

# A Study on Lexicalization of “Ke (可) X” From the Perspective of Cognition

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The word formation prefix “ke (可)” has the meanings of “can (可以)”, “make (使令)”, “worth (值得)”, and “suitable (适合)”; this paper not only studies the words of “ke (可) X”, but analyzes the generation mechanism and conditions of “ke X”, and holds that metaphor and metonymy, distance iconicity, analogy and reanalysis are important mechanisms for the lexicalization of “ke X”; the interaction among phonetics, syntax, and semantics creates conditions for “ke X” to become a word. In addition, the subjective tendency of “ke X” is also discussed, the subjective meaning of “ke X” is the evolution from concrete actual action to abstract subjective mental action, and this reflects the human cognitive model from concrete to abstract.

**Keywords:** ke (可), lexicalization, condition, subjective, generative mechanism

## Introduction

In recent years, the research on “ke (可)” has produced abundant research results. From the perspective of subjective modality, some studies have revealed that “ke” has the semantic function of observing and listening to the subjective expectations between the two sides in the dialogue context, such as Zhang Wangxi and Li Huimin (2009). In addition, some studies have analyzed the phenomenon of the gradual use of “ke” as a morpheme from the perspective of network buzzwords and the construction of “ke A ke B”, such as Yu Xiaohan (2021) and Chen Zi (2021). Although there are new ideas, the deficiency is that the clue of the evolution of the meaning of “ke” is not clearly presented.

Mr. Lv Shuxiang (1980, p. 335) studied “ke” as a word formation prefix early, that is, “ke + verb” to form an adjective, indicating can and should; and “ke + noun” forms an adjective, indicating fit. However, later generations have paid little attention to this aspect and discussed it less. On the basis of previous studies, this paper will continue to explore the lexicalization of “ke X” and reveal the lexicalization process of “ke”.

## Word Analysis of “Ke X”

The general criteria for the lexicalization of a certain “ke X” are as follows: Firstly, “ke X” appears as a syntactic component in a sentence, and no other component can be inserted between “ke” and “X”, such as “keai (可爱)”, and can only be used as a word; there must be no other things between them. Secondly, the overall meaning of “ke X” is not the simple addition of the meaning of “ke” and “X”; the actual meaning is hidden behind the surface meaning, for example, “kexin (可心)” means “suitable for wish”. Thirdly, neither “ke” nor “X” can be modified separately, but can only be modified as a whole by other syntactic elements. For example, “kecao

(可靠)” can only be modified as a whole by the adverb of degree “very (很/非常)”, to say “henkekao (很可靠)”. The lexicalization of “ke X” is a strong trend of evolution, which has experienced a long process of evolution. In the future, more forms of “ke X” will join the ranks of the word formation, such as “keren (可人)”.

### Adjectives Formed by “Ke X”

**Ke means can (可以义).** *The Modern Chinese Dictionary* (7th edition) (Dictionary Editing Office, Institute of Linguistics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 2016, p. 738) has included four adjectives, namely, “kekao (可靠)”, “keneng (可能)”, “kexing (可行)”, and “kequ (可取)”, which are composed of “ke” and “X”. For example:

(1) 是谁家的票子, 可靠得住吗? (清《老残游记》)

(Whose ticket is it? Can you trust it?)

“Ke” and “kao (靠)” have phonetic pauses, and these three morphemes are closely combined and used as a phrase. “Ke” is in a transitional stage. There are two kinds of understanding: One meaning is equal to yes; the other is doubt, but generally the author prefers the first understanding.

(2) 靠山山会倒, 靠人人会跑, 只有自己最可靠。(影视作品《天道》)

(Backer mountain will fall; relying on everyone will run, only their most reliable.)

In modern Chinese, there is no phonetic pause between “ke” and “kao”, and “kekao” is solidified into an adjective, which can be modified by the adverb of degree “zui (最)” in front of it, and there is no other syntactic component behind it. At this time, the “ke” indicating the meaning has completed the lexicalization evolution process.

**Ke means makes (使令义).** When combined with an emotive verb, “ke” means “to feel...”, such as “keai (可爱)”, “kebei (可悲)”, etc. For example:

(3) 下官今日三报师恩, 正要天下人晓得扶持了老成人也有用处, 不可爱少而贱老也! (明《警世通言(上)》)

(I thanked the teacher many times today, I want to let everyone know that help honest people will also be useful, we cannot like young talent to abandon the old.)

“Ke” and “ai” are not the same word, “ai” and “shao” are closely linked to form a phrase, and “keai” has not been lexicalized at this time. However, because “ke” and “ai” are often used in combination without inserting other components, they are closely related in syntactic form, and there is a negative component in front of “ke”, which lays the foundation for the further development of “keai”.

(4) 他是雕的还是铸的, 是杏仁般大的一个弥勒佛象, 须眉毕现的, 很是可爱。(清《二十年目睹之怪现状(上)》)

(Is he carved or cast? He is a Maitreya Buddha elephant as big as almonds, with whiskers and eyebrows showing, which is very lovely.)

It is not difficult to see that in modern times, “keai” is often used as an adjective, “ke” develops to make meaning, and in front of “keai” not only can be added negative components, but also can be used to modify the degree adverb “very (很)”, and behind without an object.

**Ke means worth (值得义).** When combined with an action verb, a mental verb, or a monosyllabic adjective, “ke” means “worth...”, such as “keguan (可观)”, “kejing (可敬)”, and so on; this meaning is related to the speaker’s subjective cognition. For example:

(5) 九卿数言便宜奏议可观。(隋·虞世南《北堂书钞》)

(The secretaries of state has given advice to the emperor many times, and has many advantages that are beneficial to the government, which you can learn from.)

(6) 楹有书更精妙，甚可观。(清·陆心源《唐文拾遗续拾》)

(And there are books more exquisite, and very handsome.)

In Example (5), the word “ke” represents “can”. “Ke” and “guan” are separate syntactic components, or a phrase. In Example (6), “ke” represents worth meaning, and “keguan” as an adjective is modified by degree adverb “very (甚)”, which has obvious tendency of subjectivism.

**Ke menas suitable (适合义).** Human body words refer to the body or organs of the word, “ke” and the combination of human body words means “suitable”, such as “keshen (可身)”, “kekou (可口)”, and so on, mostly related to the speaker’s subjective modality. For example:

(7) 虽府受节度，可身无致敬。(唐·房玄龄《晋书》)

(Although the government was also subject to the honor of the officer, he himself did not have to comply.)

(8) 杨元无罪可身，丐者徇私量罚。(明《龙图公案》)

(Yang Yuan was innocent, but the beggar was punished for personal gain.)

(9) 这样，她穿起可身的涤良军便服。(现代李国文《危楼记事》)

(In this way, she was dressed in fine polyester military civilian clothes.)

In Example (7), “ke” is used separately from “shen”, and “ke” indicates transition, which does not become a word at this time. In Example (8), “ke” is used as the meaning of suitable, “ke” as the predicate and “shen” as the object, rather than as a word. At this time, “ke” is in a transitional period. In Example (9), “ke” is already used as an adjective, forming a definite middle structure with the following noun.

“Kelian (可怜)” is a special word. For example:

(10) 那个人罪大恶极，不要可怜他。

(Don’t pity the man for his terrible crime.)

(11) a. 她这么小就没了爹娘，真可怜。

(It’s a pity that she lost her parents at such a young age.)

b. 他的工资少得可怜。

(His salary is pitiful.)

“Lian (怜)” is both verbal and descriptive. When “kelian” is a verb, it means “lianmin (怜悯)”, as in Example (10). When “kelian” is an adjective, it has two meanings, one meaning “worthy of pity” (e.g., Example (11a)), the other meaning “(small quantity or bad quality) is not worth mentioning” (e.g., Example (11b)).

### Verbs Formed by “Ke X”

In *Modern Chinese Dictionary* (7th edition), there are only two verbs formed by “ke” and “X”, namely “kewang (可望)” and “kewei (可谓)”.

**Kewang (可望).** “Kewang (可望)” means “can count on”. For example:

(12) 此同车，必使能，国未可望也。(春秋《左传》)

(The same car, will enable, the country is not expected.)

“Ke” and “wang” are not closely related, “wei” and “ke” have tight semantics, and “kewang” is still a phrase.

(13) 不敢，相公，岂可望赏？小人奉承的便是。(元《朴通事》)

(Dare not, prime minister, can expect to reward? The little man flatters is.)

(14) 男的似是常用麻药的人，可望保住性命。(现代·川端康成《山之音》)

(The man seems to be a common anesthetic; is expected to save his life.)

It is not difficult to see that the form of “ke” and “wang” is closely combined, starting from the Spring and Autumn period. In the Northern Song Dynasty, “kewang” is close together, followed by the object component, and is in the middle of phrases and words. Through the search of CCL (Center for Chinese Linguistics PKU) Corpus, a total of 284 cases of “kewang” were found in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, most of which could take an object, and the lexicalization table “can be expected” had already occurred. After the Republic of China, “kewang” as a verb can be followed by an object or a clause and other complex structures, as shown in Example (14).

**Kewei (可谓).** “Kewei” expresses the meaning of “you can say”, and acts as the predicate or predicate central language in sentences. From ancient times to modern Chinese, there is no great change in semantics, and the syntactic component has changed from phrase to verb. For example:

(15) 晋公子生十七年而亡，卿材三人从之，可谓贤矣。（春秋《左传》）

(The prince of Jin died 17 years after he was born, so three men followed him. He could be called a man of merit.)

(16) 卓赞美道：“这真可谓绝无仅有有了！”（民国《后汉演义》）

(Zhuo praised, “This is truly unique!”)

From the Spring and Autumn period to modern times, there is no obvious change in the syntactic level of “kewei”. In modern times, “kewei” has changed, that is, it has changed from not having any modifier in the front to being able to be preceded by a sub-part of speech. Being able to be modified by adverbs is a condition for the lexicalization of “kewei”.

### Adverbs Formed by “Ke X”

**Kebu (可不).** “Kebu” is a modality that implies agreement. The main usages of “ke” include “kebu (可不)”, “kebushima (可不是嘛)”, which is used in a conversation to agree with the other person. For example:

(17) 覆军杀将必以五危，不可不察也。（春秋《孙子》）

(There will be dangers in the battle against the generals, which must not be ignored.)

(18) 你的终身又有所托，可不生死无憾。（元《元代话本选集》）

(Your life has trust, that is without regret.)

(19) 你是指瓦尔纳维齐吗？……那可不！（屠格涅夫《猎人笔记》）

(Do you mean Valnavich?... That’s not true!)

In Example (17), the “ke” means “can” and the “bu” means “negative”, used separately, which are one phrase. In Example (18), “ke” and “bu” are semantic compact, representing a subjective modality of the speaker and expressing agreement with what has been mentioned above, while “kebu” is in a transitional stage. In Example (19), “kebu” becomes a modal adverb, acting as an adverbial to express the speaker’s agreement with the previous point, equivalent to “yes”.

**Kehao (可好).** The word “kehao” has undergone semantic changes since the Ming Dynasty. Before the Ming Dynasty, it was a Chinese phrase indicating “very good”, and after the Ming Dynasty, it became an adverb indicating “just (正好)”, which went through an evolution process as follows. For example:

(20) 吾闻之，唯仁者可好也，可恶也，可高也，可下也。（春秋《国语》）

(I heard, only Renzhe can be good, hateful, can also high, and can also low.)

(21) 看前面树阴之下，可好纳凉。（明《封神演义（上）》）

(Look ahead under the shade of the trees. It's cool.)

(22) 我正想找他来帮忙，可好他来了。（当代/应用文/词典/倒序现代汉语词典）

(I was going to ask him for help, but here he is.)

In Example (20), “ke” stands for “can”, “ke” is adverbial in the sentence, “hao” is pronounced as the fourth sound, the verb as the predicate, and “kehao” is not a word at this time. In Example (21), “kehao” can be understood as the phrase table “can be very well” and can also be understood as the adverb table “exactly”; it is in the transition stage. In Example (22), “kehao” means “just (正好)”; the whole is as an adverb to use, in the sentence do adverbial.

### Conjunction Formed by “Ke X”

**Kejian (可见).** As a conjunction in modern Chinese, “kejian” has the function of textual cohesion, carrying on the above, indicating that one can make a judgment or conclusion. For example:

(23) 八卦以象告，爻象以情言，刚柔杂居，而吉凶可见矣。（周《周易》）

(Gossip to tell, Yao and giri to love, rigid and soft, and can see the good and bad.)

(24) 其所执守，可见而不可论也。（六朝抱朴子《道论》）

(His observance is visible and not discussed.)

(25) 可见是当时祝寿讲经文的底本。（五代《敦煌变文集新书》）

(So, this is the text of the birthday sermon.)

In Example (23), “kejian” means “can be seen” and semantically represents the inference made from the previous text, which lays a foundation for further lexicalization. In Example (24), “kejian” is at the beginning of the last clause, connecting the preceding and subsequent texts, and providing conditions for its lexicalization in form. In Example (25), “kejian” is at the beginning of the sentence, connecting the context and developing from phrase to conjunction. The above example sentences show this long process of evolution.

**Keshi (可是).** In ancient Chinese, “ke” of “keshi” indicates emphasis and is an adverb; “shi” indicates judgment and is a judgment verb. In modern Chinese, “ke” is used as a conjunction to indicate a turning point. For example:

(26) 那沈襄可是沈经历的儿子？（元《元代话本选集》）

(But Shen Xiang was the son of Shen Jingli?)

(27) 似乎船在江中，可是并未行动。（清《三侠剑（上）》）

(It seems that the ship is in the river, but it does not move.)

In Example (26), “ke” means emphasis, “shi” means judgment, and “keshi” is not a word, but close together in form. The syntactic proximity of the two creates conditions for lexicalization. The “keshi” in Example (27) as a conjunction represents the transition, semantic change, equivalent to “but” and connects the preceding and subsequent texts.

### Generation Mechanism and Conditions of Lexicalization of “Ke X”

The transformation of “ke X” from non-word to word is a dynamic process of language evolution. The words formed by “ke X” have both content and function words, and most of them are developed from phrases. Some “ke X” still retains the use of phrases in modern Chinese.

(28) 不能骂她，她可是你妈妈。

(Don't scold her. She's your mother.)

In the process of word formation, the semantic change of “ke” contributes to the generation of lexicalization. The “ke” in the content words formed by “ke X” has practical meaning, while the “ke” in the function words formed by “ke X” becomes hollow. The “ke” and “x” are closely related in form and semantics, and the semantics is highly correlated. Therefore, “ke X” constitutes a semantic whole that is not easy to be separated and evolves into a word, such as “keshi” above.

### Generation Mechanism of Lexicalization of “Ke X”

The evolution of the meaning of “ke” is closely related to human cognitive activities, and the generation mechanism of “ke X” mainly includes the following aspects.

Firstly, metaphor and metonymy. Metaphor and metonymy are not only important concepts in cognitive linguistics, but also important generative mechanisms for lexicalization of “ke X”. On the one hand, metaphor is more of a cognitive means and exists in people’s daily life. The whole human system is based on metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, pp. 21-29). For example, “keneng (可能)” itself means “can”, “ke” means “can”, “neng” means “can”, “ke” and “neng” are semantically similar, so it has evolved into a two-syllable word which means “can be realized” or “may come true”. Another aspect is metonymy. Croft (1993) believed that metonymy is a cognitive operation process in which one conceptual entity provides psychological channels for another conceptual entity in the same idealized cognitive model. For example, “kehao” means “just (恰好)”, and the speaker hopes that things will always go in a good direction. Therefore, as a word, “kehao” is endowed with the semantic meaning of “just (正好)”, which is in line with subjective expectations and is compatible with people’s cognition. That is to say, the semantic meaning expressed by “kehao” is related to the semantic meaning of people’s hope that something will happen exactly as expected.

Secondly, distance iconicity. “Distance” refers to the cognitive distance of human beings, while “iconicity” is a concept opposite to “arbitrariness”, which means that the connection between the form and meaning of language is not completely arbitrary, but has a certain motivation and can be verified (Lu, 2019, p. 272). For example, “kebu”. “Kebu” first appeared in the Zhou Dynasty; “ke” and “bu” have their own meaning and usage, according to their register which can be summed up into three modes: (A) “S1, bukebu (不可不) x”; (B) “S1, kebu (可不) x”; (C) “S1, kebu (可不)”. In the beginning (Type A), “ke” and “X” are in parallel, the verb can be meaning, the second “bu” is negative, “ke” and “bu” are close to each other in form, and semantically, they have the correlation of “positive and promise”, and they are connected together without semantic contradiction. In the Type B, the meaning and function of “kebu” are changed. It no longer acts as a syntactic component separately, but becomes a whole adverb in the position of the adverbial at the beginning of the clause to express the agreement with the preceding clause, which is equivalent to “exactly”. In Type C in the “kebu” after the disappearance of the ingredients, “kebu” can add exclamation point single said, strong tone. After the evolution from A to B to C, the original semantic function of “kebu” is lost, and it becomes an adverb as an adverbial to echo and agree with the meaning (Liu, 2016).

Thirdly, by analogy. Ye Feisheng and Xu Tongqiang (2010, p. 258) believed that analogy can smooth out the difficulties in grammar, promote the scope of application of new rules, and play a role of adjustment and rectification to make language more organized. The table constituted by “ke X” makes the adjective with “kewu (可恶)” and “kezeng (可憎)”, and “wu” “zeng” with derogatory color. After “kewu” becomes an adjective, under the influence of analogy, there appears the linguistic phenomenon of adding “ke” before the morpheme with derogatory color in the same semantic category, and a series of words of the same type are introduced.

Fourthly, reanalysis. Lexicalization and grammaticalization are interwoven, so reanalysis can be used as the generative mechanism of lexicalization (Liu, 2010). For example, “kejian (可见)”. “Kejian” was originally a phrase, “ke” is the auxiliary verb to indicate the meaning, and “jian” is the verb means “see”, which is a practical action, as in Example (23). Later, “kejian” evolved from a practical action to a psychological action semantically, connecting the preceding and following clauses and being used as conjunctions. The semantic analysis was reinterpreted as “can infer or draw a certain conclusion”, as in Example (25).

### Conditions for Lexicalization of “Ke X”

In the process of lexicalization, the interaction among pronunciation, syntax, and semantics is an important condition for lexicalization of “ke X”.

First of all, the fusion effect of disphonation at the beginning of sentences in ancient Chinese contributed to the lexicalization of “ke X”. In Chinese, the first sentence is the typical syntactic position of the conjunction, which is prone to disarticulationization under the influence of “fusion” (Li, 2011). Dong Xiufang (2003) believed that the syntactic component at the beginning of a sentence changes from a phrase to a conjunction, generally because a sentence has only one semantic focus. If the syntactic component is in the position of non-semantic focus, that is, the beginning or the end of a sentence, it will naturally be placed out of the focus of attention, so the two syntactic components at the beginning or the end of a sentence will become one. The following takes “kejian” as an example. For example:

(29) 近而不可见者，不察其辞也；远而可知者，反往以验来也。（战国《鬼谷子》）

(Near and not to see, do not notice its words; far but can know, back to the test.)

(30) 以辅汉为名，可见是时人心思汉，举天下不谋而同。（清·赵翼《廿二史劄记》）

(In the name of assisting the Han Dynasty, it can be seen that when people minded Han, the world happened to be the same.)

In Example (29), “ke” is the auxiliary verb and “jian” is the verb. “Kejian” in Example (30) is the conjunction. Therefore, in ancient Chinese, “kejian”, which is located at the beginning of a sentence, changed from phrase to conjunction under the action of the “fusion” of dissonance.

Secondly, some changes in syntax also lay the foundation for lexicalization. For example:

(31) a. 洞里可是个治世的祖师么？（明《三宝太监西洋记（二）》）

(Is there a ruler in the cave?)

b. 一些人尝试过，可是他们现在都在国外。（《俄罗斯首富是怎样形成的》）

(Some have tried, but they are all abroad now.)

(31) a. 可爱深红爱浅红？（唐·杜甫《江畔独步寻花（其五）》）

(Do you prefer dark red or light red peach blossoms?)

b. 今日在凌霄宝殿弄威风，各展雄才真可爱。（明《西游记（上）》）

(Today in the Ling Xiao Bao Dian getting prestige, each show is really cute.)

In Example (31a), “keshi” is in the middle of the sentence, “ke” is an adverb, and “shi” is a judgment verb. In Example (31b), the position of “keshi” has changed, and it is in the adverbial position at the beginning of the sentence; “keshi” becomes an adverb, which is used to connect the preceding and subsequent texts to express the transition. In Example (32a) “keai” is a phrase, “ke” is a rhetorical mood, equivalent to “still”, and “ai” is a “love”. In Example (32b) “keai” can be modified by an adverb and become an adjective.

Finally, the change of semantic relation is also the condition for lexicalization of “ke X”. From “ke” and “X” representing different meanings respectively, to “ke X” representing the same meaning as a whole, the semantic meaning of “ke” becomes blurred and “ke” becomes an affix. For example:

(33) a. 朕可体上天好生之心，存罪人不孥之德。（清《七剑十三侠（下）》）

(I can heaven good life of the heart; the sinner does not have the virtue of children.)

b. 颇长的身材，白皙的皮肤，可体的飞行皮服恰到好处地将妩媚与英武裹合在一起。（1995年人民日报）

(Tall body, white skin, body flight leather suit just right to charm and handsome wrapped together.)

In Example (33a), “ke” and “ti” act as two syntactic components in the sentence, and their semantics is separated. In Example (33b), as a semantic overall table “fit for body”, “ke” becomes a prefix indicating “fit”, the semantic meaning of “ke” is blurred, and the semantic meaning of “ke X” has been changed.

### The Subjective Tendency of Worthy and Suitable Adjective “Ke X”

Shen Jianxuan (2001) pointed out that subjectification refers to language adopting appropriate structural forms or undergoing corresponding evolution process in order to express the position and emotion of the speech subject. In the process of development, the adjective “ke X”, which represents worthy and suitable meaning, reflects the subjective tendency of the speaker and conforms to the cognitive law of human beings from concrete to abstract.

#### Subjective Tendency of Meaningful “Ke X” Adjectives

The adjectives of “ke X”, which indicate worthiness, have obvious tendency of subjectivism, such as “keguan (可观)” and “kegui (可贵)”. For example:

(34) 第二天发生恶心、呕吐的症状已非常可疑，应该立刻进行诊断、急救。（当代《蒋氏家族全传》）

(The symptoms of nausea and vomiting on the second day are very suspicious and should be diagnosed and first aid immediately.)

(35) 多么耿直可敬的老人啊。（《1994年报刊精选》）

(What a straight and honorable old man.)

In Example (34), “keyi” means “doubtful”, developed from a visible look of suspicion to an invisible inner activity. In Example (35), “kejing” means “worthy of respect”, people’s respect for the old man from the actual action to the psychological feeling that he is worthy of respect. All the above sentences can reflect a strong subjective tendency.

#### Subjective Tendency of Adjectives Suitable for Meaning “Ke X”

The adjectives composed of “ke” and human body words are “keshen (可身)” and “kekou (可口)”, which change from concrete behavior into an abstract subjective modality. For example:

(36) 黄素琴为稳定她的学习情绪，给她买来很多件可身的衣服。（《1994年报刊精选》）

(In order to stabilize her studying mood, Huang Suqin bought her a lot of suitable clothes.)

(37) 色黄，酥脆味香可口。（当代/应用文）

(The color is yellow; it’s very crisp and delicious.)

In Example (36), “keshen” means “fit for the body”, meaning that the clothes fit for the body can be seen, which is from the actual action to the speaker subjectively thinking “clothes are very satisfied” psychological attitude. In Example (37), “kekou” refers to “fit for taste”, which develops from the specific action of eating to subjective evaluation. The above two sentences both show subjective tendency.

## Conclusions

In modern Chinese, “ke X” has been included in the *Modern Chinese Dictionary* (7th edition), and has become a word, such as “keai (可爱)” and “kewang (可望)”, and some “ke X” forms are in the process of becoming a word, such as “kejia (可嘉)” and “kejian (可鉴)”. The lexicalized “ke X” are mostly disyllabic, but there are also polysyllabic constructions used as idiomatic expressions, such as “nakebu (那可不)”. This paper analyzes the formation mechanism and conditions of “ke X” lexicalization from the perspective of cognition, and believes that metonymy and metaphor, distance iconicity, analogy and reanalysis are the important mechanisms of “ke X” lexicalization, and the interaction among phonetics, syntax, and semantics creates the conditions for “ke X” lexicalization.

This paper also discusses the subjective tendency of “ke X”. In the long process of evolution, part of the semantic meaning of “ke X” has changed from the concrete action meaning to the more abstract subjective modal meaning. Therefore, the in-depth exploration of “ke X” with subjective tendency and the motivation behind it can better clarify the evolution of the meaning of “ke”, which will not only promote the discussion of language evolution theory, but also be beneficial to the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language.

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