A Comparison of the Reduplication of Adjectives and Verbs in Mandarin and Shanghainese

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What is my research about?

Reduplication

- A form of compounding
- A morphological operation in which part of (or all of) a morpheme's base is duplicated and attached to the original base to create a new morpheme

What is my research about?

Mandarin

- The most widely spoken language in China
- Makes heavy use of compounding in its morphology

Shanghainese

- A dialect of Wu Chinese, which is mutually unintelligible with Mandarin
- Spoken in specific districts of Shanghai and surrounding regions
- Shares a similar origin geographically with Mandarin

What is my research about?

<u>Reduplication in Mandarin</u>

- Existing literature primarily focuses on the *structure* of adjective and verb reduplication
- Monosyllabic reduplication
  - $[A]_{Adj., V} \rightarrow [AA]_{Adj., V}$
  - Example:

走   走 走

zǒu   →   zǒu zǒu

"walk"   "walk a little"

What is my research about?

Reduplication in Mandarin

- Disyllabic reduplication
  - $[AB]_{Adj., V} \rightarrow [ABAB]_V$
  - $[AB]_{Adj., V} \rightarrow [AABB]_{Adj.}$
  - $[AB]_V \rightarrow [AAB]_V$
  - Examples:

高 兴 gāo xìng "happy"	$\rightarrow$	高 兴 高 兴 gāo xìng gāo xìng "have a little fun"
高 兴 gāo xìng "happy"	$\rightarrow$	高 高 兴 兴 gāo gāo xìng xìng "very happy"

Why did I choose this topic?

Personal Reasons

- Grew up in a Mandarin-speaking household
- Had a source close to me for Shanghainese data

Research Reasons

- Lack of existing literature on Shanghainese
- Can contribute to an understanding of the compounding nature of Chinese

What have I found (so far)?

Mandarin: $[A]_{Adj., V} \rightarrow [AA]_{Adj., V}$

Shanghainese: $[A]_{Adj.?, V} \rightarrow [AA]_{Adj.?, V}$

Example:

mo $\rightarrow$ mo mo

"unclear, dark"   "very dark"

What have I found (so far)?

Mandarin/Shanghainese: $[AB]_{Adj., V} \rightarrow [ABAB]_V$

Example:

      qing song $\rightarrow$ qing song qing song

      "not stressed out"   "to have a break and relax"

What have I found (so far)?

Mandarin/Shanghainese: $[AB]_{Adj., V} \rightarrow [AABB]_{Adj.}$

Example:

qing song $\rightarrow$ qing qing song song

"not stressed out"   "takes it easy"

What have I found (so far)?

Mandarin: $[AB]_V \rightarrow [AAB]_V$

Shanghainese: $[AB]_{Adj.} \rightarrow [AAB]_{Adj.}$

Example:

se qing   →   se se qing

"refreshing"   "very refreshing"

Conclusions (so far)

- The 4 main patterns of reduplication (AA, ABAB, AABB, and AAB) all appear in Shanghainese
- AA and AAB patterns maintain their semantic properties, but apply to different word classes
- ABAB and AABB perform the same word class conversions, but lose out on increasing/diminishing reduplication
- While ABAB and AABB are considered the primary forms of reduplication in Mandarin, AA and AAB are anecdotally more "natural" in Shanghainese