

Revisiting VV in Mandarin: New Evidence from Northeastern Chinese

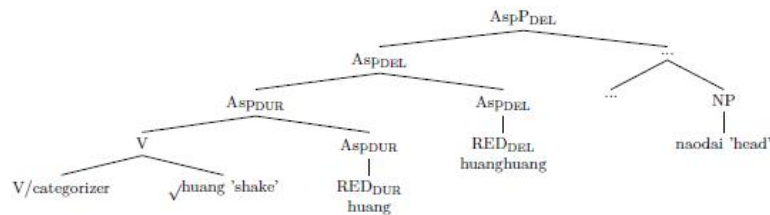
Provided new data from Northeastern Mandarin, this paper revisits two morphosyntactic puzzles centering Mandarin delimitative verbal reduplication (VV_{DEL}), e.g. *kan-kan* ‘see-see; have a look’. First, the source of the second copy, whether it is a cognate verbal classifier (Xiong 2016; Ye & Guo 2023) or the morphological realization of an ‘inner aspect’ (Travis 2010) head, Asp_{DEL} (Li & Thompson 1981; Paris 2013; Sui & Hu 2016)? Second, under the aspect analysis, how to explain why the surface order is *VleV*, when VV_{DEL} further composes with the perfective marker *le*? Adopting a multiple-layered approach to Mandarin aspects (Liao 2004; Tsai 2008; Sybesma 2017), as Asp_{PERF} is higher than inner aspect, *VleV* violates Mirror Principle (Baker 1985).

In addition to VV_{DEL}, Northeastern Mandarin possesses another VV (Jiang 2006; Tong 2015) which differs from VV_{DEL} in: compatible with long-duration adverbials, Num-Classifier_{verbal} phrases, and progressive/durative markers; largely incompatible with *le*; crucially, lacking a corresponding V-Num-V form, challenging classifier-based analyses. This paper labels this pattern durative reduplication (VV_{DUR}) and proposes that it realizes an inner-aspect head which makes the predication denoted by V temporally unbounded. Furthermore, Northeastern Mandarin exhibits VVVV (VV_{le}VV), which patterns with VV_{DEL} in semantic interpretation and syntactic distribution, and whose base V must allow both VV_{DEL} and VV_{DUR}. It indicates that VVVV is in essence a complex type of delimitative reduplication.

Within Distributed Morphology (Halle & Marantz 1993), this paper claims that the dialectal data strongly argues for an aspect-head analysis of reduplication combined with a post-syntactic Local Dislocation (LD, Embick 2007) account of *le* placement (Xiao 2024).

The other approaches are ruled out because of following reasons. The cognate-classifier approach can derive VV-V but not VVVV because only the category-less root V can merge with a classifier categorizer. The OT approach under the aspect analysis (Yang & Wei 2017) predicts *VleVV* to be preferred over *VVleVV* due to the constraint that requires *le* to be attached to the root.

Therefore, this paper argues that: VV_{DEL} and VV_{DUR} are realizations of inner aspect heads, Asp_{DEL} and Asp_{DUR}, respectively; Asp_{DEL} is structurally higher than Asp_{DUR}; VVVV is derived via successive head movement, i.e. the verb V first moves to Asp_{DUR} and then Asp_{DEL}, both of which are exponed as RED at Late Insertion (LI), yielding (V-RED_{DUR})-RED_{DEL}, and RED_{DUR} copies the phonological content of V while RED_{DEL} copies V-RED_{DUR} (VV) as a whole. The sample tree for *huang-huang-huanghuang naodai* ‘shake head for a little bit’ is given below.



For VV_{le}VV, following Xiao (2024), we propose that V+Asp_{DUR}+Asp_{DEL} undergoes further movement to Asp_{PERF}, forming a complex head; then after LI **and copying**, *le* and VV become adjacent ‘Sub-word’s within the same ‘M-word’ (Embick 2007); *le* thus dislocates with VV and adjoins to it via LD, outputting VV_{le}VV. The sample tree for *huang-huang-le-huanghuang naodai* ‘shake head for a little bit’ is given below.

