

5. VERBAL LEXEMES

The presentation of verbal lexemes is organized in a manner similar to that of adjectival lexemes in chapter 4. Like the term 'adjective', the term 'verb' is understood in the traditional sense as referring to a lexical category that typically designates actions, and repetition is a morphological means to modify the duration or type of activity of verbs. Consequently, not unlike adjectives, repetition of verbs generally represents discourse-dependent modulations of cognitively unitary verbal concepts, which means that these repetitive forms can hardly be expected to undergo lexicalisation, but are rather produced by general linguistic rules when the on-going communication so requires. This state of affairs naturally leads to the emphasis of the processual aspect of repetition in the exposition of the verbal data. It is further claimed that the most typical class of verbs liable to undergo repetition is comprised by verbs of volition. This is not an absolute rule, but a general tendency whereby phenomena concerning repetition of other types of verbs in the whole corpus are possible.

Before proceeding to a presentation of verbal repetitive forms proper, a few words on a topic related not only to Standard Chinese but concerning other languages in the corpus as well, are in order. In the chapter on adjectival repetition, the iconicity principle represented an attempt to describe the varied repetitive data in terms of a single, coherent concept. However, in the context of adjectival repetition, the changes to be explained by the principle in question could be conceptualized in terms of differing values on a single bi-polar continuum of intensity, whereas with verbs, the iconicity principle would have to be related simultaneously to more than one concept, each of which should be interpreted as partaking of one and the same continuum. For example, as verbal repetition in the languages of the corpus is principally concerned with what are traditionally referred to as aspectual distinctions and if Standard Chinese action verbs, unmarked for aspect, are described as expressing 'habitual action' or 'intention' (Yip & Rimmington 1997: 29), while those marked for aspect are connected with such concepts as 'delimitative', 'frequentative', 'inceptive', 'inducive', etc., it is very difficult indeed to conceptualize in what relevant sense a delimitative repetitive lexeme, for instance, is semantically 'more' (or 'less') than its formally simpler habitual or intentional base. Consequently, the iconicity principle will be used in the description of verbal repetitive data below only if the formulation in the original allows such an interpretation, i.e. the semantic effects of repetition on a verbal base form can be examined in terms of fluctuation within a conceptually unique continuum.

As mentioned above, the speech forms of the corpus are on the whole aspect-oriented languages, not tense-oriented. This means that a repetitive verb form does not signal the relation between the time of the occurrence of a situation and the moment it is mentioned in speech, but rather describes the duration or other characteristics of the situation itself. Consequently, the descriptive terms utilized in the analyses of repetitive verb forms below are all associated with the concept of aspect as distinct from the concept of tense.

5.1. THE SINITIC GROUP

In addition to Standard and Old Chinese as well as northern, north-western, south-western and eastern Mandarin dialects, the Sinitic data consist of sub-corpora from the Wu, Xiang, Gan, Hakka, Yue and Min dialect groups.

5.1.1. Standard and Old Chinese

Both (i) monosyllabic and (ii) disyllabic verbs of volition can undergo a repetitive process²²⁶ in Standard Chinese whereby the duration of the action expressed by the verb is generally regarded as being restricted ('delimitative' in Li & Thompson's [1981: 29], 'tentative' in Chao's [1970: 204-205] terminology). With disyllabic verbs, this type of repetition is not so common as with monosyllabic verbs (see Li & Thompson 1981: 29-31). E.g.:

- | | | | | | |
|------|--------|---------------|----|---------------|-----------------------|
| (i) | xiǎng | 'to think' | —> | xiǎng xiǎng | 'to think a little' |
| | zǒu | 'to walk' | —> | zǒu zǒu | 'to walk a little' |
| (ii) | yánjiū | 'to research' | —> | yánjiū yánjiū | 'to do some research' |
| | xiūxi | 'to rest' | —> | xiūxi xiūxi | 'to rest a little' |
- (Gan 1993: 41, 45)

The regular neutralisation of the second syllable characterizes the following set of formally repetitive lexicalised verbal forms:

rāng rang	'(inf.) to make a noise, make an uproar; to make widely known'
dāo dao	'to talk on and on, chatter away'

²²⁶ The second syllable of a duplicate derived from a monosyllabic base is regularly in the neutral tone while with disyllabic bases, the repetitive output does not suffer any phonological change (Li & Thompson 1981: 29-30).

liē lie	'to talk nonsense, blabber; (of a child) cry'
chā cha	'to whisper'
nāng nang	'to speak in a low voice, murmur'
(Wei et al. 1995: 829, 201, 617, 102, 707)	

Shǎn shǎn 'to walk slowly like a woman' and *kuí kuí* 'to stare, gaze' (Wei et al. 1995: 869, 573) are examples of formally repetitive lexemes with a non-neutralised second syllable²²⁷.

A variant for the AA pattern with monosyllabic verbs is an infixal pattern (ABA) where the morpheme *yī* functions as an infix (Li & Thompson 1981: 29-30). The use of the term 'morpheme' to refer to the infix here naturally implies a semantic content for the same. Gan's argument (1993: 56) that instead of 'one', the tonally neutral *yī* has the meaning 'a little' and Li & Thompson's treatment of *yī* as a morpheme are in conflict with the general principle of tonal neutrality as often being considered an index of asematicity in Standard Chinese, but perhaps the semantic bleaching has not been total and vestiges of semanticity remain, perceptible to the native speaker. The meaning of this infixal pattern (A *yī* A) amounts to the same with the non-infixal one.

Gan (1993: 80-81) lists a set of monosyllabic morphemes which may function both as verbs and as adjectives after repetition. As verbal lexemes, they acquire the predictable delimitative/tentative meaning and allow infixation of *yī* to construct lexemes of the trisyllabic ABA type. E.g.:

sōng	'loose/to loosen'	—>	sōng yī sōng	'to loosen a little'
liáng	'cool/to cool'	—>	liáng yī liáng	'to cool a little'

Another infixal pattern of the ABA type is achieved when the particle *le* is inserted between the constituents of a verbal duplicate of monosyllabic origin. The resulting lexical form indicates a sense of completion. Gan (1993: 52) argues that the form A *le* A stands expressly for the combined perfective-tentative aspect of the verb A. Gan also points out that the retention of such a cumbersome term finds its motivation in the fact that the perfective aspect expressed by a suffixal *le* can be used with a future time reference, which is not possible with the infixal *le*. E.g.:

kàn	'to look'	—>	kàn le kàn	'had a bit of a look'
xiǎng	'to think'	—>	xiǎng le xiǎng	'thought for a moment'

²²⁷ The character used to write the former item is not treated as a meaningful entry in Wei et al. (1995: 869), while this is the case with the latter where, however, the meanings of the character, 'to separate; (formal) to go against, run counter to' (Wei et al. 1995: 573), are so unlike the meaning of the disyllabic lexeme that it is hardly contrary to anyone's intuition to treat *kuí kuí* as opaque in respect to *kuí*.

Such disyllabic volitional verbs which are analysed as consisting of a verb and its object and which allow insertion between the constituents are repeated according to the AAB pattern, i.e. they repeat only the verbal constituent with neutralisation of tone. The resultant meaning is of the already familiar type. E.g.:

tiào wǔ 'to dance' → tiào tiao wǔ 'to dance a little'
 jū gōng 'to bow' → jū ju gōng 'to bow a little'
 (Li & Thompson 1981: 31)

Inseparable verb-object compounds comply to the ABAB pattern (Li & Thompson 1981:31).

The delimitative or tentative meaning can be made more explicit by adding the suffix *-kàn* to a duplicated monosyllabic base, though there is no real difference in semantic effect²²⁸ (Gan 1993: 49-50) E.g.:

cháng 'to taste' → cháng chang = cháng chang kàn 'to have a try'
 xué 'to learn' → xué xue = xué xue kàn 'to learn a little'

Yet another verbal repetitive pattern introduced by Gan (1993: 63-65) as representing the output of a productive and extensively used process, taken up neither by Chao (1970: 199) nor by Li & Thompson (1981: 29-31), is again one with an infix (ABA), which in this pattern is *-a-* or *-ya-*. The decision to regard the structure in question as a repetitive pattern rests on the boundness of the infixes and the native speaker's intuition that it is a derivative of one verb (Gan 1993: 65). Semantically, *A a A* or *A ya A* refers to a steady and prolonged activity and is therefore determined as expressing the sustained aspect by Gan (1993: 63-64, 65). E.g.:

pá 'to climb' → pá ya pá 'to climb and climb'
 xiě 'to write' → xiě a xiě 'to write and write'
 (Gan 1993: 64)

There are a few trisyllabic repetitive fixed lexemes of either the (i) ABB or (ii) AAB type in Standard Chinese. E.g.:

- (i) dǎ hā ha 'to make fun, crack a joke'
 qiáo hā ha(r) '(inf.) to have a good laugh over, gloat over'
- (ii) liū liū zhuàn '(of a round object) to turn around and around'
 (Wei et al. 1995: 178, 797, 628)

²²⁸ Gan (1993: 50) claims that *-kàn* cannot be suffixed to an AA form when a frequentative meaning is desired.

The former are apparently lexicalised verb-object structures, of which the first consists of a free morpheme followed by a bound element (*dǎ* 'to hit, strike' + *hāha* [Wei et al. 1995: 177, 374]), while both constituents in the second item are free morphemes (*qiáo* '(inf.) to look, see' + *hāha(r)* '(dial.) a ridiculous thing, a laughing matter' [Wei et al. 1995: 797, 374]). In the only exponent of the AAB type, the specialised meaning of the whole structure is different to an extent from the meaning of its parts (*liū* 'to slide, glide' + *zhuàn* 'to turn, revolve, rotate' [Wei et al. 1995: 627, 1353]). As the meaning of the whole lexeme in all three cases can be more or less connected to the meaning of the constituents, they can be considered transparent.

There is a productive sub-type of the ABAB repetitive verbal pattern introduced by Gan (1993: 60-63) where the B slot is filled by the suffix *-zhe*, the durative aspect marker in Standard Chinese (ABAB = A *zhe* A *zhe*). As this concatenation of verbal forms does not allow the insertion of an object, for example, in between, it deserves to be regarded as a case of repetition, in Gan's opinion, and not as a combination of two verb phrases. In defining the semantic function of this pattern, Gan resorts to sentence level where an exponent of the pattern appearing in the first clause of a complex sentence provides a durative background for another event expressed in the latter clause. This is why the duplicative form is seen as embodying the inductive aspect of a verb marked as durative (A-*zhe*) and the durative-inductive aspect of a monosyllabic verb (A). E.g.:

Tā pǎo zhe pǎo zhe hūrán dǎo xià le.
 he run dur. suddenly fall down part.
 'He was running when all of a sudden he fell down.'

Tā chàng zhe chàng zhe tūrán kū le qǐ lái²²⁹
 he sing dur. suddenly cry part. init.
 'He was singing when suddenly he started to cry.'
 (Gan 1993: 62)

Gan (1993: 65-66) thinks that the instances of disjunctive repetitive verbal structures with *lái* (originally 'to come') and *qù* (originally 'to go') as the second and fourth syllables in an ABAC pattern represent the repetitive aspect of a verb (A → ABAC). The base can either be monosyllabic or disyllabic. E.g.:

suàn 'to calculate' → suàn lái suàn qù 'to calculate over and again'
 kǎo lǚ 'to consider' → kǎo lǚ lái kǎo lǚ qù 'to consider over and again'
 (Gan 1993: 66)

²²⁹ As this *-qǐ lái* does not act as an independent verb in this context and it appears as an entry in Wei et al (1995: 776-777) where its suffixal character is explicitly defined, instead of glossing it with 'to start' as Gan does, the use of the term 'initiator' (= init.) is suggested as more suitable for expressing its function as an aspectual marker designating the inception of an action or state (see e.g. Yip & Rimmington 1997: 51).

Even though the consecutive repetitive pattern AABB is mostly connected with adjectival repetition, as for example verbs repeated after this pattern are often turned into adjectives, there are outputs of this repetitive type which retain their identity as verbs. According to Gan (1993: 67), the bases for the pattern in question consist of either two juxtaposed monosyllabic verbal morphemes or a disyllabic verb. E.g.:

tuī 'to push' + sāng²³⁰ 'to push violently' → tuī tui sāng sāng²³¹
 duǒcáng 'to hide oneself' → duǒ duǒ cáng cáng
 (Gan 1993: 68)

Gan (1993: 69) maintains further that semantically, the repetitive process here has an intensifying effect on the meaning of the base, and consequently its results embody the intensifying aspect of the verb.

It was noted earlier in connection with adjectival duplication that partial repetition was not rare in Old Chinese and that rhymes in alliterative repetitive forms were often distinguished only by nuclear vowels which often tended to consist of *-e-* in the first syllable and *-o-* in the second syllable. There were also verbs with this particular partially repetitive structure. E.g.:

*t-n-rjen? - t-n-rjon? 'to toss and turn'
 *khjen? - khjon? 'to cling to, adhere to'
 *drje - drjo 'to pace back and forth'
 (Baxter & Sagart 1998: 65-66)

On the basis of the English equivalents, one is tempted to suggest a continuous sense for this pair of vowels.

5.1.2. The Mandarin dialects

The data concerning verbal repetition in the Mandarin dialects come principally from the speech forms of the south-western group, while the other groups are unfortunately not so well represented. The northern group has to rely on a few notes in Yuan (1989: 49) on the connotation of infixal (ABA) repetitive verbal forms in passive sentences in the Luoyang dialect and the perhaps more interesting phenomenon of predicates consisting of *-er*-suffixed duplicates of verbs functioning as a modifier, with an intensifying effect, for the non-duplicated form of the same verb, as for example in:

²³⁰ Marked as dialectal in Wei et al. (1995: 861). The translation is worded according to Wei et al. 1995.

²³¹ Gan (1993: 68) has not provided meanings for these duplicates.

他坐坐兒坐著，連一點兒也不幫。
 he sit -er even a little also not help
 'He just sat there and did not help at all.'

In the north-western dialects spoken in northern Shaanxi it is common that verbal repetition is restricted to the language used when talking to children, and to the formation of nouns (Liu 1988: 265), but not all dialects of that areal group share this feature, as for example the dialect of Pingyao (Shanxi) seems to realize the delimitative aspect by duplicating a monosyllabic verb:

ts'ɔ	'to stir-fry'	→	ts'ɔ ⁵¹³ ts'ɔ ³¹	'to stir-fry a little' ²³²
uŋ	'to ask'	→	uŋ ⁵³ uŋ ³¹	'to ask a little'
ɕiʌʔ	'to learn'	→	ɕiʌ ⁷⁵¹³ ɕiʌ ⁷⁵³	'to learn a little'

(Hou 1980: 13)

Zhu (1987: 23) claims that in the Wuhan (Hubei) dialect of the south-western Mandarin dialect group, the repetitive verbal form often has the suffix 神 [sən] ²³³ attached to it. The basic purpose of verbal repetition in the dialect of Wuhan extractable from Zhu's notes is to express the continuous aspect of a verb. E.g.:

眨	'to blink'	→	眨眨(神)	'to keep on blinking'
擺	'to sway'	→	擺擺燻(神)	'to keep on swaying'
sai ²¹³	'to shiver'	→	sai ²¹³ sai	'to keep on shivering' ²³⁴

(Zhu 1987: 24)

According to Wang (1987: 25), the verb cannot be duplicated in most Mandarin dialects spoken in Hubei province, but when repetition occurs, the suffixation of an element after a repeated verb comparable to that in the Wuhan dialect is typical of south-western Mandarin variants in Hubei. In some localities (e.g. Jingshan, Qianjiang and Hefeng), in addition to a suffix, the duplication of a verb is accompanied by a prefix. In some places (Laohekou and Zaoyang, for example), the suffix is also repeated (Wang 1987: 26).

232 As the tone of the base is not clear, it is left unmarked. The tones marked on the duplicate are presumably tone sandhi tones.

233 Zhu (1987: 23) says that this suffix has the meaning '連接不斷的樣子', i.e. it refers to the continuity of the action expressed by the duplicated verb.

234 The output of this derivation is the only instance of Wuhan verbal duplicates transcribed in a phonetic notation in the source used. If the tone on the first syllable of the repetitive form is a sandhi tone, then the tone of the base, concluded from the derived form, is naturally incorrect. Note how the dialect of Wuhan is similar to Standard Chinese in neutralising the second syllable of the repetitive form derived from a monosyllabic base.

In the dialect of Kunming (Yunnan), all monosyllabic verbs can be duplicated (A → AA) with a tentative/delimitative meaning, which can further be emphasized by suffixing the particle 譙 after the repetitive verbal form. E.g.:

- | | | | | |
|---|------------|----|-------|-------------------|
| 猜 | 'to guess' | —> | 猜猜(譙) | 'to have a guess' |
| 騎 | 'to ride' | —> | 騎騎(譙) | 'to have a ride' |
- (Zhang Ning 1987: 27)

If the verb which is to follow the infixal ABA (B = 勒 [lei]) pattern of the Kunming dialect refers to (i) mental or physiological states, its repetition according to this pattern carries with it an intensifying semantic effect, but if the input verb implies (ii) an action instead, the repetitive mechanism imbues it with a continuous meaning. E.g.:

- | | | | | | |
|------|----|--------------|----|-------|------------------------|
| (i) | 喜歡 | 'to like' | —> | 喜歡勒喜歡 | 'to like a great deal' |
| | 信 | 'to believe' | —> | 信勒信 | 'to really believe' |
| (ii) | 下 | 'to rain' | —> | 下勒下 | 'to keep on raining' |
| | 淌 | 'to drip' | —> | 淌勒淌 | 'to keep on dripping' |
- (Zhang Ning 1987: 27)

Verbs capable of following the infixal ABA pattern, cannot usually be duplicated according to the AA pattern in Kunming (Zhang Ning 1987: 27).

There is a quadrisyllabic Kunming pattern (ABAB) which, if the character filling the B slot in the formula refers to an aspect marker, is identical in form to a four syllable pattern in Standard Chinese, namely A 著 A 著. The meanings of the pattern in question in the two speech forms coincide in providing a durative background for the action expressed by another verb, but the difference between them stems from the fact that in Kunming the repetitive item immediately precedes the principal verb in the same clause, thus directly modifying the action expressed by it (Zhang Ning 1987: 27). E.g.:

- 你就是追著追著呢(= 的)問, 他也不會講呢。
 'You keep pestering him with questions, though he does not know.'
 (Zhang Ning 1987: 28)

Another disjunctive quadrisyllabic pattern (ABAB) in Kunming is restricted to momentaneous verbs and represents a repetitive aspect of such a verb. The slot marked by A is always filled by '—' (ABAB = —B—B). E.g.:

小船一晃一晃呢,我不敢坐.

'As the small boat sways back and forth, I do not dare to sit.'

(Zhang Ning 1987: 28)

Zhang Ning (1987: 28) points out that with disyllabic verbs, two patterns are possible: AB → ABAB and AB → AABB. Unfortunately, Zhang does not specify in any way the semantic effect carried by the former process, but of the latter he says that it expresses habitual, only just initiated states, being adjectival in this respect. The following example embodies the latter alternative with the verb 收拾 'to put in order, tidy, clear away' in the repeated form:

你家 (= 您) 收收拾拾呢 (= 的), 要去哪點兒做客?

'You look so tidy, who are you going to visit?'

The fact that the consecutive pattern (AABB) in the Kunming dialect is adjectival is reminiscent of the situation in Standard Chinese where some lexemes acquire a meaning typical of either repetitive adjectives or verbs, depending on the pattern according to which they are duplicated. As in Kunming, the consecutive pattern in Standard Chinese is an indicator of a semantic effect characteristic of adjectives (see Gan 1993: 99-100).

Though not noted explicitly at all by Zhang, it seems that repetition of the verb in a verb-object compound in a context where it is followed by another verb or a VP in the same sentence, induces a perfective interpretation of the action referred to by the repeated verb. Co-referentiality of the subjects of the repeated verb and the verb group appears to characterize this construction, too. The verb-object compounds in the following examples are (i) 吃飯 'to eat, have a meal', and (ii) 上街 'to go shopping, go to the street':

(i) 你先去著, 我吃吃飯就來.

'You go first, I'll come after I've eaten.'

(ii) 我上上街還要回來做飯.

'I'll be back to do the meal after I've finished shopping.'

(Zhang Ning 1987: 28)

The Guiyang dialect (Guizhou) has quite a few disjunctive repetitive verbal patterns. One of them is A—A勒, which represents the continuous aspect of a verb. E.g.:

那個架架搖一搖勒, 要垮下來嘔.

'That shelf is swaying, it will collapse!'

(Zhang Huiquan 1987: 115)

The other pattern with ‘一’ in the Guiyang dialect, dialect-specifically 一A一A 勒, is not defined by Zhang Huiquan (1987: 115) as to its meaning. It is used as a modifier to another verb in the following example:

他一搖一搖勒走嘍。
‘He walked and swayed.’

Very close in form to the pattern cited is a pattern of the form A啊 A勒, which stresses the continuity of an action (Zhang Huiquan 1987: 115).

There are even more complex patterns in Guiyang, represented by the formula ABABC. Forms in accordance with the A倒A倒勒²³⁵ pattern are used, just as in Standard Chinese, in the first of two clauses of a complex sentence to refer to an event that serves as a background for another oncoming event. It could be regarded as representing the durative-inducive aspect or merely the continuous aspect in general, in the dialect of Guiyang. E.g.:

想倒想倒勒,他就把來嘍。
‘I was just thinking when he arrived.’
(Zhang Huiquan 1987: 115)

The pattern A放A放勒, indicating a repetitive aspect of the verb in Guiyang, is interesting in that it is capable of application only to actions having to do with three parts of the body, namely the mouth, hand and foot. E.g.:

熱得他趕緊拿起扇子搧放搧放勒。
‘It was so hot that he hastily took a fan and started fanning.’
(Zhang Huiquan 1987: 115)

A variant of the disjunctive formula ABABC, rewritten as BABAC where A = verb, B = 要 and C = 勒 (要A要A勒) in the present context, defines, on account of the 要 constituent, the action expressed by the base as taking place in the near future, while otherwise similar patterns but with 鬼 or 干 instead of 要, have a derogatory meaning (Zhang Huiquan 1987: 115).

Though according to Zhang Huiquan (1987: 115), the non-repetitive pattern A下 is used with monosyllabic verbs in Guiyang to express the delimitative aspect, disyllabic verbs, however, resort to repetition for the purpose of implementing delimitative meaning (AB → ABAB下).

There are two other patterns which disyllabic verbs can follow in Guiyang. They both have 勒 as the final element. One of these patterns is consecutive (AB

²³⁵ The character 倒 in a ‘progressive’ context reminds one of Yuan’s observation (1989: 52-53) on its use to refer to a durative marker in Sichuan speech (四川話), corresponding to *-zhe* (著) in Standard Chinese.

—> AABB勒) and the other disjunctive (AB —> ABAB勒). Unfortunately, Zhang Huiquan (1987: 115) is rather taciturn about them, especially concerning the former, which he only describes in terms of the possible syntactic functions it may fulfil, and of the latter he only notes that it is infrequent and that it combines the characteristics of both verbs and adjectives. It would be interesting to know whether this combined nature refers to a similar situation in Guiyang as prevails in Standard Chinese, i.e. the incongruence of word class between the unrepetitive base and the repetitive output in a specific pattern (see Gan 1993: 99-100).

The Dafang dialect (Guizhou) is similar to that of Guiyang as regards the expression of the delimitative aspect of monosyllabic verbs (i.e. A下) (Li 1987: 202), but this does not exclude repetition as a morphological means in Dafang, as proved by the quadrisyllabic repetitive patterns introduced below.

The progressive aspect is realized through an exponent of the ABAB pattern, namely A倒A倒 in the dialect of Dafang. Just like the A zhe A zhe pattern in Standard Chinese, this pattern can be used to provide a durative background for another action. E.g.:

電影放倒放倒 le⁵⁵ 他的瞌睡又來了。²³⁶

'As the film was running, he fell asleep.'

(Li 1987: 202)

In Dafang, the repetitive or frequentative aspect of a disyllabic verb is implemented by the consecutive AABB pattern. E.g.:

他一天妮和一些人拉拉扯扯 le⁵⁵.

'One day he chatted with a number of people.'

(Li 1987: 202)

There is yet another quadrisyllabic pattern which on a more general level of notation is also marked as AABB, but which in the context of the dialect of Dafang can be rewritten as AA舞舞. This is a compositional pattern, as the 舞舞 part is a suffix attached only to a duplicated monosyllabic verb, an unrepeated verb will not do (Li 1987: 202). It is imbued with a derogatory connotation, implying discontent and depreciation. E.g.:

他一天寫寫舞舞 le⁵⁵, 也不知是些哪樣東西.

'One day he wrote something that he did not even know what it was.'

(Li 1987: 202)

²³⁶ According to Li (1987: 202), le⁵⁵ must follow a repetitive form in the context of a sentence.

In the traditional dialect of Nanjing²³⁷, repetition of (i) monosyllabic verbs – (ii) infixed with ‘一’ or not – to achieve a delimitative meaning is possible, but not as frequent as the process whereby ‘一下子’ is suffixed to a verb (Liu 1994: 99). E.g.:

- (i) 你去瞧瞧
'(You) go and have a look.'
- (ii) 你大聲喊一喊
'(You) go ahead and shout.'

Just as in Standard Chinese, the tentativeness expressed by repetition can be made more explicit in the dialect of Nanjing by suffixing (i) 看 to the duplicated verb, or (ii) 瞧 if the repeated verb is 看 (A → AA + 看/瞧). E.g.:

- (i) 你吃吃看, 味道好不好.
'(You) eat some to see if it tastes OK.'
- (ii) 你看看瞧, 高頭寫的甚麼?
'(You) have a look at what is written up there.'
(Liu 1994: 99)

In a verb-complement construction, the verb can freely be duplicated (A + B → AAB, A + BC → AABC), but deplorably Liu (1994: 99-100) does not specify the meaning of the repetitive output. E.g.:

煮爛	'to boil till soft/tender'	→	煮煮爛
切碎	'to cut into pieces'	→	切切碎
掃干淨	'to sweep clean'	→	掃掃干淨

A unique feature in the whole corpus is the capability of a monosyllabic Nanjing verb to undergo quadruplication bringing with it an emphasis on the continuous aspect of an action. Quite predictably, the quadruple form is used in contexts where a continuous background is needed for a new situation to emerge. E.g.:

他喫喫喫喫睡著了。
'He fell asleep while eating.'

我走走走走不認得路了。
'I got lost while walking.'

(Liu 1994: 100)

²³⁷ This layer in the modern Nanjing speech form, designated as ‘最老派’ (‘the most conservative’) by Liu (1994: 82), represents the eastern Mandarin dialect group.

The suffixation of ‘的’ after a duplicated verb has the explicit function of changing the reference of the relevant verb from action to state with a connotation in the Nanjing dialect of casuality and relaxedness. The patient of the repeated verb cannot be placed after it in the position of an object. (Liu 1994: 100). E.g.:

她在柜台里头生意不做, 毛衣打打的, 瓜子磕磕的。
 ‘She is not at all engaged in business at the counter,
 but is busy knitting a sweater and cracking melon seeds.’

In the dialect of Huoqiu, another eastern Mandarin speech form, both monosyllabic and disyllabic verbs can be repeated. Zhao (1995: 211-213) describes verbal repetition in Huoqiu further by noting that monosyllabic verbs are much more frequent in this respect and are often verbs associated with movements of parts of the body and verbs referring to daily life in general. The resulting repetitive forms represent the continuous aspect of a verb and are often used in a context already familiar from previous examples. E.g.:

(他)站站, 腿酸了。
 ‘While he was standing, his feet started to tingle.’

村里群众正議論議論, 村干部插話了。
 ‘The masses were just discussing things in the village,
 when the village cadre chipped in.’

(Zhao 1995: 211)

Note how in the second example the progressive aspect is explicitly emphasized by the use of 正 before the repeated verb²³⁸.

5.1.3. Other Sinitic dialects

The corpus on verbal repetition in other Sinitic dialects consists almost exclusively of listed repetitive items, which makes the treatment of Sinitic non-standard and non-Mandarin dialectal repetition resemble the analysis of nominal repetition with its emphasis on representation of repetitive structural types rather than on repeated forms as outputs of productive repetitive processes.

The data on Wu dialects contain disyllabic repetitive lexemes (AA), as represented by the following Chongming items:

²³⁸ Naturally this interpretation depends on the condition that the character used refers to an element with this function in the Huoqiu dialect.

- (i) ʔlu⁵⁵ ʔlu⁵⁵ 'to stroke gently, caress'
 tɕ'ia²⁵ tɕ'ia²⁵ 'to bully, take advantage of'
 zo³¹³ zo^{313/33} '(of children) to make a slight bow with hands
 folded in front'
 tsã⁵⁵ tsã⁵⁵ 'to call on, visit, see'
 fi³¹³ piã³¹³ jiã^{313/33} 'to ask to give way'
 (ChoFYCD 1993: 21, 202, 115, 146, 153)

The last item reminds one of the sense of politeness sometimes associated with repetitive verbal forms in requests and commands in Standard Chinese (see Gan 1993: 41-43).

Just as in Standard Chinese and some Mandarin dialects, the dialect of Chongming allows suffixation of an element after a duplicated verb (A → AA + k'ø³³) in order to stress the notion of delimitativeness/tentativeness²³⁹. E.g.:

- fi²⁴² 'to ladle' → fi²⁴² fi^{242/33} k'ø^{33/55} 'to ladle a little'
 tã⁴²⁴ 'to hit' → tã^{424/42} tã^{424/33} k'ø^{33/55} 'to hit a little'
 (Zhang Huiying 1980: 32)

There are two infixal repetitive verbal lexemes (ABA) in the Chongming sub-corpus which both have a reciprocal meaning presumably due to the infix, provided that the character (相) used to write it is meant to be interpreted in its etymological meaning, not phonetically:

- fi³¹³ mo³¹³ ciã⁵⁵ mo⁽³¹³⁾ 'to wrangle'
 tã⁴²⁴ ciã⁵⁵ tã⁽⁴²⁴⁾ 'to fight'
 (ChoFYCD 1993: 114, 145)

It would be interesting to know whether deriving a trisyllabic infixal repetitive form by this pattern is commonly applicable to verbs in Chongming or whether the two cases cited are random examples, resulting from lexicalisation.

In the dialect of Yongkang (Wu, Zhejiang), the perfective aspect of an action expressed by a verb in the first clause of a complex sentence in respect to a verb in the second clause of the same sentence, is achieved through repetition. E.g.:

- va²⁴¹ zəi^{13/11} zəi^{13/24} tsəi⁵² k'w⁵² təi³³ ka³²⁴
 rice eat then go part.²⁴⁰
 'Let's go after we've eaten!'

(Yuan et al. 1989: 96)

²³⁹ The Suzhou and Shanghai dialects also partake of this process and with etymologically the same morpheme (Yuan et al. 1989: 96).

²⁴⁰ Treating the final two syllables of this Yongkang string as forming a disyllabic sentence-final particle is due to its Standard Chinese equivalent (罢) in Yuan (1989: 96).

The Yongkang dialect is similar to Chongming and a few other Sinitic speech forms treated here in making more explicit through suffixation (*ma*³³) the delimitative/tentative aspect presumably also carried by an unsuffixed repeated verb. E.g.:

maŋ²⁴¹ 'to look' → maŋ^{241/24} maŋ^{241/33} ma³³ 'to have a look'
 du¹³ 'to read' → du^{13/11} du^{13/24} ma³³ 'to read a little'
 (Yuan et al. 1989: 96)

Repetitive verbal lexemes of the AAB type are a feature in the Suzhou dialect, for instance. E.g.:

tɕia⁷⁵ tɕia⁷⁵ tsii¹³ 'to seek undue advantage'
 hua⁵⁵ hua⁵⁵ tsɿ³¹ 'to pout (one's lips as a signal)'
 (SFYCD 1993: 263, 42)

It seems that within the Wu group, at least the dialect of Chongming possesses a productive repetitive process whereby a disyllabic verbal base is expanded into a trisyllabic form (AB → AAB). E.g.:

ts'ɔ⁵⁵ hfu³¹³ 'to combine different things together'
 → ts'ɔ⁵⁵ ts'ɔ⁵⁵ hfu³¹³ 'to mix two kinds of things together evenly'
 (ChoFYCD 1993: 98)

The Changsha dialect of the Xiang group (New Xiang) has trisyllabic repetitive verbs with an ABB constituent structure in its lexicon. The meaning of the three Changsha items below seems to stem primarily from the semantics of the repetitive part. It is of interest to note that the element corresponding to A in the lexemes in question is not traceable to the verb 'to hit' in the dialect of Changsha, though written with the character 打 ('hit') (see ChaFYCD 1993: 36). E.g.:

tā⁴¹ tɕyē⁵⁵ tɕyē⁽⁵⁵⁾ 'to go round and round'
 tā⁴¹ iau¹³ iau 'to swing (a child on one's foot)'
 tā⁴¹ tən³³ tən 'to support (a child who is learning to walk)'
 (ChaFYCD 1993: 42, 41, 43)

The representative of Old Xiang dialects, the dialect of Loudi, features comparable trisyllabic repetitive verbal lexemes (ABB) in its vocabulary, with the first constituent written with 打. E.g.:

ta^{42/11} k'e¹¹ k'e 'to talk in whispers'
 ta^{42/11} iɔ⁴⁴ iɔ^(44/33) 'to go perfunctorily to a place and return'
 (LFYCD 1994: 46-47)

The BB part in the first Loudi lexeme results from repeating the verb *k'e11* 'to talk in private' while that in the second is presumably the noun *io44* *io* 'circle, ring' (LFYCD 1994: 72, 118).

The data on the Loudi dialect contain consecutively repetitive quadrisyllabic verbal lexemes (AABB). The first form is based on two consecutively repeated monosyllabic verbs and is presumably an instance of intensification. E.g.:

nvŋ35 'to push' + *ɬ'io42* 'to shove'
 —> *nvŋ35 nvŋ ɬ'io42/11 ɬ'io* 'to push and shove'
ŋa35 ŋa ioŋ11/22 ioŋ 'to squabble endlessly'
 (LFYCD 1994: 181, 59)

If the difference between the verbal lexicon of the two Gan dialects, Nanchang and Linchuan, were exclusively to be decided upon the evidence of the present data, one would have to conclude that the former, represented by lexemes conforming to the AABB pattern (i), seems to shun lexicalisation of repetitive forms whereas the latter is more receptive to them, with lexemes of both the AAB (ii) and the AABB type (iii). E.g.:

- (i) *tiet5 tiet tau213 tau* 'to stagger'
mi42 mi ma42 ma 'to do this and do that'
 (NFYCD 1994: 259, 9)
- (ii) *uɔŋ35 uɔŋ ɬ'i44* 'to get angry'
p'uŋ3 p'uŋ k'uən53 'to sleep on one's stomach'
ŋioŋ44 ŋioŋ k'uən53 'to sleep with one's face upward'
 (LiFYCD 1995: 176, 242, 180)
- (iii) *ŋi35 ŋi35 kuəi?3/5 kuəi?3/5* 'to hesitate'
ɬəiəu53 ɬəiəu53 ma13 ma13 'to intersperse one's talk with curses'
 (LiFYCD 1995: 46, 108)

The Sixian²⁴¹ dialect (Hakka) does not deviate from the common semantic norm, already established by the Sinitic data presented so far, according to which repetition of a verb regularly carries with it a delimitative/tentative implication. E.g.:

piak5 'to strike (with the palm of the hand)'
 —> *piak5 piak5 (ke31)* 'to strike a little'
so24 'to rub (with hands)'
 —> *so24/11 so24 (e31)* 'to rub a little'

²⁴¹ See fn. 163.

- k'ɑŋ⁵⁵ 'to clean (fingernails)'
 —> k'ɑŋ⁵⁵ k'ɑŋ⁵⁵ (ŋe³¹) 'to clean a little'
 (Luo 1990: 275)

Luo (1990: 280-281) distinguishes between two types of compositional repetitive verbs of the AAB pattern in Sixian Hakka: (i) those where the head (= B) is an adjective and (ii) those where it is a verb. In the former type, the repetitive constituent can be a noun expressing time or a noun which also functions as a classifier. When this kind of lexemes are repeated, they acquire a distributive meaning (see ch. 3). The English equivalents of the Hakka lexemes below are based on their Standard Chinese translations. E.g.:

- (i) jit² jit² t'a⁵⁵ 'to grow bigger (day by day)'
 niet² niet² ko²⁴ 'to grow taller (month by month)'
 liap² liap² fuŋ¹¹ 'to turn red (grain by grain)'
- (ii) k'uan^{24/11} k'uan²⁴ tson³¹ 'to toss and turn'
 lit² lit² tson³¹ 'to turn round and round'

Though not separately specified by Luo (1990: 281), but concluding from the Standard Chinese equivalents and the character used to represent B (看), the following trisyllabic repetitive lexemes presumably exemplify the additional explicitation by suffixal means of the delimitative/tentative aspect brought about by repetition:

- tsok² tsok² k'on⁵⁵ '(of clothes) to try it on'
 ts'o¹¹ ts'o¹¹ k'on⁵⁵ 'to sit a little'

Like Standard Chinese, the Sixian Hakka speech form has quadrisyllabic repetitive verbal lexemes complying with the consecutive AABB duplicative pattern. E.g.:

- pu³¹ pu³¹ taŋ^{24/11} taŋ²⁴ 'to patch up'
 loi¹¹ loi¹¹ hi⁵⁵ hi⁵⁵ 'to come and go'
 (Luo 1990: 281)

Gan (1993: 67-69) distinguishes between two different types of consecutive four syllable repetitive forms: one based on juxtaposed monosyllabic verbs, the other derived from a disyllabic verb. On the condition that Sixian Hakka and Standard Chinese coincide lexically to a sufficient extent from a historical perspective, the first of the two items above would then represent the derivational type (*pu³¹ taŋ²⁴ —> pu³¹ pu³¹ taŋ^{24/11} taŋ²⁴*) (see Wei et al. 1995: 72), and, in absence of information to the contrary, the second item is tentatively proposed as embodying the juxtapositional type (*loi¹¹ 'come' + hi⁵⁵ 'go'*).

Like Standard Chinese and south-western Mandarin, Sixian Hakka has disjunctive four syllable repetitive lexemes of the ABAB type where (i) the durative marker *-ten³¹* fills the B slot (ABAB = A *ten³¹* A *ten³¹*), obviously implying continuity of action. The disjunctive quadrisyllabic form is likewise used to express (ii) the delimitative aspect in Sixian Hakka with a pattern where B = 停 [*t'in¹¹*] in BABA (ABAB = BABA = *t'in¹¹* A *t'in¹¹* A). A third disjunctive subcategory mentioned in passing by Luo is similar to a pattern in the Kunming dialect (south-western Mandarin group), in which the B slot in BABA is constantly filled by the numeral 'one', *it¹* in (Sixian) Hakka (ABAB = BABA = *it¹* A *it¹* A), and in analogy to this south-western Mandarin dialect, it is proposed that the semantic function of the (iii) *it¹* A *it¹* A pattern is to represent the repetitive aspect of a verb. E.g.:

- (i) kəŋ³¹ 'to speak' → kəŋ³¹ *ten³¹* kəŋ³¹ *ten³¹* 'to speak on'
 (ii) t'uj¹¹ 'to move' → *t'in¹¹* t'uj¹¹ *t'in¹¹* t'uj¹¹ 'to move a little'
 (iii) niap¹ 'to blink' → *it¹* niap¹ *it¹* niap¹ 'to keep on blinking'
 (Luo 1990: 282)

According to Matthews & Yip (1994: 44-45), stative verbs²⁴² are among the kinds of verb that can undergo repetition in (Hong Kong) Cantonese, a representative of the Yue dialect group. To express the delimitative aspect, a stative verb is duplicated like an adjective with *-déi* at the rear (A → AAB). E.g.:

- sīk 'to know' → sīk sīk déi 'to know a little'
 mihng 'to understand' → mihng míng déi 'to understand roughly'²⁴³
 (Matthews & Yip 1994: 44, 23)

With action verbs, the delimitative aspect can be repetitively conveyed by an infixal pattern (ABA) where the infix is always *yat* (ABA = A *yat* A), associated with the numeral 'one', and thus a replica of the Standard Chinese structure. E.g.:

- tàih 'to mention' → tàih yāt tàih 'to mention a little'
 kīng 'to chat' → kīng yāt kīng 'to have a chat'
 (Matthews & Yip 1994: 24, 208)

²⁴² The overlapping of verbs and adjectives has already been touched upon in connection with Standard Chinese, but it concerns Cantonese as well. One way of solving the problem is to set up an intermediate category between verbs and adjectives, that of stative verbs, which share properties with both other categories. This is the solution favoured by Matthews & Yip (1994: 57-59, 131-132).

²⁴³ A low-register tone in the second syllable of a repetitive verb with the suffix *-déi* changes regularly to a high rising tone (Matthews & Yip 1994: 23-27).

This infixal construction can be contracted, resulting in the loss of *yāt* and a tone change (ABA → A- A: *siu yāt siu* 'to have a smile' → *síu siu*) (Matthews & Yip 1994: 208, 23-27).

A trisyllabic repetitive form can be formed in Cantonese by suffixing *-háh* to a repeated verb (A → AAB = AA *háh*). Semantically, this process is comparable to the one with infixal outputs of the A *a/ya* A pattern in Standard Chinese with its implication of prolonged activity (Gan 1993: 63-65)²⁴⁴. E.g.:

sihk 'to eat' → *sihk sihk háh* 'to keep on eating'
lám 'to think' → *lám lám háh* 'to keep on thinking'
 (Matthews & Yip 1994: 208)

The Standard Chinese pattern expressing, according to Gan (1993: 65-66), the repetitive aspect (ABAC = A *lái* A *qù*) has a Cantonese quadrisyllabic counterpart with the etymological equivalents of *lái* and *qù* in the corresponding slots (ABAC = A *laih* A *heui*). E.g.:

tiu 'to jump' → *tiu laih tiu heui* 'to leap about'
góng 'to talk' → *góng laih góng heui* 'to talk and talk'
 (Matthews & Yip 1994: 148)

A quadrisyllabic pattern of the disjunctive ABAC type with *gwái* and *máh*, homophonous with morphemes meaning 'devil' and 'horse', respectively, as the second and fourth syllables (ABAC = A *gwái* A *máh*), is productive in colloquial (Hong Kong) Cantonese for rhetorical purposes (Matthews & Yip 1994: 47-48). E.g.:

Heui gwái heui máh mē? Bīndouh dōu msái heui la.
 go part. where also no-need go part.
 'What's the point of going? There's no need to go anywhere'

Sihk gwái sihk máh mē? Lihn yāt mán dōu móuh.
 eat part. even one dollar also not-have
 'No way to eat. Haven't got a dime.'

A specific characteristic of the Yue dialects²⁴⁵, met with only in the dialect of Putian (Min) besides the Yue group in the Sinitic corpus of repetitive verbs, is the possibility of repeating auxiliary verbs, with a delimitative effect. The auxiliary

²⁴⁴ This construction is used to provide a background for another activity within the framework of a complex sentence (see Matthews & Yip 1994: 208-209).

²⁴⁵ This is the term consistently used by Yuan (1989: 177-231), usually without any further specifications in terms of individual dialects, and since there is no mention of the duplication of auxiliary verbs in Matthews & Yip (1994), Yuan's term is to be preferred.

verbs are duplicated with the *-dēi* (= *tei³⁵*) suffix, like adjectives (A → AAB).
E.g.:

k'œy¹³ wui²² wui^{22/35} tei³⁵ ta³⁵ pɔ⁵⁵

he can suff. hit ball

'He knows a little how to play ball.'

ŋɔ¹³ ka:m³⁵ ka:m³⁵ tei³⁵ sɪk² la:k²² tsiu⁵⁵

I dare suff. eat hot pepper

'I dare a little to eat hot pepper.'

(Yuan et al. 1989: 218)

The trisyllabic repetitive verbal patterns of the Dongguan dialect (Yue) in the corpus can be subsumed under two types, (i) ABB and (ii) AAB. In the former, the BB part stands for a disyllabic suffix (*tɛi^{32/35} tɛi^{32/35}*) attached to a monosyllabic verb to yield a verbal form with a continuous meaning, whereas the latter represents lexicalised forms. E.g.:

- (i) kɔŋ³⁵ 'to talk' → kɔŋ³⁵ tɛi^{32/35} tɛi^{32/35} 'to keep on talking'
t'øŋ³⁵ 'to listen' → t'øŋ³⁵ tɛi^{32/35} tɛi^{32/35} 'to keep on listening'
(DFYCD 1997: 61-62)

- (ii) zok⁴⁴ zok⁴⁴ koŋ³² 'to move back and forth, without stopping'
zəŋ³⁵ zəŋ³⁵ ha¹³ 'to keep on doing; go back and forth'
tsa^{ʔ22} tsa^{ʔ22} t'iu³² 'to skip and jump about'
(DFYCD 1997: 271, 230, 236)

Note how the second item in (ii) resembles both in form and in meaning Cantonese trisyllabic AAB (= AA *háh*) lexemes expressing prolonged activity.

According to Xu's analysis (Xu Jidun 1990: 294), Taiwanese repetitive verb forms, derived both from monosyllabic and disyllabic verbs (A → AA; AB → ABAB, little used), regularly denote the delimitative aspect, which seems to constitute a general rule in the Sinitic corpus as a whole. Yuan (1989: 271), on the other hand, while noting the delimitativeness/tentativeness in meaning of such trisyllabic, suffixal repetitive verbal lexemes in Xiamen as *sue^{51/55} sue⁵¹ k'uā¹¹* 'to wash a little, have a wash' (<— *sue⁵¹* 'to wash') and *ts'i^{11/51} ts'i^{11/51} k'uā¹¹* 'to try a little, have a try' (<— *ts'i¹¹* 'to try'), argues that repeated action verbs are also accompanied by a sense of completeness, as Yuan puts it. E.g.:

tsɔŋ⁵⁵ tsia⁵¹ e^{24/33} uā⁵¹ siu^{55/33} siu⁵⁵ k'i lai
prep. these part. bowl receive dir. compl.
'To (have) receive(d) all these bowls.'

puŋ³³ ka^{ʔ11/55} i⁵⁵ tsia^{ʔ55/11} tsia^{ʔ55/11} lo^ʔ k'i
 rice eat dir. compl.
 'To (have) eat(en) all rice.'
 (Yuan et al. 1989: 271)

If one examines more closely the context in which Yuan's 'complete' repetitive forms appear, one begins to suspect that the said unique semantic feature is a consequence of the inclusion of meaning elements implied by the type of sentence in which the verbs are used rather than the semantics consistently arising from the duplicative process itself. Structurally, the above Xiamen sentences ominously resemble sentences containing the so-called 把 construction in Standard Chinese. The 把 construction can be regarded as a kind of topicalization process whereby a referentially definite object is placed directly before the VP of the predicate. Another major condition in addition to referential definiteness of the object is that the action denoted by the verb must be indicated as being specific about what has happened to the object. Since repetition is one of the means to define the activity expressed by the verb, the VP of a 把 construction may simply consist of a repeated verb. Besides a repetitive verb, which at least in Standard Chinese would alone meet the requirement of specified action in a 把 topicalized sentence, both Xiamen strings also contain complex directional complements as constituents (see XFYCD 1993: 9-10, 363), which according to the rules of Standard Chinese syntax would again, as an exclusive complement to the verb, make possible the use of the 把 construction.

The Minnan equivalent of the 把 construction is, according to Yuan (1989: 278-279), of two types, both represented above. One type uses a preposed element (= tsioŋ⁵⁵ [將]) corresponding to 把 before the topicalized object, while the other favours the postposition of a disyllabic marker (ka^{ʔ11/55} i⁵⁵ [甲伊]) after the object transferred to the foremost position in a sentence. Unfortunately, no explicit explanation of either the function of repetition or the relationship between repetition and the directional complements in a 將/甲伊 construction is available in Yuan.

Triplication of verbs, just like that of adjectives, with the implication of thoroughness of the action expressed by the verb, is possible in Taiwanese, but not common; it is rarer than triplication of adjectives (Xu Jidun 1990: 373, 295). E.g.:

khui 'to open' → khui khui khui 'to open completely'
 sio 'to burn' → sio sio sio 'to burn thoroughly'
 (Xu Jidun 1990: 295; Embree 1973: 161, 233)

Like disyllabic verbs in Standard Chinese, the corresponding Taiwanese forms can undergo consecutive repetition (AB → AABB). Though Xu Jidun (1990: 295, 373) says nothing of the semantic function, it is proposed that analogously with Standard Chinese, repetition creates an intensifying or vivifying effect on the verbs affected (see Gan 1993: 69). E.g.:

chhá nau 'to make a disturbance' → chhá chhá nau nau
 môa phiàn 'to deceive, cheat' → môa môa phiàn phiàn
 (Xu Jidun 1990: 373; Embree 1973: 46, 180)

Some AABB forms exist only in repetitive form in Taiwanese, and verbal lexemes with consecutively repeated synonymous or antonymous verbs as constituents are also a feature of the Taiwanese lexicon (e.g. *chhut* 'to go out' + *lip* 'to enter' → *chhut chhut lip lip*; *k'i* 'to rise' + *lak* 'to fall' → *k'i'k'i lak lak*) (see Xu Jidun 1990: 295, 373; Embree 1973: 63, 163; XFYCD 1993: 305, 9).

A Taiwanese (i), as well as a Haikou (Min) (ii) disyllabic verb can be repeated according to the ABB (AB → ABB) pattern whereby only the second syllable is duplicated. Whether this pattern in Taiwanese deviates from the general delimitative meaning so typical of Sinitic verbal repetition, is not made explicit by Xu Jidun (1990: 373). The Haikou process (ii) is accompanied by intensification. Emphasis is the attribute utilized by HFYCD to characterize the effect of repetition on a Haikou trisyllabic verbal lexeme (ABC → ABCC) (iii), though labelling it as an instance of intensification can hardly be objected to. E.g.:

- (i) khui kóng 'to chat' → khui kóng kóng
 chhit thô 'to play, have fun' → chhit thô thô
 (Embree 1973: 161, 148, 58)
- (ii) kɔj²¹³ he⁵⁵ '(of clothes) to take off'
 → kɔj²¹³ he⁵⁵ he⁵⁵ 'to take off till nude'
 (HFYCD 1996: 141)
- (iii) hin²⁴ mak³ ki³⁵ 'to see very clearly'
 → hin²⁴ mak³ ki³⁵ ki³⁵ 'to see extremely clearly'
 (HFYCD 1996: 207)

Some Taiwanese verbs, like *chhit thô* for example, can be duplicated according to both the ABAB and the ABB pattern (Xu Jidun 1990: 373).

There is also a compositional ABB pattern in which the head can sometimes be modified by a plethora of disyllabic duplicates, mostly classifiable as onomatopoeic. E.g.:

chhìo 'to laugh, smile' → chhìo ba ba
 chhìo bi bi
 chhìo bún bún
 chhìo gi gi
 chhìo hah hah
 chhìo hi hi

(Embree 1973: 56)

In some instances, the BB part can be seen as contributing a suggestive meaning, as in *k'uā^{21/53} ts'ut^{11/55} ts'ut¹¹* 'to see through, see clearly' (<— *k'uā²¹* 'to see' + *ts'ut¹¹* 'to go out') from Xiamen (XFYCD 1993: 296).

Another trisyllabic compositional pattern reverses the order of the repetitive constituent and the head in Xiamen, i.e. the two syllable constituent precedes the head (AAB). E.g.:

<i>iā^{11/21} iā^{11/21} pe⁵⁵</i>	'to fly upward, rise'
<i>kim kim k'uā¹¹</i>	'to look attentively'
<i>tu? tu? siu⁵¹</i>	'to plan deliberately, scheme incessantly'

(XFYCD 1993: 289; Yuan et al. 1989: 265)

In the Putian dialect of the Puxian Min sub-group (Yuan et al. 1989: 234) (i), as well as the dialect of Haikou (ii), the repetition of a monosyllabic verb represents, rather unsurprisingly, the delimitative/ tentative aspect of a verb, with or without a suffixal element: E.g.:

- (i) 我輩去行行。 'We are going for a little walk.'
 汝頌頌看。 'Try it/them on.' (said of clothes)
 (Yuan et al. 1989: 300)
- (ii) *tio³³* 'to think' → *tio³³ tio³³* 'to think a little'
o³⁵ 'to look' → *o³⁵ o³⁵* 'to have a look'
 (HFYCD 1996: 119, 114-115)

The repetitive pattern for disyllabic verbs seems to be AAB in the dialect of Putian. Some of the repeated forms retain their verbal character whence they are interpreted as being repeated for the delimitative aspect, while others seem to turn into adjectives with intensification of the meaning of the base (Yuan et al. 1989: 301). The following are examples of repetitive verbal forms:

交涉 'to negotiate'	→	交交涉	'to negotiate a little'
討論 'to discuss'	→	討討論	'to discuss a little'

(Yuan et al. 1989: 301)

The Putian dialect is similar to the Yue dialects in allowing auxiliary verbs to undergo repetition. The semantic impact of repetition on these verbs is described in terms usually associated with repeated adjectives, i.e. repetitive auxiliaries are claimed to be more intense in meaning than the unrepeated base (Yuan et al. 1989: 301). E.g.:

能能(做事際)	'really to be able (to do things)'
敢敢(講話)	'really to dare (to speak)'

5.2. THE TIBETO-BURMAN GROUP

Repetition is the means by which the continuous aspect of the verb is expressed in Burmese. The following restricted set of examples consists of what O’Kell calls compound verbs where the first syllable is repeated (AB → AAB) to express frequency or continuousness of occurrence²⁴⁶:

la meì ‘to come and ask’ → la la meì ‘to keep coming and asking’
 thwà hníñ ‘to go ahead’ → thwà thwà hníñ ‘to keep going ahead’
 cou pouú ‘to send in advance’ → cou cou pouú ‘to keep sending in advance’
 (O’Kell 1969: 35)

A corroboration of the iconicity principle within a verbal context is provided by the fact that longer duration can be indicated through duplication of the repeated verb itself in Burmese (A → AA → AA AA): *thwà* ‘to go’ → *thwà thwà* ‘to keep going’ → *thwà thwà thwà thwà* ‘to keep on and on going’ (O’Kell 1969: 35).

A repeated verb can function as a marker of subordination in a syntactic context in Burmese expressing (i) alternativity. A Burmese repeated verb in a subordinate clause may also be interpreted as being an exponent of indefinite meaning (ii). E.g.:

(i) bāmamá yu-yu boumá yu-yu eĩñhtaũ cá-yiñ ceina?-pi-hpè
 Burmese girl take Western girl take household be in-if be satisfied-V.S.-indeed²⁴⁷
 ‘Whether (he) marries a Burmese girl or a Western girl, so long as (he) gets married (I’ll) be satisfied.’

(ii) be thwà-thwà hpǎyà-hcì-hpè myiñ-yá-te
 where go pagoda-only-emphatic see-can-V.S.
 ‘Wherever (you) go (you) can see nothing but pagodas.’
 (O’Kell 1969: 476, 478)

Xu Xijian (1990: 52-60) is fond of observing Jingpo repetition in a syntactic context (see 2.2, 4.2) and verbs are no exception. A semantic feature arguably common to verbal repetitive forms both in (i) subject and (ii) predicative position is that they can be interpreted as being ‘emphatic’ in respect to the non-repetitive form. In the former case, the emphaticness can perhaps be analysed as consisting of the combined effect of the transferring to subject position of an element which according to its inherent nature as a verb would usually be located after the object in a

²⁴⁶ For O’Kell’s analysis of Burmese compound verbs, see O’Kell (1969: 24-42).

²⁴⁷ V.S. = verb sentence marker (O’Kell 1969: xv).

sentence of a language with a basic SOV word order (Si et al. 1983: 956), and of the formal repetition itself. The latter case deals rather with the concept of realizing more thoroughly and intensively the action denoted by the verb. E.g.:

- (i) ʃa⁵⁵ ʃa⁵⁵ ko³¹ ʃi³³ lu³¹ ʃa⁵⁵ ai³³
 eat part. he can eat part.²⁴⁸
 'As far as eating goes, he sure can do that.'
- ka^{ʔ31} ka^{ʔ31} ai³³ ko³¹ khum³¹ la⁵⁵ u^{ʔ31}
 crack part. part. don't take part.²⁴⁹
 'Everything is cracked, don't take any of it!'
- (ii) num³³ n⁵⁵te^{ʔ55} a^{ʔ31} tʃe³³ tsun³³ tsun³³ ai³³ wa³³
 woman this part. can speak part. interj.²⁵⁰
 'This woman sure talks a lot!'
 (Xu Xijian 1990: 56)

Repetition of a verb can be accompanied by a frequentative implication, which is claimed by Xu Xijian (1990: 56) as being the case with repeated monosyllabic verbs (A → AA) serving as adverbials²⁵¹. E.g.:

- ʃă³¹na^{ʔ55}te^{ʔ31} ʒai⁵⁵ tʃaŋ³³, mə³¹ʒaŋ³³ thu^{ʔ31} thu^{ʔ31}ʒai³¹wa³¹ ai³³
 afternoon is word rain fall verb aux. part.²⁵²
 'It often rains in the afternoon.'

The possibility of a repeated verb functioning as an attribute in Jingpo is very restricted indeed, as it requires the noun *ni*³³ ('people') to serve as its head. An attributive repetitive verb is semantically similar to repetitive verbs in subject position with its implication of emphasis. Note how the disyllabic verb in (ii) only repeats the second syllable (AB → ABB). E.g.:

- (i) tai³¹ni⁵⁵ sa³³ sa³³ ai³³ ni³³ ko³¹ tʃoŋ³¹ma³¹ khʒai³³ ʒe⁵¹
 today go part. people part. student all be²⁵³
 'All the people who are going today are students.'

²⁴⁸ *ko*³¹ is a subject particle and *ai*³³ a sentence-final particle (Si et al. 1983: 196, 18).

²⁴⁹ The function of this *ai*³³ is that of a restrictive particle used after a verb or an adjective; *u*^{ʔ31} is a sentence-final particle with a second person sg. reference used at the end of an imperative sentence (Si et al. 1983: 18, 851).

²⁵⁰ *a*^{ʔ31} is a particle used after a noun or a pronoun (Si et al. 1983: 1).

²⁵¹ The 'adverbiality' of the repeated verb form is due to its position before a 'verb of general reference' (泛指動詞 in Chinese), namely *ʒai*³¹ (see fn. 188).

²⁵² For *ʒai*³¹, see fn. 188. *Wa*³¹ is an auxiliary verb denoting an incipient or developing action (Si et al. 1983: 858).

²⁵³ A verb used in emphatic affirmative statements (Si et al. 1983: 688).

- (ii) tai³¹na⁷⁵⁵ lai³¹ka³³ ǰǰ³¹zin⁵⁵zin⁵⁵ ai³³ ni³³ ko³¹ jon³¹ wa³¹ mat³¹ sai³³
 Tonight culture study part. people part. all return aux. part.²⁵⁴
 'All of the people who are going to study culture tonight, have returned.'
 (Xu Xijian 1990: 57)

Most auxiliary verbs in Jingpo can be repeated. *Khat*⁵⁵, for example, is an auxiliary which, when used after a verb, adds a reciprocal implication to the action expressed by it. E.g.:

- an⁵⁵the³³ ǰa³¹ta⁷³¹ kǎ³¹zum³³ khat⁵⁵ khat⁵⁵ ʒai³¹ ka⁷³¹
 we each other help aux. verb part.²⁵⁵
 'Let's help one another!'
 (Si et al. 1983: 947)

The data on Jinuo verbal repetition is rather meagre, as Gai (1981: 71) only notes that it exists, giving a few examples of monosyllabic verbs without any specification of the meaning. Jinuo, however, resembles quite a few other languages in the corpus in having quadrisyllabic repetitive lexemes consisting of consecutively repeated antonymous (or possibly also synonymous) monosyllabic verbs (A + B → AABB). E.g.:

- o³ 'to enter' + to⁴ 'to go out' → o³ o³ to⁴ to⁴
 le⁵ 'to go' + lo³ 'to come' → le⁵ le⁵ lo³ lo³
 (Gai 1981: 70)

Ma (1988: 36), in his analysis of the formation of complex words in Tangut, is more specific than Gai in respect to Jinuo, as he explicitly notes that repeated monosyllabics realize the frequentative aspect of the respective verb. E.g.:

- řǰǰ 'to get' → řǰǰ řǰǰ 'to get repeatedly'
 wǰǰ 'to do' → wǰǰ wǰǰ 'to do repeatedly'
 le 'to see' → le le 'to see repeatedly'

In Ma's view (1988: 36), it is difficult to know for certain whether repetition of disyllabic verbs was a part of productive morphology in Tangut, since he knows only of one single example of a two syllable verb being repeated according to a disjunctive ABAB pattern with an accompanying delimitative effect on the duration of the action denoted by the base. E.g.:

²⁵⁴ *Mat*³¹ is an auxiliary used after verbs to mark as perfective the action expressed by the preceding verb, while *sai*³³ is a sentence final particle attached to a statement (Si et al. 1983: 508, 706).

²⁵⁵ *Ka*⁷³¹ indicates a suggestion (Si et al. 1983: 138).

đ̣ɛi nie 'to listen attentively'

—> đ̣ɛi nie đ̣ɛi nie 'to listen attentively for a while'

Pumi is interesting in possessing a rhyming repetitive pattern for the purpose of denoting reciprocity. The rhyme in the anteposed repeated syllable is usually *-ɛ*. Both (i) monosyllabic and (ii) disyllabic verbs can undergo this partially repetitive pattern (A → A/x A; AB → A/x A B/x B). E.g.:

- (i) ḍzi¹³ 'to sing' → ḍzɛ¹³ ḍzi¹³ 'to sing to each other'
 sto⁵⁵ 'to look' → stɛ⁵⁵ sto⁵⁵ 'to look at each other'
- (ii) sy¹³ sḍø¹³ 'to miss' → sɛ¹³ sy¹³ sḍɛ¹³ sḍø¹³ 'to miss each other'
 (Lu 1983: 47)

Pumi, like Jingpo, has fixed quadrisyllabic repetitive items in its lexicon. The verbal examples to be presented here embody (i) a partially repetitive pattern where the first and third syllables are meaningless and bound together by a rhyming relationship between them (A B x/A B), and (ii) a consecutive, totally repetitive pattern (AABB):

- (i) khə¹³ tʃə¹³ xə¹³ tʃə¹³ 'to speak everywhere'
 speak
- khə¹³ sto⁵⁵ xə¹³ sto⁵⁵ 'to look over and over'
 look
- (ii) sɛ⁵⁵ sɛ⁵⁵ ɲɛ⁵⁵ ɲɛ⁵⁵ 'to kick up a row, wrangle'
 kill noisy
 (Lu 1983: 26)

Tujia, as noted already in connection with adjectival repetition, has many four syllable patterns, also for verbs. One of them can be written as ABAC on the general notational level. Within this general pattern there are slight differences undergone by the initial consonant and rhyme of the fourth syllable while the other syllables remain formally constant, in which case a more context-sensitive variant of the general formula would be written, either as an alliterating A B A A/x for entities with an initial *l-* in the fourth syllable, or as a rhyming A B A x/B for the non-*l-* + *-a* and A B A x/A for the non-*l-* + non-*a* (or non-*l-* + *-i*) fourth syllable items in the following quadruplications based on the verb *li²¹* 'to speak, talk'. The repetitive forms add the connotation of speaking gently, in a refined and polite way, to the meaning of *li²¹* (Tian 1986: 31):²⁵⁶

²⁵⁶ Tujia verbs inflect for aspect. Aspectual suffixes are added to the base verb. In a quadrisyllabic repetitive lexeme of e.g. the ABAC type both occurrences of the base verb can be marked for aspect, or then only one of them is suffixed (Tian 1986: 31).

li²¹ 'to speak' → li²¹ ka³⁵ li²¹ la⁵⁵/lai⁵⁵/li⁵⁵/le⁵⁵
 li²¹ ka³⁵ li²¹ sa⁵⁵/sai⁵⁵/si⁵⁵
 li²¹ ka³⁵ li²¹ tsha⁵⁵/tshai⁵⁵
 li²¹ ka³⁵ li²¹ ti⁵⁵

(Tian 1986: 31)

Another type of quadrisyllabic pattern in Tujia involves the addition of disjunctive prefixes to the occurrences of the base verb (*li²¹*) with a form of the general pattern ABCB as a result. Depending on the prefix, the connotative effect of the repetitive process on the meaning of the base can be (i) to speak insincerely and carelessly (*tū³⁵ – ta³⁵ –*), (ii) to speak disorderly (*tchi⁵⁵ – sū⁵⁵ –*) or (iii) to speak at random, ramble on (*kie³⁵ – ka³⁵ –*). Note the alliterative relationship between the constituents of the prefix in (i) and (iii) (A → B A B/x A in which A = verb) E.g.:

- (i) li²¹ 'to speak' → tū³⁵ li²¹ ta³⁵ li²¹
 (ii) li²¹ 'to speak' → tchi⁵⁵ li²¹ sū⁵⁵ li²¹
 (iii) li²¹ 'to speak' → kie³⁵ li²¹ ka³⁵ li²¹

(Tian 1986: 32)

The consecutive repetitive pattern AABB can be the result of either (i) repetition of a monosyllabic verb followed by a duplicative constituent (A → AA + BB → AABB) or (ii) consecutive duplication of the constituent syllables of a disyllabic verb (AB → AABB). The base and the repetitive constituent in (i) can be tonally different (A → A A A- A-), or they may contract either an alliterative (A → A A A-/x A-/x) or a rhyming relationship (A → A A x/A- x/A-) in addition. E.g.:

- (i) li²¹ 'speak' → li²¹ li²¹ li⁵⁵ li⁵⁵
 li²¹ li²¹ si⁵⁵ si⁵⁵
 li²¹ li²¹ le⁵⁵ le⁵⁵
 (ii) kie²¹ tshi³⁵ 'play, have fun'
 → kie²¹ kie²¹ tshi³⁵ tshi³⁵ 'play a little, have some fun'

(Tian 1986: 32-33)

The semantic function explicitly suggested by Tian (1986: 33) for repetition of disyllabic verbs in Tujia is, quite familiarly, to signal the actor's doing something a little, i.e. it is delimitative. Unfortunately, the author does not specify the meaning of a quadrisyllabic form derived from a monosyllabic verb.

Finally, a four syllable lexeme can be achieved also by compositional methods in Tujia: a repetitive constituent is usually suffixed to a disyllabic verb (AB + CC → ABCC) with the resulting lexeme generally referring to children as innocent, naïve actors. Tian (1986: 34) offers two alternative forms for the suffix position. E.g.:

kie²¹ tshi³⁵ to play, have fun' → kie²¹ tshi³⁵ li⁵⁵ li⁵⁵
kie²¹ tshi³⁵ le⁵⁵ le⁵⁵

5.3. THE TAI GROUP

Repetition of monosyllabic verbs (A → AA) in the Tai languages is, similarly to many other languages in the corpus, a marker of the delimitative/tentative aspect of the verb, as the following examples from (i) Lajia, (ii) Gelao, (iii) Li, (iv) Mulao and (v) Dong indicate:

- (i) kwa¹¹ kwa¹¹ 'to touch a little'
tsen⁵¹ tsen⁵¹ 'to eat a little'
(Mao et al. 1982: 147)²⁵⁷
- (ii) tsu²⁴ tsu¹³ 'to have a look'
təw³¹ təw³¹ 'to have a think'
(He 1982: 27-28)
- (iii) lai⁵⁵ lai⁵⁵ 'to plough a little'
(Ouyang & Zheng 1980: 17)
- (iv) tsham³ tsham³ 'to take a walk'
tui⁶ tui⁶ 'to take a seat'
(Wang & Zheng 1980: 37-38)²⁵⁸
- (v) nu⁵³ nu⁵³ 'to have a look'
thiŋ⁴⁵³ thiŋ⁴⁵³ (nu⁵³) 'to have a taste'
(Liang 1980a: 48-49)²⁵⁹

²⁵⁷ Verbs referring to mental states and changes in them cannot, except for *fiɛŋ*²⁴ 'to think', be repeated (Mao et al. 1982: 147).

²⁵⁸ Some verbs in Mulao allow an explicit enforcement of tentativeness, already expressed by duplication, in the form of the particle *kau*⁵, e.g. *lu*⁵ *lu*⁵ *kau*⁵ 'to have a taste' (Wang & Zheng 1980: 38).

²⁵⁹ The parenthesized suffixal element in the pair of Dong examples is still associated by Liang (1980a: 48) with the verbal meaning 'to look'. Liang (1980a: 48, 79) notes that originally, Dong had very little duplication of monosyllabic verbs but Chinese influence has favoured its gradual generalization.

luŋ⁶ 'to wear, put on' → luŋ⁶ laŋ⁶ → luŋ⁶ luŋ⁶ laŋ⁶ laŋ⁶
 kin¹ 'to eat' → kin¹ ka:n¹ → kin¹ kin¹ ka:n¹ ka:n¹
 (Yu & Luo 1980: 57)

Mao et al. (1982: 149-150) treat Lajia trisyllabic compositional repetitive verbal lexemes of the ABB type as consisting of a verb modified by meaningful adverbial duplicates, which is almost exactly what they did with corresponding adjectival repetitive lexemes, with the difference that the elements modifying adjectives are analysed as also existing in unrepeated form (see Mao et al. 1982: 149) whereas those functioning as modifiers of verbs are cited exclusively in their repetitive form. Whether this means that the latter exist only in repetitive form with the meaning ascribed to them, thus being a step closer to becoming mere repetitive suffixes, cannot be solved relying on Mao et al. (1982) alone. Despite the fact that these Lajia structures as wholes may be closer to phrases than to fixed lexemes, they are presented below due to their exact structural parallelism to equivalent items in Maonan, in which the repetitive element is accorded the status of a suffix (see Liang 1980b: 32). E.g.:

tshieŋ⁵⁵ 'to sing' + ŋo⁵¹ ŋo⁵¹ 'loud'
 → tshieŋ⁵⁵ ŋo⁵¹ ŋo⁵¹ 'to sing loudly and vigorously'
 pok²⁴ 'to do' + kum⁵¹ kum⁵¹ 'vigorous'
 → pok²⁴ kum⁵¹ kum⁵¹ 'to do vigorously'
 toŋ¹¹ 'to sway' + ŋeŋ⁵¹ ŋeŋ⁵¹ 'swaying-like'
 → toŋ¹¹ ŋeŋ⁵¹ ŋeŋ⁵¹ 'to move swayingly'

Liang's (1980a: 55) analysis of Dong ABB compositional lexemes resembles that of Mao et al.'s in claiming that the suffixal elements, individually or as duplicates, have a lexical meaning. E.g.:

ko⁵⁵ 'to laugh' + ŋem³²³ 'slight'
 → ko⁵⁵ ŋem³²³ ŋem³²³ 'to smile/laugh faintly'²⁶¹
 pjiu⁵⁵ 'to jump' + sart²⁴ sart²⁴ 'repeated(ly)'
 → pjiu⁵⁵ sart²⁴ sart²⁴ 'to jump about'
 ma³⁵ 'to return' + ɕi⁴⁵³ ɕi⁴⁵³ 'to be about to'
 → ma³⁵ ɕi⁴⁵³ ɕi⁴⁵³ 'to be about to return'
 (Liang 1980a: 55, 49)

In Maonan, the suffixal syllables do not by themselves have a definite semantic content but their meaning emerges indirectly in the semantics of the trisyllabic whole

²⁶¹ The order of constituents can be reversed in this item (ŋem³²³ ŋem³²³ ko⁵⁵ 'to smile/laugh faintly') (Liang 1980a: 49).

as modifiers of the meaning of the head. The formal relationship between the syllables of the suffixal duplicate can be (i) completely repetitive ($A + BB \rightarrow ABB$) or (ii) alliterative or rhyming with differing tones ($A + B B\text{-}/x \rightarrow A B B\text{-}/x$ or $A + B x/B\text{-} \rightarrow AB x/B\text{-}$). E.g.:

- (i) pi^{42} 'to sway' \rightarrow $pi^{42} \text{ə:n}^{42} \text{ə:n}^{42}$ 'to strut, swagger'
 $pi^{42} \text{dja:u}^{44} \text{dja:u}^{44}$ 'to flutter against the wind'
- (ii) pi^{42} 'to sway' \rightarrow $pi^{42} \text{ʔwaŋ}^{42} \text{ʔwɛ}^{44}$ 'to sway back and forth'
 $pi^{42} \text{ə}^{51} \text{nə}^{231}$ 'to sway all over'

(Liang 1980b: 32)

The modifying repetitive suffix added to verbs in Maonan can consist of four syllables which, again, are either alliterative or rhyming, with tonal difference. In the former case, (i) all four syllables are mutually alliterative ($A + B B\text{-}/x_1 B B\text{-}/x_2 \rightarrow A B B\text{-}/x_1 B B\text{-}/x_2$), while in the latter case, (ii) the four syllables can be viewed in terms of two duplicates, the constituent syllables of which are mutually rhyming within the respective duplicate, but non-rhyming with the syllables of the other constituent duplicate ($A + B x/B C x/C\text{-} \rightarrow A B x/B C x/C\text{-}$). Note the adjectival nature of the repetitive form in (i). E.g.:

- (i) pi^{42} 'to sway'
 $\rightarrow pi^{42} \text{zuŋ}^{213} \text{za}^{231} \text{zuŋ}^{213} \text{zar}^{24}$ 'slanting here and there'
- (ii) pi^{42} 'to sway'
 $\rightarrow pi^{42} \text{ə}^{51} \text{nə}^{51} \text{a:u}^{51} \text{nə:u}^{24}$ 'to sway here and there indefinitely'

(Liang 1980b: 32)

The joining together in repetitive form of antonymous or synonymous monosyllabic verbs to give a consecutive AABB pattern ($A + B \rightarrow AABB$) is a feature shared by the items from (i) Dai, (ii) Mulao, (iii) Gelao, (iv) Shui and (v) Dong below. This juxtaposition of consecutively repeated verbs amounts to characterizing the action as frequentative, according to some sources. The unspecified case below is assumed not to be repeated for no purpose but for an intensifying effect of some sort, as proposed by Gan (1993: 69) for the corresponding items in Standard Chinese:

- (i) xap^7 'to sing' + $fɔn^4$ 'to jump'
 $\rightarrow xap^7 xap^7 fɔn^4 fɔn^4$ 'to keep singing and dancing'

(Yu & Luo 1980: 57)

toŋ¹¹ vai⁵⁵ toŋ¹¹ voi⁵³ 'to idle about, loaf'
 tseu⁵³ tat⁵⁵ tseu⁵³ tuŋ⁵³ 'to shoot birds (with bow and arrow)'
 (Ouyang & Zheng 1980: 76-77)

Zhuang possesses a word-forming strategy whereby the addition of the suffixes $-(C)ak^{35}$, $-(C)ek^{35}$, $-(C)ak^{33}$, $-(C)ek^{33}$ and $-(C)au^{35}$ to a verb brings with them an implication of casualness or arbitrariness of the action in question²⁶². Repetition of this type of disyllabic verbs entails a connotation of resentment (AB → AABB) (Vi 1997: 76). E.g.:

yam⁵⁵ ya:k³⁵/ye:k³⁵ 'to fell (arbitrarily)'
 → yam⁵⁵ yam⁵⁵ ya:k³⁵/ye:k³⁵ ya:k³⁵/ye:k³⁵
 lam³³ la:k³³/le:k³³ 'to bind (arbitrarily)'
 → lam³³ lam³³ la:k³³/le:k³³ la:k³³/le:k³³
 kum²⁴ kau³⁵ 'to eat (casually)'
 → kum²⁴ kum²⁴ kau³⁵ kau³⁵
 (Vi 1997: 75)

Further connotative nuances in this kind of Zhuang constructions are conditioned by differences in the vowel and the tone of the suffix (Vi 1997: 76-77).

5.4. THE MIAO-YAO GROUP

Mian (i) and Bunu (ii) follow the general tendency observable in the total verbal corpus of relying on repetition to manifest the delimitative/tentative aspect of a verb (see Mao et al. 1982: 38, 93). In Bunu, repetition of verbs appears to be more restricted than in Mian, and the duplicated verb can be followed by a particle (*ŋkoŋ⁴²*) which explicitly enhances the notion of tentativeness, a feature not unfamiliar in verbal repetition. This particle is homophonic with the verb 'to look, see', just as in a number of other languages represented in the corpus, and it cannot be suffixed to a repeated verb with this meaning (Mao et al. 1982: 93). E.g.:

- (i) kat⁵⁵ 'to cut' → kat⁵⁵ kat⁵⁵ 'to cut a little, have a go at cutting'
 jen¹² 'to eat' → jen¹² jen¹² 'to eat a little, have a go at eating'
 (Mao et al. 1982: 38)

²⁶² The parenthesized C refers to the initial consonant of the suffix that assimilates to the final consonant of the verb. Assimilation between the suffix and the stem also applies to tone categories. (Vi 1997: 77).

- (ii) $cv\eta^{42}$ 'to listen' \rightarrow $cv\eta^{42} cv\eta^{42}$ ($\eta k\eta^{42}$) 'to listen a little'
 ηj^{231} 'to think' \rightarrow $\eta j^{231} \eta j^{231}$ ($\eta k\eta^{42}$) 'to think a little'
 $\eta k\eta^{42}$ 'to look' \rightarrow $\eta k\eta^{42} \eta k\eta^{42}$ 'to have a look'
 (Mao et al. 1982: 93)

Bunu is further characterized by an alliterative process of monosyllabic verbs where the rhyme of the partly duplicative syllable is *-vu*, unless it coincides with the rhyme of the base, in which case the rhyme of the repetitive syllable is *-oŋ* or *-aŋ* ($A \rightarrow A A/x$). It is here suggested that the semantic implication of casualness or arbitrariness and rapidity attributed by Mao et al. (1982: 94) to verbs repeated for this pattern be interpreted as being compatible with the general notion of delimitativeness/tentativeness, so typical of verbal repetition on the whole. E.g.:

- $n\eta\eta^{231}$ 'to wear' \rightarrow $n\eta\eta^{231} n\eta\eta^{231}$ 'to wear (casually)'
 nto^{43} 'to chop' \rightarrow $nto^{43} nt\eta\eta^{43}$ 'to chop (casually)'
 $nt\eta\eta^{21}$ 'to hit' \rightarrow $nt\eta\eta^{21} nt\eta\eta^{231}$ 'to hit (casually)'
 $n\eta\eta\eta^{42}$ 'to pluck' \rightarrow $n\eta\eta\eta^{42} n\eta\eta\eta^{31}$ 'to pluck (casually)'

Although Biaomin is a dialect of Mian (Mao 1989: 38), repeated verbs, in compliance with the iconicity principle, represent intensification of the meaning of the base rather than anything else. E.g.:

- $dzan^{42}$ 'to run' \rightarrow $dzan^{42} dzan^{42}$ 'to run much'
 ηan^{35} 'to cry' \rightarrow $\eta an^{35} \eta an^{35}$ 'to cry much'
 (Mao 1989: 40)

Mao (1989: 40) claims that if in Biaomin a monosyllabic verb has an attributive function, its duplication is indispensable. E.g.:

- nin^{21} lau^{42} lau^{42} $w\eta^{54}$ ηwai^{33} $t\eta i^{33}$ $lw\eta^{21}$ wai^{42}
 he return that day be cloudy day
 'It was cloudy on the day he returned.'
 $k\eta u^{35}$ $p\eta n^{54}$ $p\eta n^{54}$ $p\eta n^{33}$ ηa^{42} $\phi i^{42} na^{21}$ nin^{21}
 I go time not have see he
 'I did not see him at the time I went.'

Nguyen Van Loi (1975: 21-22) argues that besides manifesting the continuous aspect, repeated verbs can have an emphatic meaning in Miao [Yao?] (Vietnam). The decision as to which meaning is in question with a given repetitive verb form must obviously depend on the context in which the form is used since there is no

formal difference whatsoever between a potentially continuous repetitive form and a potentially emphatic one. On the basis of Harriehausen's more straightforward presentation of Hmong Njua (Green Miao) verb repetition (1990: 47) it seems evident that its primary function, in Hmong Njua at least, is to mark the action as continuous in opposition to a non-repetitive form which is neutral in this respect. The suggestion by Harriehausen that Hmong Njua verbs are repeated for habitual action, as in

Nwg ua ua paj ntaub.
 3sg. do embroidery
 'She's in the habit of doing embroidery.'
 (Harriehausen 1990: 48)

is not in conflict with the idea of continuity being considered the superordinate term, since it is hardly in conflict with anyone's intuition to regard habituality as a type of continuity.

Disyllabic alliterative lexemes in Miao (Vietnam) are not restricted to adjectives, but there are also partially repetitive verbs, mostly opaque single-morpheme items, that can be described in terms of an alliterative relationship contracted between the constituent syllables (A A/x). E.g.:

tsuók tsour	'to smear all over'
jus joul	'to chatter'
hlux hlér	'to snuffle'

(Nguyen Van Loi 1975: 24)

In the data of Miao [Yao?] repetitive lexemes analysed by Nguyen Van Loi (1975: 24), there are only a handful of semantically transparent items with a discernible meaningful constituent (45 out of 513). One of them, which is of relevance here, is *hlê hlou* 'to show untidily' which is based on *hlê* 'to show, let out'.

For purposes of emphasis, a disyllabic repetitive verbal lexeme can be split in Miao [Yao?] (Vietnam) in order to create a disjunctive four syllable repetitive verb (A A/x → BA BA/x). The inserted element is often meaningful. Note the adjectival input of the following derivation:

dängs dês	'unsteady'	→	kâus dängs kâus dês	'to fall down, fall on
			fall	one's back'

(Nguyen Van Loi 1975: 25)

Mao et al. (1982: 96-97) insist that the repetitive (BB) parts of various ABB lexical structures with verbs as heads, are meaningful as duplicates in Bunu. E.g.:

- nta³³ 'to look' + ke³¹ ke³¹ 'to look attentively -like'
 → nta³³ ke³¹ ke³¹ 'to gaze at'
 jvŋ⁴² 'to fly' + ɕe³¹ ɕe³¹ 'hovering-like'
 → jvŋ⁴² ɕe³¹ ɕe³¹ 'to fly lightly'
 muŋ²³¹ 'to go' + vɻu²³¹ vɻu²³¹ 'as if flying'
 → muŋ²³¹ vɻu²³¹ vɻu²³¹ 'to go very fast'

In parallel to quite a few other languages of the corpus, (i) Mian and (ii) Bunu also have quadrisyllabic repetitive lexemes consisting of consecutively repeated synonymous or antonymous juxtaposed verbs (A + B → AABB). E.g.:

- (i) koŋ⁵² 'to speak' + tɕat⁵⁵ 'to smile, laugh'
 → koŋ^{52/21} koŋ⁵² tɕat^{55/12} tɕat⁵⁵ 'to talk and laugh'
- (ii) piŋ³³ 'to pull' + co²² 'to tear'
 → piŋ³³ piŋ³³ co²² co²² 'to pull and tear'
 ɬu⁴³ 'to swallow' + ŋku⁴² 'to spit'
 → ɬu⁴³ ɬu⁴³ ŋku⁴² ŋku⁴² 'to hesitate in speech'
 (Mao et al.1982: 26, 81)

Bunu has quadrisyllabic verbal lexemes of the consecutive AABB type (i) where A is a morpheme while B is a meaningless syllable, and also of the ABAB disjunctive type (ii) where B is provided with a meaning whereas A is devoid of such. Note the vivifying semantic effect. E.g.:

- (i) ma⁴² 'to stammer' → ma⁴² ma⁴² tɬv²² tɬv²² 'to stammer and stutter'
- (ii) ɬɻu⁴² 'to sob' → ka²² ɬɻu⁴² ka²² ɬɻu⁴² 'to sob and whimper'
 (Mao et al.1982: 81)

Within the context of verbal quadrisyllabic lexemes, Bunu is further graced with an ABAC repetitive pattern with meaningless syllables in the B and C slots, which syllables, however, turn out to be alliterative, though with differing tones, in respect to each other, so that the formula ABAC should actually be rewritten as A B A B-/x. Semantically, the output is an enlivened version of the meaning of the base. E.g.:

- mpo⁴³ 'to turn over'
 → mpo⁴³ li¹² mpo^{43/54} lo²³¹ 'to rummage here and there'
 (Mao et al. 1982: 82)

5.5. THE VIET-MUONG GROUP

Vietnamese disyllabic repetitive verbal lexemes can represent semantically either (i) the continuous or (ii) the delimitative aspect, and formally they are either completely (A → AA) or partially repetitive (A → A/x A) (Thompson 1965: 152, 172). E.g.:

- | | | | | | |
|------|------|----------------|---|------------|-------------------------|
| (i) | quên | 'to forget' | → | quên quên | 'to keep forgetting' |
| | vẫy | 'to wave' | → | vẫy vẫy | 'to keep waving' |
| (ii) | cười | 'to laugh' | → | cười cười | 'to laugh a little' |
| | quen | 'to know' | → | quen quen | 'to know slightly' |
| | ngọt | 'to taper off' | → | ngon ngọt | 'to taper off somewhat' |
| | tiếc | 'to regret' | → | tiêng tiếc | 'to regret vaguely' |

(Thompson 1965: 152, 172; Nguyen Tai Can 1975: 188-189)

As noted earlier, Vietnamese is rich in variously alliterative or rhyming lexemes that cannot be classified into neat semantic categories like the items above and which formally go beyond the regular alternation between syllable-final nasals and stops represented by the last two items in (ii). The difference between the repetitive syllable and the base is sometimes, as in other Mon-Khmer languages, manifested only by the nuclear vowel while the rest of the syllable remains mutually identical. Within the descriptive framework of the study, such formations count as alliterations (A → A A/x or A → A/x A). Contrary to the derivations above, the ones cited below denote the actor's doing something 'a lot' or more intensively, according to the principle of iconicity, with a negative rather than positive connotation. E.g.:

- | | | | | |
|------|---------------|---|-----------|-----------------------|
| rao | 'to announce' | → | rêu rao | 'to spread scandal' |
| vùng | 'to shake' | → | vùng vằng | 'to shake with anger' |

(Thompson 1965: 157)

Rhyming repetitive syllables can also be either prefixal or suffixal. Note the disjunctive prefixation of the rhyming syllables in the case of the disyllabic verb (AB → A/x A B/x B) and the implication of intensification in the meaning of the base verb, as predicted by the iconicity principle, in the cases where the meaning is provided. E.g.:

- | | | | | |
|--------|--|---|------------|--|
| mò | 'to grope for' | → | lò mò | 'to grope feverishly' |
| mò mẫn | 'to grope for a long time' | → | tò mò | tấn mẫn |
| cười | 'to laugh' | → | cười nhười | 'to tease, joke' |
| khét | 'to have the smell of something burnt' | → | khét lệt | 'to have the smell of something badly burnt' |

(Thompson 1965: 158-159)

khóc lóc 'to cry, weep' → khóc lóc khóc liếc 'to cry all the time'
(Thompson 1965: 176)

This -iếc is reminiscent of a homophonic rhyme used to derive generic nouns with the meaning 'the so-called N' etc. treated in association with nominal repetition (see 2.4). The generic -iếc is not restricted to nouns but can make its appearance as the rhyme of an alliterative syllable in a repetitive verb (A → A A/x). E.g.:

học 'to study' → học hiếc 'to do so-called studying'
liên hoan 'to organize a party' → liên hoan liên hiếc 'to organize a party
or something'
(Truong 1970: 24; Dao 1998: 3)

In reference to the other new pattern, let us cite Tran (1992: 57) who brings up an interesting method of constructing quadrisyllabic repetitive verbal lexemes typical of the southern Vietnamese dialect. It is based on the resemblance of initial consonants and rhymes, as well as semantic correspondence of some sort, between two compounds. This configuration may lead to the creation of new repetitive verbal lexemes of four syllables. E.g.:

bồng chanh 'to smile incessantly' + bông chách 'garrulous'
→ bông chanh bông chách 'to talk and laugh incessantly'
sòng sành 'to display' + xọc xạch 'to touch'
→ sòng sành xọc xạch 'to show off'

Tran (1992: 58) also points out that in the south, intensifying or continuous disjunctive alliterative lexemes can be constructed by prefixing a syllable to the alliterative constituents of a disyllabic verb (A A/x → B A B A/x). This syllable may alliterate with the constituents of the disyllabic base (A A/x → A/x₁ A A/x₁ A/x). E.g.:

lu loa 'to burst wailing loudly' → bù lu bù loa 'to raise a hullabaloo'
trầy trật 'to try hard but without success' → trậm trầy trậm trật 'to try hard
for a long time but without success'

Muong does not deviate from the common semantic tendency evident so far in the languages of the corpus, to signal by repetition of volitional verbs that the actor does something 'a little', as indicated by the following exponents of complete repetition (A → AA). E.g.:

βang³ 'to hasten' → βang³ βang³ 'to hasten a little'
haw³ 'to want' → haw³ haw³ 'to want a little'
(Hoang 1998: 32)

Like a true Mon-Khmer language, Muong features alliterative lexemes (A A/x) where the constituent syllables can be distinguished from each other solely by the vowel in the rhyme. This trait characterizes verbal lexemes, too. E.x.:

ron ² ren ²	‘to walk gingerly, creep’
sêw ³ saw ³	‘to buzz, whisper’

(Hoang 1998: 33)

In Muong alliterative (i) and rhyming (ii) verbal lexemes, the repetitive syllable can, as in Vietnamese, be placed either before or after the base (A → A/x A / A A/x or A → x/A A / A x/A), though under (ii) only the former alternative is realized. E.g.:

- (i) ngong⁵ ‘to lisp’ → ngap⁵ ngong⁵ ‘to babble, prattle’
 hru⁴ ‘to call’ → hru⁴ hrɔp⁴ ‘to induce, entice’
- (ii) tluɔl³ ‘to crawl’ → cuɔl³ tluɔl³ ‘to slip, skid’
 nôn³ ‘to bustle’ → lôn³ nôn³ ‘to feel upset’
- (Hoang 1998: 33-34)

5.6. OTHER MON-KHMER LANGUAGES

To emphasize the continuity or casuality of an action, Wa resorts to partial repetition in creating a syllable with a steady rhyme (-u), which alliterates with the verbal base (A → A/x A)²⁶³. It was suggested earlier that the term ‘casuality’ be equated with delimitativeness/tentativeness when it relates to the meaning of repeated verbs, but here it would lead to contradictory meanings for the Wa repetitive forms below as it would make continuity and delimitativeness (= casuality) equal semantic alternatives for each repetitive form. It is clear that a form cannot simultaneously imply both duration in time (= continuity) and delimitation in time²⁶⁴. E.g.:

paik ‘to scratch’	→	pu paik ‘to keep scratching/scratch casually’
dik ‘to trample’	→	du dik ‘to keep trampling/trample casually’

(Zhou & Yan 1984: 28)

²⁶³ There is an interesting tendency towards further assimilating the repetitive syllable with the base by making the syllable finals match, e.g.: *mu miak* → *muk miak* ‘to disturb’. This is counterbalanced by a process whereby such initial consonant clusters of the repetitive syllable as *khl-*, *khr-* are simplified, e.g.: *khlɿ khlɿk* → *klɿ khlɿk* → *kɿ khlɿk* ‘to miss, let slip’ (Zhou & Yan 1984: 13, 16-17).

²⁶⁴ The equation of ‘casuality’ and ‘delimitativeness’ earlier in the study was due to the use of the former term together with the term ‘rapidity’, with its implication of terminal activity, to refer to the meaning of certain repetitive forms.

Besides such alliterative lexemes produced by rules as the ones just cited, the Wa lexicon seems also to have fixed alliterative single-morpheme verbal lexemes (A A/x). E.g.:

nək non	'to crack a joke'
lən lia	'to roll, trundle'
lən lək	'to drill, bore'

(Zhou & Yan 1984: 24-25)

Quadrisyllabic repetitive verbal lexemes can be created via insertion in Wa (AB → CACB where C = 'to do'). E.g.:

pre? prum	'food and drink'	→	zuh pre? zuh prum	'to prepare a meal'
			to do to do	

(Zhou & Yan 1984: 29)

Just as with adjectives, two semantically close disyllabic verbs both carrying *si* as the first syllable, and possibly with alliterative second syllables, can be combined, again for rhetorical purposes, to produce a four-syllable repetitive lexeme in Wa (AB + AC = ABAC or AB + AB/x = A B A B/x). E.g.:

si mah + si dzie	→	si mah si dzie	'to quarrel'
to quarrel to bicker			
si ?əh + si ?əin	→	si ?əh si ?əin	'to get angry'
to flare up to get angry			

(Zhou & Yan 1984: 29)

Within the framework of verbal repetition in the Katuic languages, an implication of causation or change seems to be attached to a de-adjectival infixal pattern with the syllable *tσ* functioning often, but not exclusively, as the infix in Katu (A → ABA = A → A tσ A). E.g.:

book	'white'	→	book tσbook	'to make whiter'
môp	'ugly'	→	môp tσmôp	'to make uglier'
liêm	'beautiful'	→	liêm paliêm	'to make more beautiful'

(Hoang 1993: 16, 13)

Alliteratively repeated monosyllabic verbs, with the repetitive syllable ending in *-a*, tend to denote continuity of action, at least in Katu, Pacoh and Taoih (A → A/x A = A → A-a A). E.g.:

veh 'to move' → va veh 'to keep moving'
 chok 'to look for' → cha chok 'to keep looking for'
 (Katu; Hoang 1993: 16)

pôk 'to go' → pa pôk 'to keep going'
 chóng 'to burn' → cha chóng 'to keep burning'
 (Pacoh; Hoang 1993: 11)

vôch 'to go' → va vôch 'to keep going'
 (Taoih; Hoang 1993: 11)

But once again, this is only a tendency, not a rule with this pattern, as the following derivations from Katu indicate. The first Katu output has a generic sense, while the second is closest to denoting intensification of the action expressed by the base. E.g.:

mông 'to live' → ma mông 'to live (in general)'
 lêj 'to look at' → la lêj 'to gaze at'
 (Hoang 1993: 11)

The semantic scope of the A-a A -pattern also includes reciprocity, of which the following derivation from Taoih serves as a token:

chơp 'to sing' → cha chơp 'to sing alternately to one another'
 (Hoang 1993: 16)

As a formal repetitive frame for the following Pacoh and Bru verbal lexemes with no uniquely definable semantic orientation, an alliterative pattern with *-i* or *-u* as the rhyme of the derived syllable appears to be quite common (A → A/x A = A → A-i/-u A). E.g.:

tooiq 'to steal' → ti tooiq 'to steal, filch'
 ngoiq 'to drink' → ngi ngoiq 'to drink (in general)'
 cha 'to eat' → chi cha 'to eat and drink (in general)'
 tuk → tu tuk 'to make offerings and worship'
 loo → lu loo 'to throw oneself down, rush headlong'
 (Pacoh; Hoang 1993: 11)

chơm → chi chơm 'to think to oneself'
 chơr → chi chơr 'to touch, feel, grope'
 sêq 'to ask for' → su sêq 'to beg for'
 taq 'to do, make' → tu taq 'to work, labour'
 (Bru; Hoang 1993: 11)

It was noted above that reciprocity is one of the semantic functions fulfilled by the A-a A -pattern and a derivation from Taoih was set forward as an example. With Katu disyllabic verbs, this meaning is realized by complete repetition either of (i) the second syllable of a disyllabic verb (AB → ABB) or by (ii) repeating a disyllabic verb in its entirety (AB → ABAB). E.g.:

- (i) torkol 'to buy and sell' → torkol kol 'to buy and sell
(between one another)'
- (ii) torhaj 'to remember' → torhaj torhaj 'to remember each other'
(Hoang 1993: 17)

An attempt to set up a unique relationship between form and reciprocal meaning for the ABB pattern in Katu would be frustrated by the following two derivations, of which the second appears to imply continuity:

- saraq 'to write' → saraq raq 'to write, do one's writing'
tamāq 'to ask' → tamāq māq 'to inquire, ask after; to worry'
(Hoang 1993: 17)

As the subsequent derivation from Bru with an alliterative repetitive syllable indicates, disyllabic verbs may be repeated for generic meaning in Katuic languages (AB → A B A B/x):

- karchang 'to laugh' → karchang karchuk 'to laugh and frolic
(in general)'
(Hoang 1993: 17)

The tendency in rhyming disyllabic lexemes (A x/A) to have either an initial *t*- or *l*- in the first syllable pairing off with some other initial consonant in the latter syllable is also evident in the category of repetitive verbs in the Katuic languages, as proved by the subsequent items from Pacoh, Taoih and Bru:

- tér lé/teér léér 'to spread, spill all over'
loól doól 'to bob'
tep lep 'to have a tic'
láu páu 'to dream'
tôk ngôk 'to lift, raise (one's head)'
tuł vuł 'to hum and haw'
teu heu 'to exact, require, need'
(Hoang 1993: 10)