

## Event Plurality by Adverb *pín pín* (頻頻) in Mandarin Chinese

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In Mandarin Chinese, the adverb *pín pín* (頻頻) expresses repetition of an occurrence of an action

(1).

(1) 這樣的事經常/常常/時常/頻頻/屢屢/時時發生。

*Zhè yàng de shì {jīngcháng/chángcháng/shícháng/pín pín/lǚlǚ/shíshí} fāshēng*  
This style de matter regularly often repeatedly constantly occur  
'Matters of this kind occur often/repeatedly constantly.'

The adverb is often classified as frequency adverbs which denote plurality of eventualities such as *jīngcháng* (經常), *chángcháng* (常常), *shícháng* (時常), *lǚlǚ* (屢屢), *shíshí* (時時) in Sinologue literature (Zhang (2004:177), Shi and Hu (2004:9-10), Shi and Hu (2004:9-10), Zou (2006:43), Zou (2011:52) among others). However, *pín pín* can co-occur with a postverbal durational complement which indicates the duration of the total plural eventualities on one occurrence of the action whereas *jīngcháng* and *chángcháng* cannot, as (2) illustrates, which means these adverbs should not be classified in the same paradigm.

(2) 他在課堂上\*經常/\*常常/頻頻點頭，點了一小時。

*tā zài kètáng-shàng \*jīngcháng /\*chángcháng/ pín pín diǎntóu, diǎn-le yī-xiǎoshí*  
he at class on regularly often repeatedly nod nod-Acc one-hour  
'He nodded repeatedly for an hour in the class.'

Cusic (1981:61) distinguishes occasions from events as levels of verbal plurality. In (3), the adverb *twice* can refer to occasion level or event level plurality.

(3) The salesman rang the doorbell twice.

a. On two separate occasions he rang the bell once. (Two occasions)

b. On one occasion he rang the bell two times. (Two events in one occasion)

Following Cusic (1981), I will show that *pín pín* marks plurality at event level, which is different from *jīngcháng* and *chángcháng* which pluralize at occasion level since *pín pín* can repeat an event on an occasion which is framed by a postverbal durational complement, as in (2).

Moreover, it can be observed that *pín pín* can co-occur with states, semelfactives and achievements

(4) and it is incompatible with activities and accomplishments (five predicate types in Smith 1994).

(4) 他頻頻<sup>OK</sup>頭痛/<sup>OK</sup>咳嗽/<sup>OK</sup>打碎東西/\*故事/\*寫一篇文章

*Tā pín pín <sup>OK</sup>tóutòng /<sup>OK</sup>késòu/<sup>OK</sup>dǎsui dōngxī/\*xiě gùshì /\*xiě yī-piān wénzhāng*  
he repeatedly headache cough break thing write story write one-Cl essay  
'He has headache/ coughs/ breaks things repeatedly.' intended: "He writes stories/an essay repeatedly."  
(state/semelfactive/achievement/\*activity/\*accomplishment)

However, the temporal features, i.e., dynamic/static, telic/atelic and durative/instantaneous (Smith 1994) cannot explain the (in)compatibility of *pín pín* with the five predicate types. Following Cusic (1981), the verbal unit that *pín pín* repeats is necessarily bounded, and such a verbal unit can bound predicates which are states, semelfactives and achievements only. Following Stump (1981), van Geenhoven (2004), since *pín pín* pluralizes an event, there are non-overlapping hiatus temporal intervals between two events. I claim that *pín pín* repeats a verbal unit, an event which is a temporal interval viewed as bounded and therefore, it can view states (durative), semelfactives (instantaneous) and achievements (instantaneous) as bounded in the same way.

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