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LING 105

Discussion 1A

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Prospectus

1. The Topic

The main topic of my paper will be reduplication in Mandarin Chinese and Shanghainese. As a semi-fluent Mandarin speaker, I have noticed the large impact that reduplication has on the language, as well as the unique nature of Chinese morphology as a whole. I want to investigate how these attributes translate to the dialects of Chinese, and Shanghainese happens to be the dialect I have the closest personal connection to. 

2. The Initial Literature Review

There is a substantial amount of research on the effect of reduplication on Mandarin. The bulk of this research is with regards to the varying structures between adjective and verb reduplication, and possible theories for how those structures came to be. In particular, the AABB pattern for full reduplication has seemed to receive the most research attention. There also seems to be a lot of crossover with the semantic implications of increasing and diminishing reduplication and how they relate to these patterns.

Since Shanghainese is clearly a much less common language than Mandarin, research regarding reduplication in Shanghainese seems to be nearly nonexistent. Much of the research focused on Shanghainese seems to be in more niche topics and has a much narrower focus than I intend to write with.

Considering the importance of these varying forms of reduplication on Mandarin, I believe it is worth investigating if the same systems translate to the dialect of Shanghainese. Due to the compounding nature of Chinese morphology, I would hypothesize that the data will show similar structures to Mandarin reduplication, but I highly doubt a one-to-one correspondence will reveal itself, and small variations in structure and semantic implication should arise.

3. The Research Question(s)

- How is reduplication used in Mandarin Chinese?
- What instances of reduplication are found in the dialect of Shanghainese?
- In what ways are the structures of reduplication, especially those relating to adjectives and verbs, similar or different when comparing Mandarin and Shanghainese?

4. The Plan for Data Gathering

I anticipate being able to collect all the data I need to make my arguments from both published sources and native speakers.

As mentioned in the literature review, the nature of reduplication in Mandarin is fairly well-documented, which should provide enough of a foundation to get a good picture of how Mandarin reduplication is constructed. In addition, I can rely on both mine and my parents' (who are native Mandarin speakers) knowledge of Mandarin to generate the data needed to support my claims.

For Shanghainese, I plan to consult my mother, who is a native Shanghainese speaker. She should be able to provide me with enough data to have a working conception of how Shanghainese uses reduplication. From there I can compare and contrast this usage with the research on Mandarin reduplication to form a conclusion.

5. The Preliminary Essential Bibliographical References

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- Lee-Kim, Sang-Im. "Syntax-based phonological asymmetries: The case of adjective reduplication in Mandarin Chinese." *Lingua* 179 (2016): 1-23.
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