

## The Meaning Construction of “家” in Modern Chinese “X + 家 /Family” Phrases

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*Received: 16 May 2013; Revised: 9 June-20 August Feb 2013; Accepted: 28 August 2013*

*Published online: 1 May 2013*

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**Abstract:** The paper is a corpus-based research on “X + 家 (family)” phrases in modern Chinese language. All linguistic data are from authorized Modern Chinese corpus and English translation of each example is provided. A cognitive linguistic perspective with a focus on metonymy and metaphor will be applied to analyze how Chinese people conceptualize the concept of “family” and what roles the concept of “family” plays in the construction and interpretation of Chinese “family” related phrases.

**Key words:** family, X + family phrases, Chinese, cognitive linguistics.

# The Meaning Construction of “家” in Modern Chinese “X + 家/ Family” Phrases

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## **I. Introduction:**

“Family” is a very familiar concept in people’s daily life, and establishing a family is considered as an important social event in most cultures in the world. There are so many phrases in modern Chinese language relating to “family” that they can serve as my research objects to reveal how Chinese people conceptualize the concept of “family” and what roles it plays in the construction and interpretation of Chinese “family” related phrases.

A general browse of relevant research bears out several results from major Chinese language research databases, which are research papers on “family” metaphors and comparative studies about the concept of “family” across Chinese and English. However, there is no systematic research on Chinese phrases containing “family”. The purpose of my research is to discover what kinds of words are used to form phrases together

with “family”, and how the concept of “family” is understood in these phrases. In Chinese language, “家 (jia)” is the Chinese character that can be translated into English word “family”, and family phrases are produced by combining this character with other characters that can be put both in front of and at the back of the character “家”. This paper focuses on the analysis of the linguistic pattern of “X + 家/family” phrases, in which “X” refers to any character or characters that are placed ahead of “家”.

The research takes a cognitive linguistic perspective, and theories of metaphor and metonymy are applied in analysis of meaning construction and understanding of “family” and “X + 家/family” phrases. Metaphor is defined as cross-domain mappings, which are a set of systematic correspondences between the source and the target in the sense that constituent conceptual elements of

concept B correspond to constituent elements of concept A (Zoltán Kövecses, 2002). Metonymy involves a single domain, within which an element of the domain stands for another element of the same domain. It allows people to give mental access to an element through another element related to it—where the relationship either is conventional in the conceptual system or can be easily figured out in a given context (Zoltán Kövecses, 2006). Metaphors and metonymies often interact in particular linguistic expressions, and they are important conceptual tools to construct and understand meanings.

According to cognitive linguistics, the meanings of a word will show prototypical effect too. It is hypothesized as a corresponding word of “family” in Chinese language, the Chinese character “家” in “X + 家/family” phrases will display in most cases its prototypical meaning of “family”, a concept based on blood ties. Other non-prototypical meanings of “家” are constructed and understood with conceptual metaphors and metonymies. There are four parts in the research paper. The first part is a general introduction, and the second part is the research methodology. The third part is the major part about research results and the last part is the conclusion where I summarize the findings.

## II. Methodology:

The research is a corpus-based research with linguistic data drawn from a Chinese corpus free on line at [www.cncorpus.org](http://www.cncorpus.org), which includes modern Chinese corpus data of 20 million words and ancient Chinese corpus data of about 100 million words. All Chinese phrase samples are from Modern Chinese Corpus, since my research is about “family” phrases in modern Chinese language. The Chinese character “家 (jia)” was used as the key word to search for all possible phrases with it in Modern

Chinese Corpus, and then with a list of 1076 Chinese phrases containing “家”, I managed to make a second smaller corpus by myself with 896 phrases that meet the requirement of having the pattern of “X + 家/family”. These two corpuses serve as the base of my further research on the topic concerned. Some Chinese phrases are four-character phrases or phrases with even more characters, and some phrases may contain words both before and after the character “家”. However, as long as there are certain words put in front of the character “家”, these phrases mentioned above are also counted into the corpuses.

Except for the two corpuses, I also consulted an authorized Modern Chinese dictionary for the lexical meanings of “家”, which helped me to deal with the data more correctly and efficiently. For all the items in both Chinese corpuses, I provide my English translation and Chinese pronunciation whenever it is necessary so that they are readable and understandable.

## III. “家” and “X +家/family” phrases in Chinese Language:

The English word “family” comes from Latin word “familia”, and is defined as a group of people affiliated by consanguinity, affinity, or co-residence in dictionaries. Blood ties and close relationships are emphasized in the definition. According to the Modern Chinese dictionary, the Chinese character “家” has about twelve major meanings and usages: 1) family; household; 2) the dwelling place of a family; 3) families that deal with a certain trade or people with special identities; 4) people who are specialists or experts in a certain field with specialized knowledge or abundant practical experience or people engaged in specialized activities; 5) schools of academic thought; 6) refer to one opposite side among all parties (evolved in an event or comparison); 7) a self-

depreciatory expression used to refer to one's own elder relatives in front of other people; 8) domestic (opposite to wild); 9) classifier; measure word (used to calculate families or enterprises); 10) add after a noun as a suffix to indicate certain people belong to one category; 11) add after a man's name or his seniority among brothers and sisters to mean his wife in local dialect; 12) a surname in China.

The second meaning of “家” in Chinese dictionary actually equals to the meaning of the English word “home”. However, Chinese people do not create a new word to mean “home”, but use the character “家” to mean both “family” and “home”. It is possible that the “home”

meaning of “家” comes from the metonymy FAMILY FOR WHERE FAMILY IS OR LIVE. The construction process of other meanings of “家” is also connected with figurative conceptualizations, and I will further discuss about it in the following sections.

There are 896 “X +家/family” phrases, which take up more than 80% of all 1076 phrases with “家” found in the corpus, and I listed them out as a self-made corpus and then further classified them into the following Table 1 to see the distribution of each meaning of “家” in those “X + 家 /family” phrases.

**Table 1: The meaning distribution of “家” in “X +家/family ” phrases corpus (896 phrases in total)**

NO	Usages and meanings of “家” in the “X + 家 /family” phrases	Number of the phrases found	Percentage (%)
1	family; home (where family dwell); household	278	31.03
2	families that deal with a certain trade or profession; people with special identities	36	4.02
3	people who are specialists or experts in a certain field with specialized knowledge or abundant practical experience; people engaged in specialized activities	142	15.85
4	schools of academic thought	15	1.67
5	refer to one opposite side among all parties (evolved in an event or comparison)	11	1.23
6	classifier; measure word (used to calculate families or enterprises)	10	1.12
7	add after a noun as a suffix to indicate certain people belong to one category	9	1
8	combined with a surname as a part of names for places;	243	27.12
9	combined with a surname as a part of names for objects, such as buildings, bridges, mountains, games, temples, shops, brands, companies, etc.	42	4.69
10	a part of human names	105	11.72
11	a part of phrases specially designated to address the speaker himself/herself or other people	6	0.67

As can be seen from Table 1, the first meaning category includes both the meaning of “family and household” and “the dwelling place of a family”, which are separated in the dictionary explanations for the Chinese character “家”. The reason for classify the two meaning together in Table 1 is that the Chinese character of “家” can both mean “family” and “the home where a family lives” in “X + 家/family” phrases alone. It depends on the context to determine which meaning is used for sure. The self-made corpus has proved most of the lexical

meanings of “家” in the dictionary, but lexical meanings 7), 8) and 12) are not shown in “X + 家/family” phrases. If there is a human name before “家”, then “家” can have two possible explanations: a man’s wife or a person’s family or home. The context where such phrase is used will determine the actual meaning of “家”.

Except the overlapping part with lexical meanings of “家” in dictionary, there are three examples of address forms with “家” that do not share the lexical meanings of “家”. Moreover, there are three groups of “X + 家/family” phrases that are names of people, places and

objects, which occupy larger than 40% of the corpus and to some degree show Chinese people’s preference in using “家” in names. After deduction of 390 “X + 家/family” phrases that are names with “家” from the self-made corpus, I have 506 phrases to be the major research objects for theoretical analysis in detail.

In order to see what words are put in front of the character “家” to form phrases, I further classified these 506 phrases into “noun/noun phrase + 家/family” phrases, “verb/verbal phrase + 家/family” phrases, “adjective + 家/family” phrases, “pronoun + 家/family” phrases, and “numeral + 家/family” phrases, and each category is examined carefully one after another below.

### 3.1 “Noun/Noun phrase + 家/Family” Phrases:

Among 506 “X + 家/family” phrases, 373 items are “noun/noun phrase + 家/family” phrases, a fact showing that more than 70 % of family phrases in Chinese are noun phrases. According to the meaning of “家” in the phrases, Table 2 provides us a clearer picture about the meaning distribution of “家” in “noun/noun phrase + 家/family” phrases.

**Table 2: The meaning distribution of “家” in “noun/noun phrase +家/family” phrases (506 phrases in total)**

NO.	Usages and meanings of “家” in the “noun/noun phrase + 家 /family” phrases	Number of the phrases found	Percentage (%)
1	family; home (where family dwell); household; clan	171	33.79
2	families that deal with a certain trade or profession; people with special identities	33	6.52
3	people who are specialists or experts in a certain field with specialized knowledge or abundant practical experience; people engaged in specialized activities	142	28.06
4	schools of academic thought	11	2.17
5	add after a noun as a suffix to indicate certain	9	1.78

	people belong to one category		
6	a part of phrases specially designated to address the speaker himself/herself or other people	4	0.79
7	refer to one opposite side among all parties (evolved in an event or comparison)	1	0.2
8	classifier; measure word (used to calculate families or enterprises)	1	0.2

From table 2, the “family; home; household, clan” meaning of “家” has most examples in “noun/noun phrase + 家 /family” phrases, which proves the prototypical effect in the meanings of “家” in modern Chinese language. Among these 171 examples, 40 phrases take the form of “a surname + 家/family”, 20 phrases show the pattern of “a person’s name + 家/family”, and 13 are “a minority ethnic group’s name + 家/family” phrases, all of which have “家” meaning the whole family or clan or a person’s home.

In the Modern Chinese corpus, the most frequently-seen sample is “国家 (guo jia)”, a “noun/noun phrase + 家 /family” phrase appeared 10139 times in 20 million-word Modern Chinese corpus. The Chinese character “国 (guo)” means country and the phrase “国家 (guo jia)” also means country, state or nation. Among 171 “noun/noun phrase + 家 /family” phrases, there are 65 other phrase samples containing “国家 (guo jia)”, in which 56 phrases have “国家 (guo jia)” as an adjective meaning “national” and used in names for governmental organizations.

The formation of the phrase “国家 (guo jia)” is based on a conceptual metaphor: STATE IS FAMILY. As a nation flourishing on agriculture and

Confucius beliefs, Chinese people have long tradition of respecting the old and

put great value on family ties. The origin of STATE IS FAMILY metaphor could be found in many ancient Chinese books, in which those great Chinese minds tried to explain the complex knowledge about controlling a state through the domain of family life. People are familiar with family life, and they can better understand the concept of “state” through the concept of “family”, which contains their bodily experiences and provide a vivid basis for understanding what a state should be like. Besides, the concept of a “state” is closely related to the concept of “family” due to traditional Chinese patriarchal clan system, which dominates the interpretation of the concept of a “state”. In feudal times, a change of a dynasty was often seen as a change of the ruling family. Therefore, it seems that Chinese people always talk about “state” with the conceptual metaphor of STATE IS FAMILY unconsciously lying beneath their language. They often refer their country as a “family with 56 ethnic groups”, and people are members of the big “state family” as they are members of their own families. For common Chinese people, “国家(guo jia)” is not a metaphor, but simply a noun that means “state”. The source domain “家/family” exists in Chinese people’s conceptualization of a “state” and reflects itself in the formation of the Chinese phrase.

In the remaining 32 “noun/noun phrase + 家 /family” phrases, the noun or noun phrase in each sample is a modifier of “家” that provide detail information

about whose family or what family it is, as shown in appendix 1. It is important to note that metaphor and metonymy also take part in the construction of these “noun/noun phrase + 家 /family” phrases. For example, “大户人家 (da hu ren jia)” means “rich and influential family”. The character “户” originally refers to a one-paneled door, and “大户” literally mean big one-paneled door. In the past, rich and influential families usually built big family house with big doors. With the metonymy PART FOR THE WHOLE functioning in people’s mind, the big one-paneled door is used to stand for the whole big family house. The metaphor BEING RICH AND INFLUENTIAL IS LIVING IN A BIG FAMILY HOUSE further helps to construct the meaning of the phrase “大户人家”, which actually refers to the wealth and power of a family rather than talk about the big door of the family house only. On the contrary, “小户人家 (xiao hu ren jia)” is a humble family with little wealth and power, because the noun phrase “小户” has opposite meaning to “大户”, but the meaning construction process is the same.

Three other phrases in appendix 1 are constructed with metaphor as well. “学者之家 (xue zhe zhi jia)” is an organization for scholars to hold activities. “会员之家 (hui yuan zhi jia)” is an organization for all members to join in. “少年之家 (shao nian zhi jia)” is a social place for teenage youths to learn art or skills. These phrases may rely on metaphor PEOPLE WITH SIMILAR GOALS OR INTERESTS ARE FAMILY to acquire their meanings, since scholars, members and teenagers are groups of people with similar goals or interests, and they gather together to hold activities. The meaning of the concept of “family” goes beyond blood connection, and extends to people with similar goals or interests. The metonymy FAMILY FOR THE PLACE WHERE FAMILY IS also help to construct the meaning of

these three phrases, because they refer to a public place or organization, not a specific family or home of a specific person.

Appendix 2 shows a list of “noun/noun phrase + 家 /family” phrases with “家” meaning families that deal with a certain trade, profession or people with special identities. The formation and comprehension of these phrases are also based on the prototypical meaning of “家”, and figurative tools also take part in the process. In old times, most trade and business were run by families in China, and it was a common phenomenon that children would take over family business when they grew up. Such inherited family businesses give good reason for adding the character “家” into those phrases in appendix 2. Moreover, relying on the metonymy THE PROFESSION FOR THE PEOPLE WHO HOLD THE PROFESSION, Chinese people create this category of phrases to call those people or families by the names of professions they are engaged in, which extend the prototypical meaning of family to mean families or people in a certain profession. In this part, we can also see Chinese people’s preference to use “家” in phrases as a part of special ways of addressing people with similar goals, interests or properties, such as “宾家 (guest)”, “冤家(opponent)”, “仇家(foe)”, “仙家(immortal; celestial being)” which are again examples for PEOPLE WITH SIMILAR GOALS OR INTERESTS ARE FAMILY metaphor.

In Appendix 3, 142 phrases are listed out as “noun/noun phrase + 家 /family” phrases in which the Chinese character “家” refers to people who are engaged in specialized activities or specialists or experts in a certain field with specialized knowledge or abundant practical experience. In all these phrases, the nouns or noun phrases before the Chinese

character “家” are names of professions, academic subjects, other concepts or objects, which can never be used to refer to people only by themselves. It seems that the character “家” makes all these phrases into titles for people, and it contains a positive implication that if a person is called by a phrase from this category, then his or her achievements in his or her professional field is acknowledged with respect from other people. Such usage of the concept of “family” is very unique in Chinese language, and I can not find similar usage in English.

Appendix 4 is about “noun/noun phrase + 家 /family” phrases that have “家” as schools of academic thought. Among them, “儒家(the Confucius school)” ranks the first in frequency rate, which is considered as the symbol of Chinese thinking and dominant philosophy in Chinese culture. All other phrases in this category are traditional Chinese philosophical and religious schools of thought. Most of them came into being more than 2000 years ago, but continue to affect modern Chinese people’s ideological system.

In appendix 5, we can see that when “家” is added after a noun or a noun phrase as a suffix, the prototypical meaning of “family” disappears completely in the formed “noun/noun phrase + 家 /family” phrase. The interesting point is the suffix only goes after nouns about the old, the very young and the females. When the suffix is used after the noun for old people, a sense of respect is also conveyed with the phrase. However, when it is after the nouns for small children or the females, such sense of respect is not contained in those phrases. It is also obvious from the table that the phrases for old people are used more often than other phrases for children and women.

There are four cases in the Modern Chinese corpus that “家” is a part of “noun/noun phrase + 家 /family” phrases specially designated to address the speaker himself / herself or other people. They are listed as follows:

No.	“noun/noun phrase + 家 /family” phrases	Number of the phrases found	Frequency %
1	亲家 (qing jia) relatives by marriage; parents of one's daughter-in-law or son-in-law	58	0.0061
2	亲家母 (qing jia mu) Mother-in-law	2	0.0002
3	儿女亲家 (er nü qing jia) relatives by marriage	2	0.0002
4	奴家 (nu jia) the title women used to call themselves in feudal China	3	0.0003

The meaning of the character “家” in the first three phrases are actually the same, indicating the prototypical meaning of “family” with blood ties or marriage. The character “亲” has the meaning of “closeness” and “relative by blood” as

well. The phrase “亲家 (qing jia)” is used specially to address relatives by marriage or parents of one's daughter-in-law or son-in-law. The phrase “奴家(nu jia)” is the way women used to call themselves in the feudal times, when women suffered a lot from feudal belief that women were



inferior to men. The character “奴” originally means “slave”, and successfully convey the lower social status of women at that time through the usage of the phrase. Modern usage of this phrase is seen in literary works with stories happening in a background of feudal China, but in modern daily life, people rarely use it at all.

The “noun/noun phrase + 家 /family” phrase example where “家” refers to one opposite side among all parties (evolved in an event or comparison) is “下家 (xia jia)”, which means the person on one’s left (Chinese custom) when playing cards or playing a drinkers’ wager game. In local dialect, it is also used as a humble way to say one’s own family. The phrase with opposite meaning is “上家 (shang jia)”, but it did not show up in the corpus. The Chinese character “上” and “下” are originally nouns for directions, meaning “up” and “down” respectively. It is interesting to note that Chinese people use position nouns to indicate human relationships.

In the “noun/noun phrase + 家 /family” phrase “货比三家 (huo bi san jia)”, “家” is used as a measure word to calculate shops. Before the character “家”, there is a subject-predicate phrase and a numeral, which together mean that goods should be compared at three shops before purchased. Now Chinese people use this phrase to describe the process of comparison about the quality and price of a certain product before making a decision to buy it. In this phrase, “家” does not have a definite meaning, but it can be assumed that business was run by family in the past and the concept of “family” extends from the prototypical meaning of blood ties to the measure word of any organizations that may be seen as related to family.

### 3.2 “Verb/Verbal phrase + 家 /Family” Phrases:

From appendix 6, we can find more than 70 phrases are “verb/verbal phrase + 家/family” phrases, which make them the second large group in the whole body of “X + 家/family” phrases in the corpus. Among them, 69 phrases have “家” meaning “family, home or household”; 3 phrase have “家” referring to “one opposing side among all participating parties”; 3 phrases are cases in which “家” is used for “profession or to address people with a special identity”; 1 phrase is with “家” as “a school of thought” and another 1 phrase is a specially designated word in dialect to call people who are good at handling things.

Conceptual metaphors of “family” such as FAMILY IS AN OBJECT, FAMILY IS A CONTAINER, and FAMILY IS A BUILDING are crucial in the construction and comprehension of these “verb/verbal phrase + 家/family” phrases. For example, in the phrase “搬家 (ban jia)”, family is seen as a heavy object, so when people move away to live in other places, they move their family as if they move a heavy object. Family is a whole object with parts in the phrase “分家 (fen jia)”, because it means dividing up a family and live apart. Family is an object that can be lost as in “丧家 (sang jia)” and “无家可归 (wu jia ke gui)”, when people lose their family and have no family to return to. It is an object that is watched over, guarded or protected as in “看家 (kan jia)”, “守家 (shou jia)” and “保家卫国 (bao jia wei guo)”. It is an object that can be lifted or held in hands as in “举家 (ju jia)” and “持家 (chi jia)”. Family is conceptualized as a container when people say “进家 (jin jia)” and “出家 (chu jia)”, which mean “going into family” and “going out of family; leaving family” respectively.

“赢家 (ying jia)”(winner), “胜家 (sheng jia)” (winner) and “输家 (shu jia)” (loser) are three phrases in which “家” means one opposing side among all participating parties. Winner and loser are opposite parties in an event. “管家 (guan jia)” (housekeep; steward), “管家婆 (guan jia po)” (housekeeper) and “玩家 (a player of a game)” are profession names or titles to address people with special identities. “弄家儿 (nong jia er)” is often used in dialect to refer to an able person who is good at dealing with problems or handling things. From these examples above, we can see Chinese people’s preference in choosing the character “家” to combine with certain verbs to refer the person who does the actions.

### 3.3 “Adjective + 家/Family” Phrases:

Appendix 7 gives us a good list of “adjective + 家/family” phrases in Chinese language, from which we can see the character “家” has four different usages when it is combined with an adjective. The majority of examples in the corpus show “家” as “family or home” and 7 items are examples of “家” as referring to one opposite side among all parties (evolved in an event or comparison). There are three examples “独家 (du jia)”, “首家 (shou jia)” and “只此一家 (zhi ci yi jia)” in which “家” is a measure word, two examples “诸家 (zhu jia)” and “众家 (zhong jia)” in which “家” is “a school of academic thought”, one example “名家 (ming jia)” in which “家” means “expert”, and another example “孤家寡人 (gu jia gua ren)” where “家” is a part of the title to address other people or a person himself.

The phrase “大家 (da jia)” is the most frequently used item in the corpus. Such high frequency is due to the reason that it does not only refer to a “big

family”, but also a “great master in a field”, and when it is used as a pronoun, it means “everybody”. If we only look at the phrase itself, it is hard to decide which meaning it has. In a given context, it is much easier to know the exact meaning of the phrase.

Another frequently used phrase “老家 (lao jia)” may be created on the metonymy FAMILY FOR THE ORIGIN OF THE FAMILY. The character “老 (lao)” means “old” (opposed to “young”), and people talk about their original hometown with the phrase “老家 (lao jia)”. It is obvious that not many adjectives can be added before the character “家” to form phrases, and FAMILY IS AN OBJECT metaphor is again applied in the creation and comprehension of these “adjective + 家/family” phrases. Family is seen as a whole object in phrases such as “全家 (quan jia)”, “合家 (he jia)” “阖家 (he jia)”, which share the same meaning as “the entire family”. Family is seen as an object that has a size when Chinese people talk about “大家 (da jia)” and “小家 (xiao jia)”, which mean “big family” and “small family” respectively.

The pairs such as “公家 (gong jia)” and “私家 (si jia)”, “本家 (ben jia)” and “外家 (wai jia)” can refer to opposing parties. “官家 (guan jia)” has similar meaning with “公家”, but it is usually used to depict the government officials. In China, government officials and the common people are considered as two opposing parties in an event. “俗家 (su jia)” is a phrase to refer to people who are not converted officially as a monk or a nun, and it is also the family of those monks and nuns before they become a monk or nun. The character “俗” has the meaning of “secular” and “earthly”, which are opposed in meaning with any Buddhism teachings about being out of

the control of secular bounds and earthly worries. In these phrases, the characters before “家” such as “公 (public)”, “私 (private)”, “本 (original)” and “外 (external)” may give the meaning of the phrases, and the prototypical meaning of “家” as “family or home” is not always emphasized.

In phrases “独家 (du jia)”, “首家 (shou jia)” and “只此一家 (zhi ci yi jia)”, “家” is used as a measure word that does not have a definite meaning. It may refer to a party in an event, an organization such as a school, a company etc. or even a person. “孤家 (gu jia)” and “寡人 (gua ren)” were originally used by Chinese emperors in the past to call themselves. There was normally just one emperor in the country, so the characters of “孤” and “寡” were introduced into the phrases because they both mean “alone”. Nowadays, they are combined together to be “孤家寡人” to refer to a person that is alone or isolated or intends to live a solitary life on his own will. “家” is only a part of the phrase people use to call others or themselves, and the meaning of “family” is not applicable here.

### 3.4 “Pronoun + 家/Family” Phrases

From the Modern Chinese corpus, I only identify seven “pronoun + 家 /family” phrases, and they are listed as follows:

No.	“pronoun + 家 /family” phrases	Number of the phrases found	Frequency ‰
1	他家 (ta jia) his family or home	178	0.0186
2	各家 (ge jia) every family	97	0.0102
3	谁家 (shui jia) whose family or home	69	0.0072
4	咱家 (zan jia) my or our family or home	24	0.0025
5	俺家 (an jia) my family or home	22	0.0023
6	别家 (bie jia) other family	15	0.0016
7	吾家 (wu jia) my family or home	2	0.0002
8	我家 (wo jia) my family or home	1	0.0001

It is clear to see that six phrases in this group are phrases with personal pronouns, which refer to a person’s family or home. But the phrase “别家 (bie jia)” is a little different from others,

because “家” in this phrase can have two explanations: one meaning is “family or home”; the other is “measure word for calculating families or enterprises”. Both usages of “别家” are common in daily

life, so it will depend on the context to decide which meaning is being applied when speakers use it in real communication.

Generally speaking, any person pronouns can be put in front of “家” to form such phrases, but the data show that the singular form of person pronouns are used more often, especially the male person pronoun “他(ta)” appears with the biggest frequency rate in the corpus. Such a phenomenon can in some degree show the still prevailing traditional Chinese thinking that males are dominant in the society, and only males can own a family. When people talk about family issues, they tend to refer to the men’s family more than the women’s family. An interesting point here is that in the dictionary, one meaning of “家” is “a

man’s wife” if the character is put after a man’s name or the male person pronoun “他(ta)”. It is difficult to judge only from the phrase itself which meaning of “家” is being used, since it can also mean “a man’s family or home”. However, within a communication context, it will be very easy to decide the exact meaning of “家”.

### 3.5 “Numeral + 家/Family” Phrases

The character of “家” can have two usages if a numeral is added in front of it. The first usage is “家” as “family or home” and the other is “家” as “a measure word to calculate families or enterprises, etc. The “numeral + 家/family” phrases are listed in the following table from the Modern Chinese corpus:

No.	“numeral + 家 /family” phrases	Number of appearance	Frequency %
1	一家 (yi jia) one family	709	0.0742
2	一家人 (yi jia ren) the whole family	126	0.0132
3	一家子 (yi jia zi) one whole family	30	0.0031
4	千家万户 (qian jia wan hu) thousands upon thousands of families	30	0.0031
5	一家一户 (yi jia yi hu) unshared housing; house to house	26	0.0027
6	百家姓 (bai jia xing) hundreds of family surnames	8	0.0008
7	一家之主 (yi jia zhi zhu) the head of a family	7	0.0007
8	万家灯火 (wan jia deng huo) lamps and candles of a myriad families	5	0.0005
9	一家之言 (yi jia zhi yan) the academic works of an independent thought which have formed a school of its own; somebody’s personal opinion	3	0.0003
10	四家 (si jia) four families	2	0.0002
11	十家 (shi jia) ten families	2	0.0002
12	中国第一家轴承厂 (nan jia) China’s first Bearing Factory	1	0.0001
13	六家 (liu jia) six families	1	0.0001

From the table, we can see that most examples in this section have “家” as “family, home or household”. However, except for fixed four-character idioms with definite meanings, if a cardinal numeral is in the front, “家” can be used both as “family, home or household” and as a measure word. If an ordinal number is in the front, “家” can only be a measure word as in item 12 in the table above. Chinese people rely on the context to decide the meaning of “家” if there are more than two possible explanations. In the phrase “一家之言 (yi jia zhi yan)”, “家” is again used as “a school of thought”. But in daily communication, people also use it when somebody expresses his or her own opinion upon a topic.

#### IV. Conclusion:

With a detailed analysis in the previous parts and all the data listed in tables and appendixes, I can safely draw a conclusion that in Chinese “X + 家 /family” phrases, the cases where the character “家” is used as its prototypical meaning “family” take up the largest proportion of the phrases concerned, which proves the hypothesis raised at the beginning of the paper. Another large part of the phrases containing “家” are just names of places or people, which shows Chinese people’s preference of the character and probably the concepts behind it. Compared with other words, nouns and noun phrases are more often chosen to form “X + 家/family” phrases, and it is a very unique usage of “家” when is combined together with names of academic subjects to refer to experts in certain fields. The concept of “family” and “state” are so closely related in Chinese that the STATE IS A FAMILY metaphor is lexicalized in the phrase denoting a state in Chinese language.

Figurative ways of thinking such as metaphor and metonymy do play an important part in meaning construction of the concept of “family” in Chinese character “家” and Chinese “X + 家 /family” phrases, a lot of which display cultural distinctiveness and traditional Chinese concepts behind them as well. This research is a still at beginning stage and needs further exploration upon the concept of “family” in Chinese language and society. It would be more discoveries if further research could find out changes in the concept of “family” in Chinese over the years or do a comparative study about it across different languages.

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## Appendix 1

The “noun/noun phrase + 家 /family” phrases in the Modern Chinese Corpus

No.	“noun/noun phrase + 家 /family” phrases in which “家” means family, household, clan, home	Number of appearance	Frequency %
1	人家 (ren jia) human family; household	1794	0.1877
2	娘家 (niang jia) a married woman's parents' home	104	0.0109
3	自家 (zi jia) self family	103	0.0108
4	皇家 (huang jia) emperor's family; royal family	61	0.0064
5	婆家 (po jia) the husband's family	38	0.0040
6	女家 (nü jia) the bride's family	33	0.0035
7	夫家 (fu jia) the husband's family	32	0.0033
8	男家 (nan jia) the bridegroom's family	25	0.0026
9	邻家 (lin jia) neighbor's family	17	0.0018
10	穷人家 (qiong ren jia) poor people's family	16	0.0017
11	自家人 (zi jia ren) a member of one's own family	16	0.0017
12	亲戚家 (qin qi jia) relative's family	16	0.0017
13	主人家 (zhu ren jia) the host family	12	0.0013
14	身家性命 (shen jia xing ming) man's life and his family's lives	8	0.0008
15	大户人家 (da hu ren jia) rich and influential family	8	0.0008
16	小户人家 (xiao hu ren jia) humble family	6	0.0006
17	身家 (shen jia) a man's body and his family	5	0.0005
18	母家 (mu jia) a married woman's parents' home	4	0.0004
19	娘家人 (niang jia ren) mother's side of the family	3	0.0003
20	婆婆家 (po po jia) the husband's family	3	0.0003
21	西家 (xi jia) family at the west	3	0.0003

22	英国皇家学会 (ying guo huang jia xue hui) the Royal Society of the Great Britian	2	0.0002
23	好人家 (hao ren jia) good people's family; decent family	1	0.0001
24	学者之家 (xue zhe zhi jia) scholar's family	1	0.0001
25	会员之家 (hui yuan zhi jia) member's family	1	0.0001
26	少年之家 (shao nian zhi jia) youths' family	1	0.0001
27	皇家学会 (huang jia xue hui) the Royal Society	1	0.0001
28	主家 (zhu jia) the host family; the master's family	1	0.0001
29	学生家 (xue sheng jia) student's family	1	0.0001
30	皇家战争博物馆 (huang jia zhan zheng bo wu guan) The Royal Family War Museum	1	0.0001
31	德国皇家科学院 (de guo huang jia ke xue yuan) the Royal Society of Germany	1	0.0001
32	牙买加皇家港 (ya mai jia huang jia gang) The royal family harbor of Jamaica	1	0.0001

## Appendix 2

### The “noun/noun phrase + 家 /family” phrases in the Modern Chinese Corpus

No.	“noun/noun phrase + 家 /family” phrases in which “家” means families or people that deal with a certain trade, profession or people with special identities	Number of appearance	Frequency %
1	厂家 (niang jia) manufacturer	107	0.0112
2	农家 (nong jia) peasant family	85	0.0089
3	东家 (dong jia) master; landlord	70	0.0073
4	医家 (yi jia) doctors	31	0.0032

5	船家 (chuan jia) boatman	31	0.0032
6	酒家 (jiu jia) liquor shop; restaurant	26	0.0027
7	史家 (shi jia) historian	19	0.0020
8	兵家 (bing jia) military strategist in ancient China	18	0.0019
9	冤家 (yuan jia) opponent; enemy; foe	17	0.0018
10	店家 (dian jia) hotel/restaurant/shop owner or manager	15	0.0016
11	商家 (shang jia) seller	12	0.0013
12	渔家 (yu jia) fishermen	11	0.0012
13	书家 (shu jia) calligrapher	11	0.0012
14	庄家 (zhuang jia) dealer; declarer	7	0.0007
15	农家肥 (nong jia fei) farmyard manure	7	0.0007
16	冤家路窄 (yuan jia lu zhai) one can't avoid one's enemy	5	0.0005
17	冤家对头 (yuan jia dui tou) opponent and foe	3	0.0003
18	华苑酒家 (hua yuan jiu jia) Huayuan Restaurant	2	0.0002
19	房家 (fang jia) owner of the house; landlord	2	0.0002
20	仙家 (xian jia) immortal; celestial being	2	0.0002
21	八角亭酒家 (ba jiao ting jiu jia) Bajiaoting Restaurant	1	0.0001
22	宾家 (bin jia) guest	1	0.0001
23	渔家女 (yu jia nü) fisherman's daughter	1	0.0001
24	农家女 (nong jia nü) peasant's daughter	1	0.0001
25	仇家 (chou jia) foe	1	0.0001
26	横沙商家 (heng sha shang jia) Hengsha seller	1	0.0001
27	森林酒家 (sen lin jiu jia) Forest Restaurant	1	0.0001
28	冤家宜解不宜结 (yuan jia yi jie bu yi jie) Better make friends than make enemies.	1	0.0001



29	大耕家 (dag eng jia) large farming family	1	0.0001
30	华达酒家 (hua da jiu jia) Huada Restaurant	1	0.0001
31	南海酒家 (nan hai jiu jia) South Sea Restaurant	1	0.0001
32	上海百乐门大酒家( shang hai bai le men da jiu jia) Shanghai Bailemen Great Restaurant	1	0.0001
33	新雅酒家 (xin ya jiu jia) Xinya Restaurant	1	0.0001

**Appendix 3****The “noun/noun phrase + 家 /family” phrases in the Modern Chinese Corpus**

NO.	“noun/noun phrase + 家 /family” phrases in which “家” means people who are specialists or experts in a certain field with specialized knowledge or abundant practical experience; people engaged in specialized activities	Number of appearance	Frequency %
1	作家 (zuo jia) writer	1155	0.1209
2	科学家 (ke xue jia) scientist	930	0.0973
3	专家 (zhuan jia) specialist; expert	725	0.0759
4	资本家 (zi ben jia) capitalist	685	0.0717
5	画家 (hua jia) painter	532	0.0557
6	艺术家 (yi shu jia) artist	491	0.0514
7	物理学家 (wu li xue jia) physician	195	0.0204
8	哲学家 (zhe xue jia) philosopher	182	0.0190
9	作曲家 (zuo qu jia) composer	178	0.0186
10	心理学家 (xin li xue jia) psychologist	170	0.0178
11	思想家 (si xiang jia) ideologist	135	0.0141
12	化学家 (hua xue jia) chemist	132	0.0138
13	音乐家 (yin yue jia) musician	129	0.0135
14	数学家 (shu xue jia) mathematician	127	0.0133

15	革命家 (ge ming jia)	revolutionist	112	0.0117
16	舞蹈家 (wu dao jia)	terpsichorean; dancer	110	0.0115
17	理论家 (li lun jia)	theoretician	104	0.0109
18	企业家 (qi ye jia)	entrepreneur	103	0.0108
19	文学家 (wen xue jia)	litterateur	98	0.0103
20	语言学家 (yu yan xue jia)	linguist	96	0.0100
21	天文学家 (tian wen xue jia)	astronomer	92	0.0096
22	政治家 (zheng zhi jia)	politician	90	0.0094
23	教育家 (jiao yu jia)	educationist	89	0.0093
24	剧作家 (ju zuo jia)	playwriter	70	0.0073
25	法学家 (fa xue jia)	jurisprudential scholar	64	0.0067
26	生物学家 (sheng wu xue jia)	biologist	64	0.0067
27	经济学家 (jing ji xue jia)	economist	62	0.0065
28	评论家 (ping lun jia)	critic	54	0.0057
29	社会学家 (she hui xue jia)	sociologist	52	0.0054
30	批评家 (pi ping jia)	commenter	49	0.0051
31	发明家 (fa ming jia)	inventor	47	0.0049
32	历史学家 (li shi xue jia)	historian	45	0.0047
33	行家 (hang jia)	expert	44	0.0046
34	雕刻家 (diao ke jia)	sculptor	40	0.0042
35	自然科学家 (zi ran ke xue jia)	natural science expert	40	0.0042
36	野心家 (ye xin jia)	ambitious schemer	38	0.0040
37	文艺家 (wen yi jia)	literature and art expert	38	0.0040
38	歌唱家 (ge chang jia)	singer	37	0.0039
39	小说家 (xiao shuo jia)	novelist	37	0.0039

40	史学家 (shi xue jia)	historian	36	0.0038
41	军事家 (jun shi jia)	militarist	33	0.0035
42	表演艺术家 (biao yan yi shu jia)	performance artist	32	0.0033
43	地质学家 (di zhi xue jia)	geologist	32	0.0033
44	美术家 (mei shu jia)	artist	31	0.0032
45	医学家 (yi xue jia)	medical science expert	31	0.0032
46	雕塑家 (diao su jia)	sculptor	30	0.0031
47	摄影家 (she ying jia)	photographer	29	0.0030
48	活动家 (huo dong jia)	activist	28	0.0029
49	美学家 (mei xue jia)	esthetician	28	0.0029
50	演奏家 (yan zou jia)	musical instrument performer	27	0.0028
51	钢琴家 (gang qin jia)	pianist	24	0.0025
52	生理学家 (sheng li xue jia)	physiologist	24	0.0025
53	书法家 (shu fa jia)	calligrapher	23	0.0024
54	戏剧家 (xi ju jia)	dramatist	23	0.0024
55	外国专家 (wai guo zhuan jia)	foreign expert	22	0.0023
56	银行家 (yin hang jia)	banker	22	0.0023
57	人类学家 (ren lei xue jia)	anthropologist	22	0.0023
58	旅行家 (lü xing jia)	travel expert	21	0.0022
59	观察家 (guan cha jia)	observer	20	0.0021
60	阴谋家 (yin mou jia)	conspirator	20	0.0021
61	航海家 (hang hai jia)	navigator	19	0.0020
62	小提琴家 (xiao ti qin jia)	violinist	19	0.0020
63	植物学家 (zhi wu xue jia)	botanist	19	0.0020
64	指挥家 (zhi hui jia)	conductor (of a orchestra)	18	0.0019

65	实干家 (shi gan jia)	doer; a man of action	17	0.0018
66	神学家 (shen xue jia)	theologist	17	0.0018
67	漫画家 (man hua jia)	cartoonist	16	0.0017
68	考古学家 (kao gu xue jia)	archaeologist	15	0.0016
69	书画家 (shu hua jia)	painter and calligrapher	14	0.0015
70	教育学家 (jiao yu xue jia)	educationist	14	0.0015
71	探险家 (tan xian jia)	explorer	14	0.0015
72	改革家 (gai ge jia)	reformer	14	0.0015
73	分析家 (fen xi jia)	analyst	12	0.0013
74	理学家 (li xue jia)	Neo-Confucian	12	0.0013
75	冒险家 (mao xian jia)	adventurer	11	0.0012
76	外交家 (wai jiao jia)	diplomat	11	0.0012
77	地理学家 (di li xue jia)	geographer	11	0.0012
78	实业家 (shi ye jia)	industrialist	10	0.0010
79	女作家 (nü zuo jia)	female writer	9	0.0009
80	政论家 (zheng lun jia)	political commentator	9	0.0009
81	农学家 (nong xue jia)	agriculturalist	8	0.0008
82	汉学家 (han xue jia)	sinologist	8	0.0008
83	收藏家 (shou cang jia)	collector	8	0.0008
84	演说家 (yan shuo jia)	elocutionist	7	0.0007
85	战略家 (zhan lue jia)	strategist	7	0.0007
86	预言家 (yu yan jia)	prophet	6	0.0006
87	社会活动家 (she hui huo dong jia)	social activist	6	0.0006
88	慈善家 (ci shan jia)	charitarian	6	0.0006
89	营养学家 (ying yang xue jia)	nutritionist	6	0.0006

90	大作家 (da zuo jia)	great writer	5	0.0005
91	版画家 (ban hua jia)	woodcut artist	5	0.0005
92	专家组 (zhuan jia zu)	expert group	5	0.0005
93	核物理学家 (he wu li xue jia)	nuclear physicist	5	0.0005
94	道学家 (dao xue jia)	Neo-Confucian	5	0.0005
95	行家里手 (hang jia li shou)	expert and master	4	0.0004
96	老艺术家 (lao yi shu jia)	old artist	4	0.0004
97	科学史家 (ke xue shi jia)	expert on history of science	4	0.0004
98	名作家 (ming zuo jia)	famous writer	4	0.0004
99	美食家 (mei shi jia)	gourmet	4	0.0004
100	中国作家协会 (zhong guo zuo jia xie hui)	China Writers Society	4	0.0004
101	金融家 (jin rong jia)	financier	3	0.0003
102	出版家 (chu ban jia)	publisher	3	0.0003
103	设计家 (she ji jia)	designer	3	0.0003
104	音乐学家 (yin yue xue jia)	musicologist	3	0.0003
105	散文家 (san wen jia)	essayist	2	0.0002
106	理论物理学家 (li lun wu li xue jia)	theoretical physicist	2	0.0002
107	经史家 (jing shi jia)	historian	2	0.0002
108	鉴赏家 (jian shang jia)	connoisseur	2	0.0002
109	中国摄影家协会 (zhong guo she ying jia xie hui)	China Photographers Association	2	0.0002
110	中国音乐家协会 (zhong guo yin yue jia xie hui)	China Musicians Association	2	0.0002
111	少年旅行家协会 (shao nian lü xing jia xie hui)	Young Travelers Association	2	0.0002

112	阴阳家 (yin yang jia)      Yin-Yang specialist	2	0.0002
113	幻想家 (huan xiang jia)      fantast	2	0.0002
114	土专家 (tu zhuan jia)      local expert	2	0.0002
115	专家门诊 (zhuan jia men zhen) expert outpatient service	2	0.0002
116	学问家 (xue wen jia)      scholar	2	0.0002
117	中国漫画家代表团 (zhong guo man hua jia dai biao tuan) China Cartoonist Delegation	1	0.0001
118	气候学家 (qi hou xue jia)      climatologist	1	0.0001
119	地磁学家 (di ci xue jia)      geomagnetic expert	1	0.0001
120	中国美术家通讯 (zhong guo mei shu jia tong xun) China Artists News Report	1	0.0001
121	柳州书法家协会 (liu zhou shu fa jia xie hui) Liuzhou Calligraphers Association	1	0.0001
122	红学家 (hong xue jia) expert on research of Chinese novel “A Dream of Red Mansions”	1	0.0001
123	藏书家 (cang shu jia ) book collectors	1	0.0001
124	资产阶级革命家 (zi chan jie ji ge ming jia) bourgeois revolutionist	1	0.0001
125	悲剧家 (bei ju jia)      tragedy dramatist	1	0.0001
126	喜剧家 (xi ju jia)      comedy dramatist	1	0.0001
127	左翼戏剧家联盟 (zuo yi xi ju jia lian meng) Left-wing Dramatists Union	1	0.0001
128	炼剑家 (lian jian jia)      sword-making master	1	0.0001
129	相剑家 (xiang jian jia)      sword connoisseur	1	0.0001
130	矿物学家 (kuang wu xue jia) mineralogist	1	0.0001

131	油画家 (you hua jia) oil painter	1	0.0001
132	病理学家 (bing li xue jia) pathologist	1	0.0001
133	作家出版社 (zuo jia chu ban she) Writers Press Company	1	0.0001
134	全国美术家协会 (quan guo mei shu jia xie hui) National Artists Association	1	0.0001
135	中国版画家协会 (zhong guo ban hua jia xie hui) China Woodcut Artists Association	1	0.0001
136	摄影家协会上海分会 (she ying jia xie hui shang hai fen hui) Shanghai Branch of Photographers Association	1	0.0001
137	术数家 (shu shu jia) expert on Shushu (one of big branches of Zhou Yi)	1	0.0001
138	中国电影家协会 (zhong guo dian ying jia xie hui) China Movie Masters Association	1	0.0001
139	法理学家 (fa li xue jia) jurisprudent	1	0.0001
140	星相家 (xing xiang jia) astrologer	1	0.0001
141	金术家 (jin shu jia) alchemy expert	1	0.0001
142	堪舆家 (kan yu jia) expert on geomantic omen	1	0.0001

#### Appendix 4

##### The “noun/noun phrase + 家 /family” phrases in the Modern Chinese Corpus

NO.	“noun/noun phrase + 家 /family” phrases in which “家” means schools of academic thought	Number of appearance	Frequency %
1	儒家 (ru jia) the Confucian school	146	0.0153
2	道家 (dao jia) the Taoist school	34	0.0036
3	法家 (fa jia) the Legalists (a school of thought in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods, 770-221 B.C.)	30	0.0031

4	百家争鸣 (bai jia zheng ming) contention of a hundred schools of thought	26	0.0027
5	佛家 (fo jia) Buddhism	21	0.0022
6	杂家 (yi shu jia) the Eclectics, a school of thought flourishing at the end of the Warring States Period and the beginning of the Han Dynasty	11	0.0012
7	诸子百家 (zhu zi bai jia) the various schools of thought and their exponents during the period from pre-Qin times to the early years of the Han Dynasty	5	0.0005
8	儒家经典 (ru jia jing dian) The Confucian classics	4	0.0004
9	墨家 (mo jia) the Mohist School (a school of thought in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods)	4	0.0004
10	禅家 (chan jia) the Zen school	2	0.0002
11	孔家店 (kong jia dian) the Confucian thought system	1	0.0001

## Appendix 5

### The “noun/noun phrase + 家 /family” phrases in the Modern Chinese Corpus

NO.	“noun/noun phrase + 家 /family” phrases in which “家” is added after a noun as a suffix to indicate certain people belong to one category	Number of appearance	Frequency %
1	老人家 (lao ren jia) old man or old woman	186	0.0195
2	他老人家 (ta lao ren jia) old man	57	0.0060
3	姑娘家 (gu niang jia) girl	14	0.0015
4	女人家 (nü ren jia) woman	11	0.0012
5	小孩子家 (xiao hai zi jia) small children	6	0.0006
6	妇道人家 (fu dao ren jia) married woman	4	0.0004
7	女孩子家 (nü hai zi jia) young girl	3	0.0003
8	孩子家 (hai zi jia) children	1	0.0001
9	女孩儿家 (nü hai er jia) young girl	1	0.0001



## Appendix 6

## The “verb/verbal phrase + 家 /family” phrases in the Modern Chinese Corpus

NO.	“verb/verbal phrase + 家 /family” phrases	Number of appearance	Frequency %
1	回家 (hui jia) return home	971	0.1016
2	在家 (zai jia) exist at home	249	0.0261
3	搬家 (ban jia) move home; move house	120	0.0126
4	离家 (li jia) leave home	76	0.0080
5	当家作主 (dang jia zuo zhu) be master in one's own house -- be in power; be the master of one's own affairs	75	0.0078
6	当家 (dang jia) manage (household) affairs	67	0.0070
7	管家 (guan jia) housekeep; steward; butler	60	0.0063
8	分家 (fen jia) break up the family and live apart	60	0.0063
9	出家 (chu jia) become a monk or nun or Taoist priest	53	0.0055
10	到家 (dao jia) arrive home; be excellent	47	0.0049
11	起家 (qi jia) make one's fortune, name, etc.; build up a fortune; grow and thrive	36	0.0038
12	丧家 (chan jia) family which hold a funeral	27	0.0028
13	回娘家 (hui niang jia) married women visit their parents' home	26	0.0027
14	成家 (cheng jia) establish a family; settle down	26	0.0027
15	安家 (an jia) set up a home; settle down	26	0.0027
16	想家 (xiang jia) miss home; homesick	25	0.0026
17	住家 (zhu jia) reside in; residence	22	0.0023
18	无家可归 (wu jia ke gui) have no home to return to	20	0.0021
19	安家落户 (an jia luo hu) settle down; make home somewhere	20	0.0021
20	看家 (kan jia) look after the house	17	0.0018
21	保家卫国 (bao jia wei guo) protect home and defend country	16	0.0017

22	发家致富 (fa jia zhi fu) build up the family fortunes	16	0.0017
23	当家人 (dang jia ren) head of the household	15	0.0016
24	归家 (gui jia) return home	15	0.0016
25	抄家 (chao jia) search the house and confiscate the property	14	0.0015
26	发家 (fa jia) build up a family fortune	14	0.0015
27	回老家 (hui lao jia) go back the old home	14	0.0015
28	倾家荡产 (qing jia dang chan) family ruined and its property all lost	14	0.0015
29	白手起家 (bai shou qi jia) make a fortune starting from scratch	13	0.0014
30	败家子 (bai jia zi) a prodigal son squandering family's fortune	12	0.0013
31	挨家挨户 (ai jia ai hu) go from house to house	12	0.0013
32	传家宝 (chuan jia bao) family heirloom	11	0.0012
33	探家 (tan jia) go home to visit one's family	11	0.0012
34	居家 (ju jia) live with one's own family	10	0.0010
35	出家人 (chu jia ren) a monk or a nun	9	0.0009
36	养家 (yang jia) support a family	8	0.0008
37	亲如一家 (qin ru yi jia) be close to be like one family	8	0.0008
38	进家 (jin jia) come into the home	7	0.0007
39	当家做主 (dang jia zuo zhu) be the master of one's family	7	0.0007
40	败家 (bai jia) squander family's fortune	7	0.0007
41	治家 (zhi jia) regulate a family; manage a household	7	0.0007
42	养家活口 (yang jia huo kou) feed and clothe one's family	6	0.0006
43	成家立业 (cheng jia li ye) make up a family and start one's career	6	0.0006
44	举家 (ju jia) lift the whole family	6	0.0006
45	返家 (fan jia) go back home	6	0.0006

46	自成一家 (zi cheng yi jia) establish one's own school of thought; strike out a new line for oneself;	6	0.0006
47	着家 (zhao jia) be at home	5	0.0005
48	四海为家 (si hai wei jia) make one's home wherever one is	5	0.0005
49	顾家 (gu jia) concern for one's family; care for one's family	5	0.0005
50	赢家 (ying jia) winner	5	0.0005
51	丧家之犬 (sang jia zhi quan) a dog that has lost its master	4	0.0004
52	挨家 (ai jia) go from house to house	4	0.0004
53	兴家 (xing jia) flourish one's family	4	0.0004
54	看家本领 (kan jia ben ling) one's special skills	4	0.0004
55	找婆家 (zhao po jia) find a husband	4	0.0004
56	当家的 (dang jia de) the head of a family	3	0.0003
57	勤俭持家 (qin jian chi jia) manage the household industriously and thriftily	2	0.0002
58	持家 (chi jia) manage the affairs of the family	2	0.0002
59	看家狗 (kan jia gou) watchdog	2	0.0002
60	败家精 (bai jia jing) a prodigal son squandering family's fortune in local dialect	2	0.0002
61	打家劫舍 (da jia jie she) raid homes and plunder houses	2	0.0002
62	安家费 (an jia fei) settling-in allowance	2	0.0002
63	恋家 (lian jia) long for home	2	0.0002
64	输家 (shu jia) loser	2	0.0002
65	管家婆 (guan jia po) housekeeper	1	0.0001
66	半路出家 (ban lu chu jia) become a monk or nun late in life; switch to a job one was not trained for; switch to a new profession; without solid foundation or training	1	0.0001
67	干家 (gan jia) manage a family; an able person	1	0.0001

68	发家史 (fa jia shi) the history of building up family fortunes	1	0.0001
69	拖家带口 (tuo jia dai kou) be tied down by one's family	1	0.0001
70	养家糊口 (yang jia hu kou) support a family	1	0.0001
71	至家 (zhi jia) arrive home	1	0.0001
72	搬搬家 (ban ban jia) move house	1	0.0001
73	思家 (si jia) long for home	1	0.0001
74	守家 (shou jia) guard the house	1	0.0001
75	胜家 (sheng jia) winner	1	0.0001
76	弄家儿 (nong jia er) people who are good at handling things	1	0.0001
77	玩家 (wan jia) player of a game	1	0.0001

## Appendix 7

### The “Adjective + 家 /family” phrases in the Modern Chinese Corpus

NO.	“adjective + 家 /family” phrases	Number of appearance	Frequency %
1	大家 (da jia) big family; great master; everybody	3683	0.3854
2	全家 (quan jia) the entire family	194	0.0203
3	老家 (lao jia) old home; native place	103	0.0108
4	公家 (gong jia) the public	64	0.0067
5	独家 (du jia) exclusive; sole	46	0.0048
6	名家 (ming jia) famous expert	38	0.0040
7	本家 (ben jia) member of the same clan	21	0.0022
8	官家 (guan jia) the public; the government	15	0.0016
9	私家 (si jia) private	12	0.0013
10	富家 (fu jia) rich family	11	0.0012

11	首家 (shou jia) the first	11	0.0012
12	小家 (xiao jia) small family	10	0.0010
13	合家 (he jia) the whole family	10	0.0010
14	小家碧玉 (xiao jia bi yu) a pretty girl brought up in a family of moderate means	8	0.0008
15	诸家 (zhu jia) various schools of thought	8	0.0008
16	小康之家 (xiao kang zhi jia) well-off family	6	0.0006
17	众家 (zhong jia) many schools of thought	6	0.0006
18	小家子气 (xiao jia zi qi) appearing nervous or petty in public	4	0.0004
19	全家福 (quan jia fu) the whole family photo	4	0.0004
20	外家 (wai jia) family of grandmother and grandfather on mother's side; married woman's parent's home	4	0.0004
21	良家 (liang jia) good, decent family	3	0.0003
22	阖家 (he jia) the whole family	3	0.0003
23	孤家寡人 (gu jia gua ren) a title used by feudal emperors to call themselves; a loner; a person in solitary splendor	3	0.0003
24	只此一家 (zhi ci yi jia) only this	3	0.0003
25	俗家 (su jia) the home of Buddhist and Taoist monks or nuns' before they are monks or nuns; layman who is not a monk	2	0.0002
26	阔家 (kuo jia) rich family	1	0.0001
27	良家妇女 (liang jia fu nü) a good woman from decent family	1	0.0001
28	大家闺秀 (da jia gui xiu) great lady of good family	1	0.0001
29	旧家 (jiu jia) old home	1	0.0001
30	私家车 (si jia che) private car	1	0.0001