This is a brief sketch on word formation with Chinese functional morphemes keˇ1 and néng. What we will try to prove here is why both of them (ke and neng), in the formation of adjectives (and de-adjectival nouns), can correspond to the English adjectival suffixes -able/ible.

Historical background – a short history of the ‘conflict’

Kè2, néng, kẽ, kān, dé and zú are six auxiliary verbs which (apart from their other meanings) in classical Chinese denote the possibility of an action. All of them can be translated into modern Chinese as kěyì, néng, kěnéng, nénggòu (that is can/may or can/be able to/be capable of). Only two of them, ke and neng, have survived the test of time and are now auxiliary/modal verbs in modern Chinese.

Before going more deeply into the problem, let us remember two important facts about classical Chinese:
1) frequent polysemy of words and morphemes consequently leads to a situation where a single word/morpheme can be converted from one part of speech to another3.

1 The tone marks are those of the four tones of Mandarin Chinese and are indicated only in cases of possible ambiguity due to toneless pinyin transcription.
2 Auxiliary verb kè is the first one recorded in ancient scripts (Yang and He: 1992) and also the first one to be used by the Qin dynasty (3 c. BC). In modern Chinese kè (with unchanged meaning can) can only be found in the written language and in rare expressions like kè qín kè jiàn ‘have capacity for industry and thrift’, ‘be industrious and frugal’, or bu kè ‘be unable to, cannot’. Hereafter kè will always be written with its tone mark, while kẽ in the context (to avoid misunderstanding) will be written as ke, without its tone mark. Kān, like kè, only forms idiomatic expressions such as kān dāng zhòng rén ‘be capable of shouldering important tasks’, ‘can take a position of great responsibility’. Dé and zú (following the example of kè and kān) have also lost their auxiliary function.
3 As we will see further on, keneng can be an auxiliary verb (can/be able to), an adjective (possible) or an adverb (possibly/maybe).
2) classical Chinese is not a monosyllabic language; complex lexemes formed out of both content and functional morphemes are not isolated cases.

A separate analysis of ke and neng with respect to these two facts, along with the elimination of all irrelevant data, gives us the following results. Ke, regarded only as an auxiliary verb, has several meanings: keyi (can/may), neng/nenggou (can/able to/be capable of) and zhide (to be worth). As such, ke soon enters into word formation, resulting in functional pairs/auxiliaries like keyi (can/may) and keneng (can/may), which still function as auxiliaries in modern Chinese, and also form adjectives such as ke’ai (lovable/worthy of being loved), kelian (pittable, pitiful) etc. Neng as auxiliary verb has almost the same meanings as ke, that is: neng/nenggou (can/able to/be capable of), keyi (can/may) and hui (be able to/be skillful in) but, unlike ke, with its auxiliary meaning it doesn’t form any words.

Briefly, in preparation for a giant leap into the future, we could sum up the data and see that the situation in classical Chinese seems pretty clear: semantically ke:neng are very close but as for word formation ke is in the lead.

Disentangling the Chinese knot

We will start by making a few notes on the features of our rivals. Both are Aux verbs often listed in the same class. Syntactically, neng has to take VP as its complement, while keyi does not; neng can be
negated by *bu* (*not/no*) and can form positive-negative questions\(^9\), while *keyi* is negated by the negative form of *neng* (i.e. *bu neng*) and cannot form positive-negative questions\(^10\). Semantically, they are still very close and the slight difference between them is fairly convincingly stated by Lü (1994): *"Neng lays more emphasis on capability, while keyi lays more on possibility."* But on the battlefield of word formation, the situation is rather more complicated.

The hypothesis that *ke* and *neng* both correspond to English adjectival suffix *-able* is based on their semantic closeness (i.e. meaning with which they form adjectives) and the same linear and structural position in the words they form (as will be shown later, reliable = *kekao* [A[Aux ke] [V]], *capable* = *nenggan* [A[Aux neng] [V]]). In seeking proof for our hypothesis we will step by step analyze all the aspects of the problem.

**Great semantic similarity - the source of the 'trouble'**

Now, resorting to fact number 1 about classical Chinese (which is also applicable to modern Chinese) we can free our investigation from needless polysemy and thus disregard all other (for us) peripheral meanings. We will focus on *ke/neng* only as auxiliaries which we presume correspond to the English suffix *-able*. The information gathered from many dictionaries and informants provides us with the following feedback:

**KE - the problematic polysemy**

\[\text{Ke}_1 = \text{keyi} = \text{can/may} \]
\[\text{neng (gou)}\]\(^{11}\) can, be able to, be capable of
\[\text{keneng} = \text{can/be able to, be possible, possibly/maybe} \]
\[\text{keneng} \]apparently functions as auxiliary verb, adjective or adverb, hence in cases such as *ta keneng lai* ambiguity is inevitable\(^{12}\).

\[\text{ke}_2 = \text{zhide} = \text{to be worth} \]

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\(^9\) E.g. *Ta neng bu neng lai?* *He can not can come?*

\(^{10}\) This is the rule found in (very prescriptively oriented) Chinese grammars, but in colloquial speech and many dialects of Chinese *keyi bu keyi* is not such a rare animal.

\(^{11}\) The difference between *neng* and *nenggou* is that *neng* is more frequent than *nenggou* and can form positive-negative questions, while the other one cannot.

\(^{12}\) It is either *[DP ta] [CP keneng lai]]* be can/may come or *[DP ta] [Adv keneng] [VP lai]], be (will) possibly/maybe come.*
According to grammars\textsuperscript{13} zdìe itself is an auxiliary verb. The mere meaning of the word/morpheme could cast doubts on its potential to be a candidate for the -\textit{able} counterpart. To overcome such an obstacle we here present two pieces of evidence. On one side there is notable inconsistency in dictionary explanations\textsuperscript{14}; on the other, in many cases of words presented none of our informants could say precisely whether the \textit{ke} in question (e.g. \textit{kekao}, \textit{ke’ai} or \textit{kebei}) is \textit{ke\textsubscript{1}} or \textit{ke\textsubscript{2}} and couldn’t draw a line between the two of them. (Nevertheless, in some other cases informants were pretty sure that \textit{ke} is actually \textit{ke\textsubscript{1}} but not \textit{ke\textsubscript{2}}). If we now extend our focus to their semantic scope, we will see that the meaning of \textit{ke\textsubscript{1}} is more basic (and wider) than \textit{ke\textsubscript{2}}. In other words the ‘worthiness’ of \textit{ke\textsubscript{2}} presupposes the ‘possibility’ of \textit{ke\textsubscript{1}} (that is, if somebody/something is worth relying on, this presupposes that he/it can be relied on), or the other way round ‘possibility’ that \textit{ke\textsubscript{1}} precedes the ‘worthiness’ of \textit{ke\textsubscript{2}} (if somebody/something can be trusted, then he/it can also be worthy of trust\textsuperscript{15}). The reasoning presented above allows us to unify these two \textit{ke\textsubscript{1}/2} into a single \textit{ke} which is the first ‘-\textit{able}’ in modern Chinese. This assumption was fortunately confirmed by informants.

\textbf{\textit{ke\textsubscript{1}} = sbihe = be appropriate/suitable for, be fit to).}

Why are we dealing with this one, when it isn’t an Aux at all? The answer lies in the fact that it also forms adjectives with the same linear order as (unified) \textit{ke} and \textit{neng}. Even more important is the fact that this \textit{ke}, unlike ‘our’ \textit{ke}/\textit{neng}, in word formation process selects a noun (not a verb) and that it is repeatedly and misleadingly ‘packed’ together with two other \textit{ke} as one single prefix\textsuperscript{16}, which contradicts our initial premise and future observations, but is still worth noticing.

\textbf{\textit{Neng} - the non-problematic polysemy}

\textit{Neng\textsubscript{1}} = \textit{can}, be able to, be capable of

\textsuperscript{13} In Liu, Fan and Gu (2001) zdìe is classified as a modal verb which expresses judgment, while \textit{ke}, \textit{keyi} and \textit{neng} are grouped in another class of auxiliaries denoting \textit{judgment based on subjective or objective conditions}.

\textsuperscript{14} For example, it could be found that the adjective ‘pitiable = kebei’ means [something that by its characteristics] can make one sad or (just) [something that by its characteristics] can make one sad or even something that is worth pity.

\textsuperscript{15} We admit, however, that ‘possibility’ can precede everything.

\textsuperscript{16} Words formed this way are \textit{kekou} \{\textit{A}\textsubscript{\text{Aux}} \textit{ke} \textit{L} mouth\} ‘tasty’, \textit{keyi} \{\textit{A}\textsubscript{\text{Aux}} \textit{ke} \textit{S} wish/thought\} ‘that is as one wishes/satisfactory’, \textit{kexin} \{\textit{A}\textsubscript{\text{Aux}} \textit{ke} \textit{S} heart\} ‘that is as heart [wishes]’. 
Neng₂ = hui = be skillful/proficient in, be able to
Neng₃ = yinggai = should, ought to, must/have to

Knowing that:
Neng₃ does not form any words,
Neng₂ forms only a few rare expressions and
Neng₁, unlike neng₁/₂, takes a verb and forms an adjective, we
can with no doubt pronounce neng₁ to be the second ‘-able’ of mod-
ern Chinese.

Inferring from the above arguments, we can state that both (uni-
fied) ke and neng by virtue of their meaning could both be ‘Chine-
se –able’. But, apart from their (not always so perceivable) semantic
similarity, there is still no firm evidence to support this hypothesis.
So far (not) so good.

**Word formation - the crux of the matter**

This is the key which gives us answers to:
why ke/neng can be considered as Chinese -able(s) and
why we say that they only correspond to English adjectival suffix
-able.

**Ke vs. neng shows ke = neng**

Observing the following examples of adjectives and (de-adjecti-
val) nouns we can clearly see that word structures formed by ke and
neng are the same.

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17 For some syntactic and semantic features of neng and hui see Watanabe (1999), in Modern Chinese Grammar Studies Meeting the Challenge of the New Century (pp. 476-486).
18 More precisely, by the overlapping of their semantic scopes: (unified) ke = ke₁ + ke₂ covers the range of can/may, be capable of, be possible (keneng), be worth, while neng = can, be able, be capable of.
Adjectives: **kekao** reliable
[Aux ke] [V kao]
*Can* rely

**nenggan** able, capable
[Aux neng] [V gan]
*Can/may* do (things)

(1) **kekao**

\[ \text{Aux} \quad \text{V} \]
\[ \text{Ke} \quad \text{kao} \quad \text{reliable} \]
\[ \text{Can/may} \quad \text{bian} \quad \text{variable} \]
\[ \text{Lian} \quad \text{pitiable/pitiful} \]
\[ \text{Xing} \quad \text{feasible/practicable} \]

**nenggan**

\[ \text{Aux} \quad \text{V} \]
\[ \text{Neng} \quad \text{gan} \quad \text{able, capable} \]
\[ \text{Can/may} \quad \text{dong} \quad \text{active, dynamic} \]

Nouns:

(2) **kejiexing** solvability/solubility

\[ \text{Aux} \quad \text{V} \quad \text{suffix}_N \]
\[ \text{Ke} \quad \text{jie} \quad \text{xìng} \quad \text{sole} \quad \text{nom. suffix} \]

**nengkongxing** controllability

\[ \text{Aux} \quad \text{V} \quad \text{suffix}_N \]
\[ \text{Neng} \quad \text{kong} \quad \text{xìng} \quad \text{control} \quad \text{nom. suffix} \]

(3) **kehuanlü** commutativity law

\[ \text{Aux} \quad \text{V} \quad \text{N}_0 \]
\[ \text{Ke} \quad \text{huan} \quad \text{lü} \quad \text{exchange} \quad \text{law} \]

**nengjiandu** visibility

\[ \text{Aux} \quad \text{V} \quad \text{N}_0 \]
\[ \text{Neng} \quad \text{jian} \quad \text{du} \quad \text{can} \quad \text{see} \quad \text{limit, extent, degree} \]

Or in other words the inner structure of adjectives composed by ke/neng is

\[ \text{Aux} \quad \text{V} \]
\[ \text{A}_0 \]

And it is very similar to auxiliary CP structure where Aux takes an IP as its complement (cf.(4)and (5)).
Nouns composed with *ke/neng* adjectives again as in (2),(3),(6) show inner syntactic structure of an NP.

From the examples presented above we can conclude that *ke* and *neng* can both be regarded as Chinese counterparts of the English adjectival suffix *-able*. The necessary conditions are satisfied:

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19 Yi is very often omitted in written language and various expressions (proverbs and the like). See footnote 7.

20 Adverb *hen* = ‘very’ in sentences like the ones above has no usual adverbial meaning and if not present in a sentence, the same would be misunderstood as some kind of incomplete sentential comparison cf. *ta kekao, Zhang bu kekao* ‘he reliable, but Zhang isn’t’ and *ta hen kekao* ‘he is reliable’.

21 The structure of (6) could be most conveniently compared with N-final relative clauses e.g. *hui kai che de guniang ‘can/know drive car [de] girl’* [literal translation] where the particle *de*, traditionally called nominal ‘modifying de’, is in recent works (He, 1999; Simpson, 2000) analyzed as clitic-like zero determiner.
their semantic scope in this particular case of adjective formation are the same; both in this particular case mean can/may.

the inner structure of the adjectives they compose (and accordingly of the de-adjectival nouns derived from them) are practically the same; both select verbs to form adjectives which in turn take a suffix or noun to form more complex lexemes.

In addition to this, the existence of synonyms formed both by ke and neng provides valuable evidence in support of our hypothesis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>kejiandu</th>
<th>keyuxing</th>
<th>fertilizability,</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nengjiandu</td>
<td>nengyuxing</td>
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<tr>
<td>kekongxing</td>
<td>&gt;controllability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nengkongxing</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

These cases where ke/neng are exchangeable without any impact on the meaning of composed words are the best demonstration that both (semantic and structural) conditions are satisfied and that ke and neng both correspond to English -able. Nevertheless, such cases raise another question: is this ke/neng adjectival formation actually a kind of allomorphy? The answers are yes and no. No, simply because to have any kind of allomorphy there have to be different contexts of occurrence of one allomorph or the other. This is not the case here, since ke/neng both select a verb to form an adjective (i.e. select the same category, [A[Aux ke/neng] [V X]]. Yes, and yes only in this particular case of formation, because – due to semantic reasons – both ke and neng have the same meaning, but a different morphophonological form (which is reason enough to reconsider the possible presence of allomorphy). This question, however, still remains unanswered.

The reason why we insisted on the detail that ke/neng in Chinese can only correspond to -able/ible in French/English resides in the fact that they are equal in semantic scope but different in its realization (formalization), that is -able/ible is a suffix hosted by a verb, while ke/neng (though linearly placed as such) are not prefixes and they select a verb to form an adjective.

22 -Abile/ible in Italian/Spanish, -iv/ljiv in Serbo-Croat etc.
Some problems related to *ke:neng*

**Ke:neng productivity**

Apart from their sameness (in meaning and formation patterns considered), on the ground of productivity *ke* and *neng* differ considerably. *Ke* is very productive (while *neng* forms only a modicum of adjectives and not many more lexemes structurally equal to those of *ke*-de-adjectival nouns. In other words there is *nengbixing* (identifiability) but not *nengshi* identifiable); there is *nengchexingxing* (figurability) but not *nengchengxing* (figurable) etc. At a glance, there seems to be no apparent reason for such a situation, but it would again be too simple to claim that this kind of phenomenon is just a result of idiosyncrasy or historical reasons. A possible source of explanations could be concealed in the problems listed:

a) scope of meaning of auxiliary *ke* which is far wider than that of *neng*;

b) *Ke* syntactically forms some kinds of constructions that *neng* doesn’t, e.g.:

Fei X bu ke = must/have to: Ta fei canjia zhe ge yanbui bu ke.
He *not participate this (classifier) party no can*
[literal translation]
he must come to this party (there is) no possibility that he doesn’t come...

Ke X (er) bu ke Y = can X (but) not Y: *ke wang er bu ke ji*
Can see but not can reach
(one) can see but not reach/unreachable

Ke X ke Y = can X [and/or] can Y: Zhe ge qingkuang ke bei ke xiao.
This (classifier) situation can sad can laugh
[literal translation]
This situation is (both) sad and ridiculous

It seems that within *ke X ke Y* constructions *ke* leaves open slots (X and Y) to be filled with verbs or adjectives (*ke V/A ke V/A*).}

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23 The presence of new words (as for instance: *nengguancexing* 'observability', *nengdaji* 'reachable sets') eliminates the possibility that *ke* during historical development replaced *neng* and thus became more productive than *neng*.

24 In the example above ‘the slots’ are actually filled with A and V respectively: adjective *bei* ‘sad’ and verb *xiao* ‘laugh’. Even decomposed complex verbs can be inserted e.g. *ke qing ke be* ‘could be congratulated/be worthy of congratulations’, the verb *qinghe* means ‘to congratulate’. However, in this case we might argue about whether: 1) morphemes X and Y were inserted in ‘the slots’ before they merged into a single XY verb =
which can be antonyms or similar in meaning. In this way *ke*, though less selective than ‘adjectival *ke*’ (where only V can be inserted) forms constructions of an adjectival nature which are, as a matter of fact, A', composed out of two (coordinated) APs \[ A'[AP \text{ ke } X] [AP \text{ ke } Y] \]. If antonyms are coordinated, the conjunction would be “or” and in the case of non-antonyms “and” would stand instead. But whatever the meaning of the inserted V/A might be, it seems that there is a consensus among the informants that for them this kind of construction is very similar to *chengyu* (typical) Chinese four syllable proverb and that they perceive it as a kind of idiomatic expression not as constructions like *fei X bu ke* (where X can be A/V/VP/IP)\(^{25}\).

It has to be pointed out that *neng* composes superficially the same type of *A*’ constructions *neng X neng Y*. Again the difference between these two lies in the meaning of *ke/neng*. *Neng* in this kind of expression has the auxiliary meaning of our *neng*\(_2\) (i.e. another Aux *bui* = be skillful in, be proficient and does not denote the possibility of an action)\(^{26}\).

*Kè*, already mentioned Aux of classical Chinese, also forms the same type of constructions *kè X kè Y*. But being only a rudiment of the past, today it is unproductive and is rarely used (see footnote 2).

c) The information that *ke*, *neng* and *kè* all form this type of superficially similar ‘A’ construction brings us one more dimension of the problem. Practically all three, “still living” ancient Aux, which once denoted possibility now form ‘A’ constructions. Nevertheless, bearing in mind all the previously mentioned details we see that:

1) only *ke*, with the same semantic content of ‘possibility’, forms both *ke*-adjectives and the ‘A’ constructions;

2) complex verb *XY* was decomposed to morphemes *X* and *Y* which were afterwards inserted in slots opened by both *ke*. This is, as a matter of fact, a question of establishing the exact historical moment when this particular construction emerged, in other words, the question of which one (the verb or the construction) preceded the other. Without a sufficient amount of historical and lexicographical data, we cannot determine which of these two assumptions is correct and, relying on the present state of affairs (i.e. data provided by modern Chinese), all we can say is that here/n now we have decomposed complex verbs.

\(^{25}\) An intriguing fact about these *ke X kè Y* constructions is that as *A* they can also compose de-adjectival nouns such as the very interesting case: *ke ca ke bian cheng xu zhi du cun chu qi* ‘erasable (and) programmable read only memory’.

\(^{26}\) E.g. *neng wen neng wu* ‘be skillful in using both pen and rifle, efficient both in brainy and brawny activities’.
2) *Neng* is not so semantically consistent and varies according to the context of occurrence. Within the adjectives it is 'our' *neng*₁ (parallel to *-able*) and in the 'A' constructions it is *neng*₂ (*but* = be skillful in);

3) *Kè* is formation-inactive.

This semantic consistency in *ke*-word/construction formation (along with the issues presented above) might be one of the reasons why *ke* is much more productive than *neng*. The problem of *ke:neng* productivity is thus clearly a set of interrelated problems which put into historical context make a possible/plausible explanation even more complicated.

**Ke - prefix or (still) not**

In our little investigation Aux *ke* is treated not like a prefix, but as an auxiliary verb which with another (selected) verb composes complex (lexical head). This kind of analysis is the opposite of interpretations found in many dictionaries. The grounds for such an anti-prefix approach are twofold. First, grammars of contemporary Chinese (if they treat this problem at all) present the fact that *ke* cannot be considered as a true affix like *lao* or *jia*\(^{27}\). According to Fang (1993: 54): “In modern Chinese, strictly speaking, there are only a few true prefixes, …, but within compound words some very productive first morphemes like 'ke, fan, fei etc. *show a tendency to become prefixes*”. Note that *ke* is (still) not a prefix! Second, and evenmore significant for us, informants were quite clear about the meaning of *ke/neng* (within words such as *kexiao*, or *nenggan*) and equally uncertain about the meaning of true pre/suffixes presented to them (long hesitation pauses, big differences in answers etc.). These two facts (along with *neng* being a non-prefix itself) were valid enough reasons for us to disregard the *ke*-prefix interpretation and analyze it in the way we did. Just a short note on this tendency. With all due respect to Chinese grammarians but also taking into account the fact that some *ke*-formed adjectives can be traced back to the Han dynasty (³c. BC - ³c. AD!)\(^{28}\), we might ask one question: isn't a period of more than

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\(^{27}\) Both *lao* and *jia* are words of modern Chinese. Adjective *lao* ‘old’ and noun *jia* ‘family, home, household’. As for word formation, *lao* is a prefix denoting respect (*lao-bi* ‘teacher’, *lao-hu* ‘tiger’ etc), *-jia* is a suffix denoting a specialist or professional in certain trades (*zuojia* ‘writer’, *hua-jia* ‘painter’, *zhuanjia* ‘specialist’), *zi* is one of the most productive nominal suffixes (*kuaizi* ‘Chinese sticks’, *benzi* ‘notebook’ etc).

\(^{28}\) E.g. *ke'ai* = lovable (Han dynasty and after), *kegui* = precious, valuable (period of Three Kingdoms, kingdom Wei ³c. AD) etc.
2000 years of language development a bit too long for a morpheme to develop just a ‘tendency to become a prefix’. Some other affixes ‘needed’ considerably less time to become what they are today).

**Selection – possible problems**

Whatever approach we prefer (*ke* being prefix or not), a few following puzzling examples show that *ke* selects a verb to form not only an adjective but also a verb or even a conjunction.

*Kewei* \[\text{v}_{\text{Aux}} \text{ke} \text{v}_{\text{weise}}\] can/could be said

*Keshe* here selects V to form V. *Kedao, keshuo*\(^{29}\) also follow this example.

*Kejian* \[\text{Conj}/\text{V} \text{[Aux ke]} \text{[v}_{\text{jian}}\] (it) is (thus) clear/obvious

*Ke* here selects V to form V or Conj. Whether it is a verb or a conjunction is still the question (or maybe only one more problem of Chinese grammarians’ classification).

*Keneng* \[\text{A}/\text{Adv}/\text{Aux}_{\text{Aux}} \text{ke} \text{[Aux neng]}\] possible, possibly, can/may/be able/capable

*Keneng* seems to be a special case in many aspects.

*Keshe* selects *neng*, i.e. selects Aux not V (as in other *ke*-adjectives). This is the only case where an Aux not V (as in other *ke*-adjectives). This is the only case where an Aux selects another Aux and forms A/Adv/Aux. Considering that this is the combination of our two Chinese ‘-able(s)’ and that they both in this particular case of formation denote possibility, we may ask why they can’t be placed in reversed linear order like *nengke*\(^{30}\). Though *neng* (by its occurrence in ancient scripts) historically precedes *ke* (Yang & He 1992), it is the one to be selected, not vice versa.

The last example shows that *ke* (contrary to its semantic aspect) is not always consistent in selection and can vary. Even more interesting are the cases where a verb is selected (*kewei* and *kejian*) but the result of formation is not necessarily an adjective. This situation, of course, prevents us from formulating a possible general rule of \[\text{A}_{\text{Aux}} \text{ke}[\text{v}]]\) composition of Chinese ‘-able-type’ adjectives. But the prevailing majority of *ke*-adjectives still give us the right to claim that such a rule, though not general in scope, does in fact exist.

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\(^{29}\) *Kewei/kedao* are stylistically marked verbs of the same to them neutral *keshuo*. All three have the same meaning can/could be said.

\(^{30}\) Earlier there was, however, conjunction *nengke*. The trouble is that the *neng* in question wasn’t the Aux *neng*, but practically the allomorph of conjunction *ning* ‘would rather/better’ and *ke* also isn’t Aux.
Concluding remarks

In this article we presented and proved the hypotheses that ke and neng, two auxiliaries of modern Chinese, both correspond to the English adjectival suffix-able. Taking into account the historical background of ke/neng word formation and via explaining their semantic similarity we eliminated all peripheral issues. By focusing on the adjectival formation patterns we showed that ke in this particular case of adjectival formation is equal to neng and that both of them can be declared as 'Chinese -able(s)'. The presence of many related problems, of which we only mentioned a few – ke/neng (questionable) allomorphy, big difference in productivity and ke-selection –, necessarily calls for further analysis of the subject presented here.

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