item (1).

The items (4)-(7) arise through metaphorical extension. The item (4), whose core sense is “to pass through/ spend (time)”, preserves the prototype’s key component (+motion) and maps it from the spatial to the temporal domain. The items (5) -(7) retain the prototype’s action schema of “applying force to spread something over a surface”. Drawing on the force-dynamic schema, each sense highlights a different facet of the event—namely the action process, the intended purpose, or the achieved result—thereby giving rise to distinct metaphorical readings.

4 Dissemination and the Motivations of New Meanings of the Verb “Shuā” (“刷”)

4.1 Dissemination

Due to the markedly uneven distribution of the new senses of “shuā” (“刷”) across overseas Sinophone regions, systematic random sampling is not a viable method for corpus-based quantification. From a global Chinese

perspective, we have conducted a search for the usage of the new meanings of “shuā” (“刷”) within the “national language” and Chinese-speaking communities in this section. We selected the first 300 entries from various Chinese media outlets including Hong Kong (Sing Tao Global Network), Macau (Macao Daily), Taiwan (China Times News), Singapore (Lianhe Zaobao), Malaysia (Sin Chew Daily), Thailand (Thai Chinese Net), Indonesia (International Times), and Australia (Australian Chinese Daily) to perform an incomplete statistics. Entries with relevant usage are marked with a “√”. The details are as follows:

Table 4 Distribution of New Meanings of the Verb “Shuā” (“刷”) in Chinese-Speaking Regions

	Hong Kong	Macau	Taiwan	Singapore	Malaysia	Thailand	Indonesia	Australia
(1)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
(2)	√	√	√	√	√		√	√
(3)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
(4)								
(5)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
(6)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
(7)		√	√	√	√	√	√	√

According to Table 4, all new meanings except for the item (4) are present in both the “national language” community and the Chinese-speaking community. The item (7) is distributed everywhere except in Hong Kong, China, and the item (6) is distributed everywhere except in Australia. The overall outward dissemination rate is as high as 85.71%.

4.2 Motivations

The formation of new meanings for the verb “shuā” (“刷”) is the result of a combination of internal and external linguistic factors. In terms of the language itself, first, there is the principle of linguistic economy, which dictates that to meet new expressive needs without creating an unlimited number of new words, it is necessary to endow “刷” with new meanings; second, there is the dependence on context, as many “old words with new meanings” in the “New Dictionary” are often seen in online contexts, and “刷” is no exception. For example, in the sentence “The joke is too much, I’ll swipe to version 5.0.1 this afternoon, and continue watching ‘Forensic Heroes’; it seems the road to perfecting Android is still long”, the word “刷” is used in the item (7) . Contextual co-occurring words like “5.0.1”, “Android”, and “perfecting” give it the contextual meaning of “refreshing (the system)”, selecting its core semantic feature of [+state

change] in that context, thereby expressing the meaning of “update, refresh”. From an external linguistic perspective, the emergence of a large number of electronic products and the rapid spread of new media, as well as people’s psychological needs for “novelty, difference, and efficiency”, have also contributed to the formation of new meanings for “shuā” (“刷”). From an extra-linguistic perspective, three main forces are at work—technology, psychology, and society. Technologically, the rise of the internet and mass media, together with the flood of popular electronic devices, has accelerated the spread of “刷 X”. Psychologically, the pattern mirrors a fast-paced, efficiency-driven mindset and satisfies the contemporary craving for novelty, difference, and speed. Socially, “刷 X” meets the main pragmatic demands of the information age, while the openness of modern society further facilitates the birth and diffusion of buzzwords.

In the 1960s, Everett Rogers formulated the Diffusion of Innovations theory, which characterizes the diffusion process as essentially one in which new ideas or objects spread through interpersonal communication and information exchange [28]. Both mass-media and interpersonal channels shape this trajectory. The outward diffusion of the new sense of the Chinese verb “shuā” (“刷”) is no longer confined to traditional print media; mainstream digital platforms have vastly amplified its reach, with the web editions of official news outlets in Chinese-speaking

regions wielding particular influence. The multi-media environment endows the new meaning with broad coverage, strong interactivity, and diverse modes of presentation.

The rapid and extensive spread of the new meanings of “刷” (swipe) across various Chinese-speaking regions can be attributed primarily to two reasons: On the one hand, with the enhancement of China's comprehensive national power, the international influence of the Chinese language has significantly increased, leading to a surge in interest in learning Chinese, often referred to as “Chinese Fever”. The outward dissemination of the new meanings of “shuā” (“刷”) is not only from mainland China to Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau but also quickly extends to overseas Chinese-speaking communities. On the other hand, the emergence of new internet technologies and the diversification of media have facilitated the swift spread of these new meanings. The integration of digital platforms and social media has allowed for the rapid sharing and adoption of linguistic innovations across different regions.

5 Conclusion

In summary, the new meanings of the verb “shuā” (“刷”) are widely used and have a higher frequency of use than the old meanings, with the item (6) being the most frequently used. The prototypical meaning “to clean or apply with a brush” serves as the basis for the derivation of new meanings. The shared core semantic features of items (1) - (3) is (+motion), while the shared core semantic features of the items (5) (6) is (+repetitive action). The core semantic features of the items (4) and (7) are (+passage/completion) and (+state change), respectively, with the item (6) carrying a pejorative connotation. The emergence of the new meanings of “刷” is due to the principle of linguistic economy, dependence on context, the rise of new media, and people's psychological need for “novelty, difference, and efficiency”. Currently, its usage has been widely disseminated across various Chinese-speaking regions, thanks to the growing international influence of the Chinese language and the rapid spread of new media.

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Biography

Zhou Lianying

Born in July 1993, is a female Ph.D. and an assistant researcher at Beijing Language and Culture University. Her main research interests are the synchronic and diachronic aspects of Modern Chinese, Chinese vocabulary, and international Chinese language teaching.

E-mail: 401553879@qq.com

Zhang Hao

Born in September 1967, is a female Ph.D. and a professor at Beijing Language and Culture University. Her main research focuses on Chinese language teaching and cultural dissemination.

E-mail: Zhanghao@blcu.edu.cn

Han Jiahe

Born in November 1993, is a female Ph.D. candidate at Beijing Normal University. Her main research interest is in linguistic typology.

E-mail: 1838695722@qq.com