

ICONICITY OF QUANTITY AND REDUPLICATION IN CHINESE LANGUAGE

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DIAGRAMMATIC ICONICITY

- Diagrams are a type of icons which ‘exhibit a structure analogous to the structure of their object’ (Hiraga 1994).
- Diagrams appear in different forms of communication
- ‘The intuition behind iconicity is that **the structure of language reflects in some way the structure of experience**, that is to say, the structure of the world including the perspective imposed on the world by the speaker’ (Croft 2003: 102).

DIAGRAMMATIC ICONICITY IN LANGUAGE

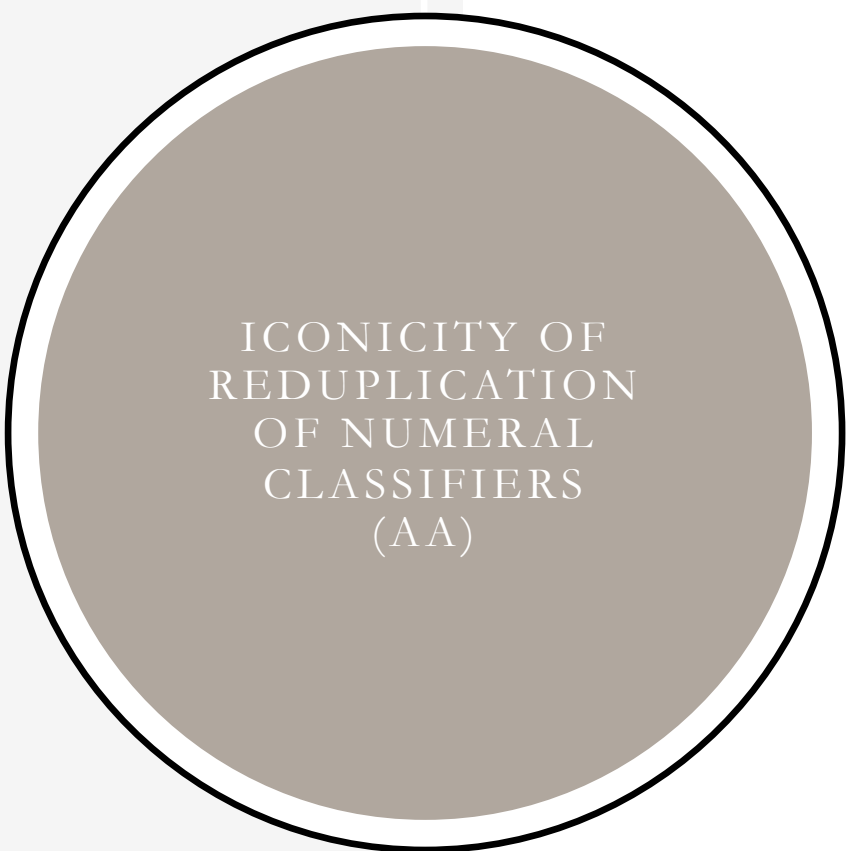
- Natural icons vs symbolic linguistic units
- In case of linguistic diagrams, their form must resemble the meaning in terms of structure.
 - Form
 - Visual or auditory linguistic forms, narrative, grammar
 - Lexical or syntagmatic level
 - Meaning
 - relationship between at least two entities (established by experience, like perception, reasoning, knowledge etc.)
 - Modification of the signified (extension, pluralization, etc.)
- “A syntactic construction is thus iconically motivated if it bears a diagrammatical resemblance to the structure of the physical world or to human being’s conceptual world” (Tai 1993)

ICONICITY OF QUANTITY, REPETITION AND REDUPLICATION

- Iconicity of quantity:
 - “There is an iconic relation between the quantity of form and the quantity (strength, degree) of meaning. Namely, the more the form, the more meaning. Examples abound in iteration, **repetition**, and **reduplication** of a word or a part of a word [...]” (Hiraga 1994)
 - Iconicity of quantity is identified when ‘**greater quantities in meaning are expressed by greater quantities of form**’. An example is given from Latin, where ‘adjective inflection, the comparative and superlative denote increasingly higher degrees and are coded by increasingly longer suffixes (e.g. *long(-us)* <long>, *long-ior* <longer>, *long-issim(-us)* <longest>’ (Haspelmath 2008).
- Iconicity of repetition:
 - “Repeated forms signal repetition in experience, as when reduplication expresses plurality or distribution’ (Haspelmath 2008)
- Iconicity of reduplication:
 - “The reduplication of a linguistic expression corresponds to the reduplication in our conceptual world” (Tai 1993).

ICONICITY OF REDUPLICATION

- “Reduplication refers to a morphological relation between a base and a derived form, in which the phonological shape of the derived form is directly dependent on the base, i.e. a portion of the base or the whole base is copied and attached to the base.” (Mattes 2014)
 - Whole-word reduplication/total reduplication
 - Partial reduplication
- Reduplication may signify (Hiraga 1994; Haiman 1980):
 - Plurality or distributivity
 - Intensity
 - Continuation or repetition



ICONICITY OF
REDUPLICATION
OF NUMERAL
CLASSIFIERS
(AA)

- Numeral Classifiers reduplicate in AA form, possibly preceded by the numeral ‘one’, the classifier phrase (with the noun excluded) may also undergo repetition
- Most often it is indicated that reduplication of classifiers yields the meaning of ‘every’ (Li & Cheng 2008; Li & Thompson 1981)
 - 磅磅肉都要查。
Bàng bàng ròu dōu yào chá
MW_{REDUPL} – meat – all – want – examine
‘Every pound of meat needs to be examined’
- Yip & Rimmington (2004) indicate that reduplicated forms of measure words may yield a meaning of plurality, profusion:
 - 條條大路通羅馬。
Tiáo tiáo dàlù tōng luómǎ.
CL_{REDUPL} – road – lead – Rome
‘All roads lead to Rome’.

ICONICITY OF
REDUPLICATION
OF NUMERAL
CLASSIFIERS
(—AA & —A—A)

- Reduplicated classifiers may be preceded by a numeral *yī* — ‘one’, and then take the form—AA to bare the meaning ‘every’:
 - 一朵朵花
Yī du ǒ du ǒ huā
One – CL_{REDUPL} – flower
‘Every single flower’.
- Repetition of “NL + MW” means ‘one after another’. Because it shows the manner of action it usually will be followed by the particle *de* 地:
 - 一步一步地
Yī bù yī bù de
One – MW – one – MW – DE
‘Step by step’

- The case of noun reduplication is rather uncommon in Mandarin Chinese, and it relates to few monosyllabic nouns, the reduplicated forms of which are lexicalized. They indicate plurality and may be translated as ‘every’ (Li & Cheng 2008; Tai 1993):

- 天天

Tiāntiān

Day_{REDUPL}

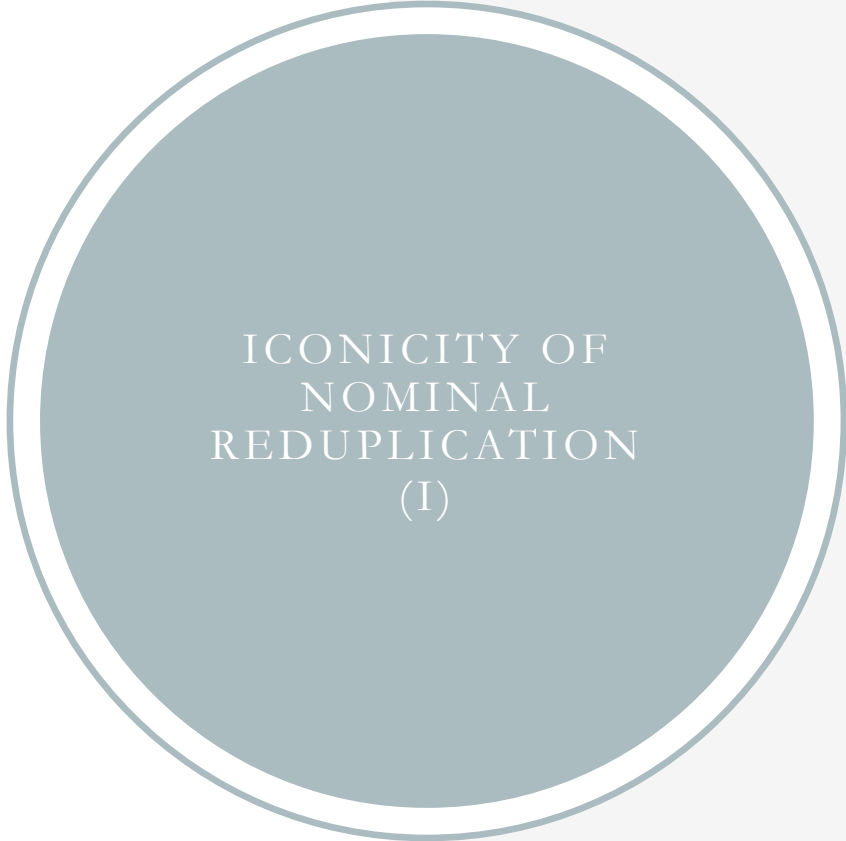
‘Every day’

- 人人

Rén rén

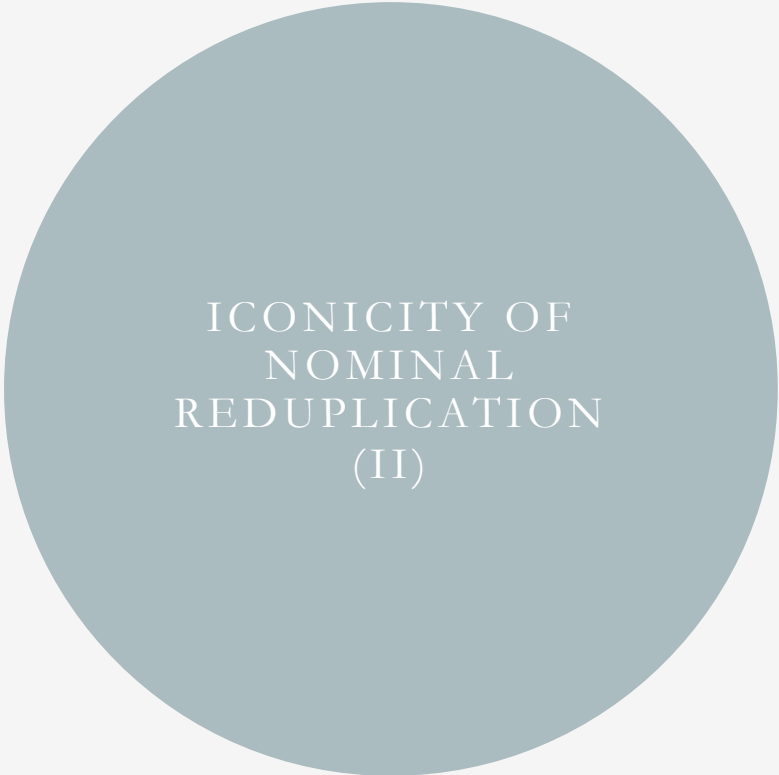
Person_{REDUPL}

‘every person’



ICONICITY OF
NOMINAL
REDUPLICATION
(I)

- However, Chinese nouns also undergo reduplication to a much greater extent of productiveness in child talk (by creating diminutives):
 - 狗狗
 - Gǒu gǒu*
 - Dog_{REDUPL}
 - ‘Doggie’.
- Reduplication of nouns in child discourse is non-iconic – it does not carry any semantic intensification.



ICONICITY OF
NOMINAL
REDUPLICATION
(II)



ICONICITY OF
ADJECTIVAL
REDUPLICATION

- Reduplicated forms of Chinese adjectives appear in AA, ABB and AABB forms.
- Arcodia et al. (2014), Tai (1993), Yip & Rimmington (2004) associate reduplicated form of adjectives with an increasing function in meaning. Compare:
 - *Xiǎoxiǎo* 小小 ‘small_{REDUPL}’
 - *xiǎo* 小 ‘small’
- Iconicity of adjective reduplication conveys intensification – but what kind?
 - *gānjìng* 乾淨 ‘clean’ vs *gāngānjìngjìng* 乾乾淨淨 ‘clean-clean’
 - *piàoliang* 漂亮 ‘pretty’ vs *piàopiàoliangliàng* 漂漂亮亮 ‘pretty’
- Reduplicated adjectives do not take degree adverbs (*hě* 很 ‘very’, *fēicháng* 非常 ‘extremely’ etc.) as if intensification in degree of their reduplication sustained rejecting redundancy.

- Reduplicated verbs occur in two synonymous patterns:
 - AA
 - ‘A yī A’ ‘A—A’
- Li & Cheng (2008) point out four meanings of reduplicated verbs:
 1. The reduplication of a verb implies a short and quick action.
 - 我問問他。
Wǒ wèn wèn tā.
I – ask_{REDUPL} – he.
‘I’ll ask him’.
 2. It expresses an attempt or a trial.
 - 我找找。
Wǒ zhǎo zhǎo.
I – search_{REDUPL}.
‘I’ll look for [it]’.



ICONICITY OF
VERBAL
REDUPLICATION

- Li & Cheng (2008):
 3. It expresses a sense of being light and relaxed
 - 星期日，我寫寫信，洗洗衣服。
 - Xīngqīrì, wǒ xiěxiě xìn, xǐxǐ yīfú.
 - Sunday – I – write_{REDUPL} – letter – wash_{REDUPL} – clothes.
 - ‘On Sunday I’ll write a letter and do some laundry’.
 4. It expresses meaning in a circumlocutory tone.
 - 你幫幫我吧!
 - Nǐ bāngbāng wǒ ba!
 - You – help_{REDUPL} – I – PART!
 - ‘Help me out!’
- Verbal reduplication indicates casual manner, feeling of tentativeness – is it still iconic?

