

New Chinese Buzz words for 2021 released by CityU

The Top 5 hottest new Chinese terms are “Lie Flat Approach”, “Metaverse”, “Cardboard Bed”, “Xinjiang as China Stopper” and “Nuclear Waste Disposal” in the Pan-Chinese media of Beijing, Hong Kong and Taipei, according to the 2021 LIVAC Pan-Chinese New Word Rosters released by City University of Hong Kong (CityU).

*The rosters are based on the LIVAC Synchronous Corpus of Chinese (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LIVAC_Synchronous_Corpus) developed by **Professor Benjamin T’sou Ka-yin**, Emeritus Professor of CityU’s Department of Linguistics and Translation.*

They draw on the usage frequencies of the new words in the Chinese-language newspapers of the 3 cities. The following table shows the five most representative new words in the Pan-Chinese context and in each of the three regions in 2021:

<i>Regions</i>	<i>Most Representative Chinese New Words</i>				
<i>Pan-Chinese</i>	<i>Lie Flat Approach</i> 躺平主義	<i>Metaverse</i> 元宇宙	<i>Cardboard Bed</i> 紙板床	<i>Xinjiang as China Stopper</i> 以疆制華	<i>Nuclear Waste Disposal</i> 核廢水排放
<i>Hong Kong</i>	<i>Consumption Voucher</i> 消費券	<i>JoyYou Card</i> 樂悠卡	<i>Leave Home Safe</i> 安心出行	<i>Hong Kong Health Code</i> 港康碼	<i>Reverse Vending Machine (RVM)</i> 入樽機
<i>Beijing</i>	<i>Two Confirmations</i> 兩個確立	<i>Three Oxen Spirit</i> 三牛精神	<i>Double Reduction</i> 雙減	<i>Cloud Convention</i> 雲招展	<i>CNY on the Job</i> 穩崗留工
<i>Taipei</i>	<i>Quintuple Vouchers</i> 五倍券	<i>“Click” Economy</i> 嗶經濟	<i>Battle-ready Blue</i> 戰鬥藍	<i>"5-2" Water Restrictions</i> 供5停2	<i>Zero Fortified Pigs</i> 零萊豬

Compared to previous years, the new terms in 2021 have been influenced by the COVID-induced economic measures and social events in the Pan-Chinese

region more than the sustained political tension between China and USA, as represented by the single term “Xinjiang as China Stopper”. The terms provide useful social and cultural indicators as “The new words appearing in the separate Beijing, Hong Kong and Taiwan rosters also reflect salient local events and around the world,” Professor T’sou said.

The new term “Lie Flat Approach” in the Pan-Chinese region is a timely reminder that the fantastic economic developments might have left some behind in China, whose emergence as an economic powerhouse can be confirmed because such an approach does not readily appear in a developing country.

“Metaverse” has appeared quite late in 2021. It could reflect a common wish for a virtual reality which could be idealistically better than the world we have found ourselves in.

“Cardboard Bed” arises from environmental concerns, but it also reflects wider social issues among top athletics than that highlighted by drug usage in the past.

“Nuclear Waste Disposal” is also related to environmental issues and its common concern is a reminder of the global village shared by us all.

Of the five top new Chinese terms in the Pan-Chinese region, “Xinjiang as China Stopper” is the concern of mainly China and USA, while two others have been triggered by events in China (“Lie Flat Approach”) and in Japan (“Nuclear Waste Disposal”). The other terms (“Metaverse”) and (“Cardboard Bed”) are not geographically focused but reflect common interests on wide ranging issues. The combination of concerns reflects a year in which shared concerns are less obvious than in the past as is reflected again by the small number of Pan-Chinese media personalities to be shortly released.

The LIVAC New Word Rosters are based on the analysis of printed media materials curated in the LIVAC (Linguistic Variations in Chinese Speech Communities) database, and the rigorous analysis of the language used by the Chinese media in the Pan-Chinese region, including Beijing, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

The database contains over 700 million characters from the major press outlets in the Pan-Chinese region since 1995, and has accumulated nearly 2 million words in the LIVAC master dictionary.

The meaning and relevant background information on the new words can be found in the appendix (in Chinese only) and the website <http://www.livac.org>.

Media enquiries:

*Professor Benjamin T'sou, Department of Linguistics and Translation, CityU
(Tel: +852 6713 4608)*

Appendix: Explanations of 2021 LIVAC Pan-Chinese New Word Rosters (in Chinese only)