

# Reduplicative Verbs in Mandarin: Evidence for Talmy's Conflation Patterns

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Reduplication exists in many languages, including Mandarin. People frequently use it in their daily communication, which is conducive to bringing the reduplication phenomenon with the features of being colloquial in style, frequent in occurrence and pervasive (Talmy 2000). This study focuses on verb reduplications in Mandarin. Previous studies tend to analyze and discuss verb reduplications on a syntactic and semantic level, however, only a few researches pay attention to its conflation patterns. More specifically, there is few (if any) diachronic research about verb reduplications from a Talmyan three-way typological perspective. Thus this paper proposes to illustrate the conflation patterns of verb reduplications in ancient Chinese and contemporary Chinese from the three-way typological perspective. With a systematic and diachronic approach, this research divides Chinese into five stages, namely, archaic Chinese, early middle Chinese, late middle Chinese, early modern Chinese and modern Chinese (Li 2019). After searching in CCL (Center for Chinese Linguistics, Peking University) ancient Chinese corpus and modern Chinese corpus, it is found that there are seven forms of verb reduplications such as,

(1) VV construction

他 摇摇 头 (Author)  
tā yáoyáo tóu  
3SG shake head

'He shakes his head.'

(3) V Yi V construction

我 想 一 想 (Author)  
wǒ xiǎngyīxiǎng  
1SG think-FUT  
'I will think!'

(5) V Le Yi V construction

我 在 附近 转 了 一 转  
wǒ zài fùjìn zhuàn le yī zhuàn  
1SG LOC nearby-ADV go-PST  
'I went round nearby.'

(7) V N V Le construction

我 看 书 看 了 很 久  
wǒ kàn shū kàn le hěn jiǔ.  
1SG read-PRF book read-PRF PRF for a long time  
'I have read my book for a long time.'

(2) V<sub>AABB</sub> construction

他 今天 下午 进 进 出 出 (Author)  
tā jīntiān xiàwǔ jìnjin chūchū  
3SG this afternoon in out

'He is in and out this afternoon.'

(4) V Le V construction

他 又 试 了 试  
tā yòu shìleshì  
3SG again-ADV try-PST  
'He tried again.'

(6) V Zhe V Zhe construction

汽车 跑 着 跑 着 着 火 了  
qìchē pǎozhepǎozhe zháo huǒ le  
3SG run-PROG catch-PST fire PST  
'The running car caught fire.'

By collecting linguistic data in CCL, it is expected to obtain how the verb reduplications in Mandarin Chinese are lexically conflated in different periods of time.

The expected research findings may include the following: (1) the distribution features different forms of verb reduplications mentioned above; (2) the ways verb reduplications are lexically conflated in each stage of Chinese; (3) from a diachronic perspective, verb reduplications are under both grammaticalization and conflation, and the ultimate goal of this construction evolution is to achieve the lexicalization.

The research significance lies in that methodologically, it complements the empirical research on the three-way typology and diachronic research on verb reduplications in Mandarin; in addition, in the aspect of typology, this research illustrates verb reduplications in Mandarin in terms of conflation patterns, which makes a distinction between lexicalization patterns and conflation patterns.

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