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Reduplicated intensifiers in Tibeto-Burman and Tai: A possible Northeast Indian areal feature

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Abstract

This paper argues that a particular ABB reduplicative construction comprising a stative verb followed by a lexically restricted, often opaque modifier that is frequently reduplicated which constitutes an areal feature of Northeast India and Myanmar. We show that comparable structures occur across unrelated language families, including Kra-Dai and Tibeto-Burman. The pattern displays roughly consistent semantic and morphosyntactic properties despite the absence of cognacy among both stems and modifiers. Its irregular distribution within subgroups, combined with clear cases of cross-family borrowing, further supports a contact-based explanation. Drawing on newly compiled Tai Phake lexical data, one of the richest sources available, we demonstrate the breadth of ABB formations and situate them within broader regional patterns of adjectival modification. The findings contribute to ongoing discussions of areality and morphosemantic convergence in the languages of the Northeast.

Keywords: reduplication, intensifiers, Tibeto-Burman, Tai

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Reduplicated intensifiers in Tibeto-Burman and Tai: A possible Northeast Indian areal feature*

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1. Introduction

Recent scholarly work has established a well-attested pattern of adjectival intensifiers occurring within Tangsa-Nocte languages of eastern Arunachal Pradesh (van Dam, 2018). A common feature of languages in Northeast India and surrounding regions is the presence of a particular pattern of adjectival modifiers, this pattern involves a verbal stem, typically a stative verb of Dixon′s type-B set (Dixon, 1977), to which a reduplicatable and lexically specified morpheme is attached which modifies the original meaning of the stem. These have provisionally been referred to in the literature as 'intensifiers' (van Dam 2018; 2020). This ABB pattern has been described for a wide range of nominal modifiers derived from stative verbs combined with an intensifying stem. While much of the previous description was focused on basic colour terms (ibid), this ABB pattern of stem-INT~RED is widespread throughout common adjectives in the languages in which this pattern is found.

However, the 'intensifier' label is not an ideal fit since in many cases the modifiers do not intensify, but instead indicate some other secondary quality. For example, with colour terms or other physical descriptors, these often invoke meanings pertaining to pattern, surface finish, or some other difference in the hue or texture. For example, in Khiamniungan *ɲaʔ*$_5$ is 'black' and *ɲaʔ*$_5$*tʃik*$_5$ suggests a less-deep black such as burnt charcoal, but could not be used to describe the absence of light such as a midnight sky. What's more, with reduplication, *ɲaʔ*$_5$*tʃik*$_5$*tʃik*$_5$ intensifies the meaning, while without reduplication it de-intensifies (Thaam & van Dam, 2026). Such cases are not limited to colours either, although these tend to be the easiest to elicit and define. Thus, while many such constructions have the function of intensification, in lieu of a better label, the current description continues with this 'intensifier' label, but with the same caveats as have already been outlined in the previous literature. At times, 'modifier' is also used for cases which clearly lack intensification, however, this too is far from ideal as it is too general within the wider scope of word classes and morphosyntactic constructions.

This paper expands upon the existing literature to present the case for such a pattern of reduplicated modifiers as an areal feature of the Northeast, found not only Tibeto-Burman but also in Tai languages of the region, notably Tai Phake and Hkamti. The study is built on a newly prepared, unpublished dictionary of over 20,000 unique entries through the work of Hailowng (forthcoming), forming the largest collection of lexical data for any Tai language of the Northeast. By investigating newly collected Tai data, we draw parallels to similar patterns found in neighbouring Tibeto-Burman varieties where contact with early Tai migrations was likely and lexical exchange has been otherwise well established. The presence of this pattern as evidence of contact has not been previously discussed.

1.1 Definition of the pattern

The most commonly attested pattern is that of a stative verb which acts as the head of the construction (A), followed by a lexically specified modifier which is often reduplicated (B~B). The head is typically monosyllabic. Example 1 shows such a construction from Tai Phake where *haiŋ*$_3$ means 'dry' (Bandhumedha, 1987; sealang.net/phake). Note that in all examples given below, subscript numerals

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represent tone categories as defined in the relevant source literature. Superscript numerals represent tone contours following the system of Chao (1930).

(1) *haiŋ$_3$* *khaü$_1$~khaü$_1$*
dry INT~RED
'excessively dry'

For the purposes of analysis and cross-linguistic comparison, the pattern is defined as having the following features: First, modifier morphemes are often - but not always - semantically opaque. Meanings may be recoverable through cross-linguistic comparison, where related languages have a cognate stem with a related meaning. As an example, sim$_2$ in Tangsa-Nocte functions as a modifier on *nyak$_4$* 'black', but will not always have a clear meaning on its own (van Dam 2018). In Bodo-Garo, sim$_2$ is a basic stem for 'black' (Benedict 1972, p. 81). Likewise, many Tangsa-Nocte varieties have *βil$_1$* for 'green' with modifier *diŋ$_3$*, typically opaque to speakers, but it is derived from 'grass'. In Tai Phake, as in Example 1, the modifier *khaü$_1$* still has some semantic transparency with a meaning relating to dryness. In many cases, the meaning of the modifier will not be apparent based on etymological grounds. The most notable extensions are modifiers such as 'flash' or 'lightning', frequently used to refer to glistening white and cross-linguistically common, while also being entirely transparent semantically.

Second, the modifier morphemes are almost always lexically specified. The modifier, which may be used to suggest a deepness in colour for 'red', will not be the same as the functionally identical modifier for 'green'. van Dam (2018) provides a substantial inventory of colour-term specific modifiers for Tangsa-Nocte languages, with very little overlap occurring between colours in terms of which modifier they use. However, one area where overlap is common is between semantic domains. In Tangsa-Nocte languages, it is typical that intensifying modifiers will be shared between 'black', 'bitter', and 'hard'. In rare cases, a single modifier can be applied to a large number of stems. This occurs in Tangsa-Nocte, where the de-intensification modifier can be applied to any basic colour term. Generic modifiers of this sort are otherwise uncommon. Example 2 from Yongkuk illustrates how the same function is covered by two distinct modifiers that are based on the head.

(2a). *loŋ$_1$* *raŋ$_2$~raŋ$_2$*
white INT~RED
'excessively white'

(2b) *ɲak$_4$* *dok$_4$~dok$_4$*
black INT~RED
'excessively black'

Third, ABB patterned modifiers will primarily occur only on simple verbal stems. Adjectives, generally speaking, are not a salient category in many of the languages of the region. Instead, most adjectival forms are the result of nominalising a stative verb stem. Verb stems undergoing such modification are typically within Dixon's type-B set, covering features such as dimension, age, colour, physical qualities, or value (Dixon, 1977). There are exceptions to this rule, although they are rare. A possible exception can be seen in Example 3 from Muishaung, where the head is understood as a noun.

(3) *βɐuŋ$_2$* *rɐuŋ$_2$~rɐuŋ$_2$*
handle INT~RED
'particularly handle-shaped'

Today, in this context, *βɐuŋ$_2$* is not interpreted with any verbal sense. Compare the phrase 'lacking a handle' in the language, *βɐuŋ$_2$ɣɤ$_1$* 'handle-to.lack', where it can only be understood as a noun.

This is a rare exception in the languages included in this study and likely points to a verbal origin for the morpheme at an earlier stage, possibly relating to carrying, lifting, or curving.

Finally, as initially mentioned, the function of the modifiers is rarely simple intensification. Examples 4 and 5 from Wolam show two such cases where the head is modified in a way other than intensification.

(4) *hiŋ*$_4^{22}$ *liu*$_4^{22}$~*liu*$_4^{22}$
red MOD~RED
'pink, as of a flower'

(5) *leʔ*$_3^{41}$ *t*^{h}*aŋ*$_3^{41}$~*t*^{h}*aŋ*$_3^{41}$
heavy MOD~RED
'slightly heavy'

1.2 Distribution in Northeast Indian languages

A major justification for interpreting the structure as areal is due to the distribution of the feature in languages of Northeast India (NEI) and the surrounding area. For example, within Patkaian, the structure is incredibly widespread among varieties of Tangsa-Nocte as well as occurring in Khiamniungan. However, it is not attested for Wancho, a language variety which is more closely related to Khiamniungan than either is to Tangsa-Nocte.

Zooming out, other Sal groups, such as Barish (Bodo-Garo), again show the pattern. Examples 6 and 7 are from the Rupini clan-lect of Kokborok (Rupini, 2022 p.c.).

(6) *chak* *ret~ret*
red INT~RED
'deeply red'

(7) *chak* *smut~smut*
red MOD~RED
'faded red'

The head *chak* 'red' in 6 and 7 can also be modified through additional stative verbs which themselves may have reduplicated modifiers, as in Examples 8 and 9.

(8) *sai* *tru~tru*
faded INT~RED
'very faded'

(9) *kw-chak* *sai* *tru~tru*
NOMZ-red faded INT~RED
'faded red'

The specific pattern varies slightly from language to language. For example, Tangsa has been shown to have metrical constraints on the presence or absence of reduplication (van Dam, 2020). This may also be the case in other languages, but it has not yet been shown for those varieties that have been investigated for the ABB pattern.

Furthermore, in Tangsa, the nominalising prefix cannot be included in most instances of the ABB construction, although exceptions are attested. One such exception is <vthuicrvungcrvungc> /ə$_0$-t̪i$_3$-rɐuŋ$_3$-rɐuŋ$_3$/ in Muishaung, NOMZ-voice-INT~RED, referring to intense chirping of a bird. Kokborok has some cases where the nominalizing prefix is retained. 'Red' *kwchak* will lose the prefix when appended by the B~B modifier, but 'yellow' *kwrmw* may not. Additionally, the reduplicated form may be only partially reduplicated as in *kwrmw-lu~luk* due to phonotactic limitations.

As mentioned above, the pattern is not restricted to colour terms. Any stative verb and many dynamic verbs are able to fall into this construction, with some language-specific limitations. In Khiamniungan, this construction can occur with taste words, along with general type-B verb stems as defined in Dixon (1977). Table 1 is taken from Thaam (2025), reproduced with permission.

form	gloss
he ʧek~ʧek	sour, acrid (of smells)
ku sak~sak	bitter
hem taŋ~taŋ	scentless

Table 1: Smell modifiers based on taste stems (Thaam, 2025)

2. The question of areality

The notion of linguistic areas has always been difficult to define. The general consensus within typological circles is that linguistic areas do exist, but little agreement is to be found in terms of which languages belong to a given area, which features characterise that area, or indeed much else. Mainland Southeast Asia (MSEA) is one of the better-known proposals for a linguistic area, the features of which may include a particular set of phonotactic limitations, the presence of sesquisyllabic patterns with an overall simple syllable structure, and the presence of linguistic tone often involving at least to some degree registrogenesis (Gehrmann, 2022). It is also generally agreed upon that areas come about due to contact over time. For example, Enfield (2005) notes that when 'languages are spoken historically in the same location they often show significant parallels in the organisation of a wide range of structural domains,' and genetic relationships are not required. Put more simply, Campbell (2006, p. 2) declares that linguistic areas constitute 'local linguistic borrowing and its history, and little else.'

The current study does not set out to resolve the questions around a reality. Instead, we take as our definition the notion that the presence of a pattern across languages spoken in a common area, without the ability to point to that pattern as a genetic inheritance, is itself sufficient for considering it to be areal in nature. This has been argued (and continues to be argued) for features such as numeral classifiers, among other common Mainland Southeast Asian or Northeast Indian features. We argue that the reduplicative construction discussed here is also such a case. This can be justified on the following grounds.

First, the pattern occurs across the region with similar semantics and morphosyntactic restrictions, although some exceptions to the pattern do occur, as discussed in more detail below. Second, it occurs in languages that are not closely related, even between language families, but is absent in other languages which are closely related to those that show the pattern. Examples in Table 1 above are from the Wolam dialect of Khiamniungan, a dialect of northern Khiamniungan in which a number of such constructions are attested. However, as with other cases where closely related varieties do not always show the same patterns, a similar discrepancy is found between Wolam and Thang, a closely related dialect which also serves as the standard variety of Khiamniungan. For example, a modified form of *ɲaʔ*$_5$*tʃ*^{h}*iŋ*$_3$ 'black' occurs in both dialects, while another, *ɲaʔ*$_5$*tʃik*$_5$, occurs only in Wolam but is absent in Thang (Thaam, 2025 p.c.).

Finally, in some cases, the modifiers appear to be direct borrowing between language families. This is the case with Tangsa-Nocte *duk*$_4$*~duk*$_4$ and Tai Phake *tük*$_4$*~tük*$_4$, as well as Assamese *p*^{h}*ut~p*^{h}*ut* and Tangsa-Nocte *p*^{h}*ut*$_4$*~p*^{h}*ut*$_4$.

2.1 Exceptions to the pattern

Pattern violations do not necessarily cause an issue to the argument of areality but instead may be further evidence for it, since each variety will have slightly different restrictions on the form the pattern takes, while the basic structure is fundamentally shared.

The distribution of the pattern, that is, the languages in which the construction is attested or not, does not indicate genetic relationships. The fact that it is found in some parts of Patkaian but not others suggests it cannot be reliably reconstructed for proto-Patkaian. Likewise, it occurs in Kokborok as well as Garo (Burling 2004, p. 93), but not in some other Barish languages such as Boro, Atong, or Rabha. Joseph (2007, p. 214) offers an AB pattern for Rabha that looks similar to the forms in Kokborok, but without reduplication, as in Examples 10-12.

(10)	*sak*	(11)	*sak-kreŋ*	(12)	*sak-kroŋ*
	red		red-MOD		red-MOD
	'red'		'light red'		'red (of ripe paddy)'

Such a system hints at a potential earlier stage prior to the development of reduplication. For Meiteilon, Chelliah (1997, pp. 269f) describes a closed set of modifiers in B position which are likewise lexically specified, but lack reduplication as seen in Examples 13 and 14.

(13)	*səŋ*	*-trik*	*səŋ*	*-trik*	*pót*
	green	INT	green	INT	thing
	'excessively green items'				

(14)	*saŋ*	*-droŋ*	*saŋ*	*-droŋ*	*pót*
	long	INT	long	INT	thing
	'excessively long items'				

Notably, the construction is not found in Uipo either, although a similar reduplicative pattern does occur in which the lexically specified modifier precedes the head. For example, *tik~tik kʰamaŋ* meaning 'pitch black' has *tik~tik* functioning as an intensifier of *kʰamaŋ* 'black', with the prefix also retained on 'black'. This too has some surface similarity to the previously given Tai Phake intensifier, *tük₄~tük₄*, but this requires further investigation given the lack of attested terms of the type *tik~tik kʰamaŋ* in Uipo.

While the ABB pattern may have developed from an earlier AB pattern as seen in Rabha or Meiteilon, one feature which suggests transmission from contact is the similarity between languages for how semantic patterning occurs. That is, the lexically specified modifiers are sometimes applicable to multiple stems. In Tangsa-Nocte, 'black' and 'heavy' can take the same modifier *duk₄~duk₄*.

This is also the case in the non-Tibeto-Burman language Tai Phake, belonging to Southwestern Tai, that had considerable contact with Tangsa-Nocte. In Phake, *küt₄~küt₄* likewise covers both stems for 'black' and 'heavy'. What is more, the etymological origin of *duk₄~duk₄* is entirely unclear, with no obvious source stems. In other cases, modifiers can be linked to other synonymous stems attested in other related language varieties, but this is not the case for *duk₄~duk₄* in Tangsa. However, Phake has an additional modifier for black, *tük₄~tük₄*, a close phonological match. This may point to a possible direct borrowing.

Direct borrowings are otherwise attested between language families. One commonly found modifier in Patkaian is *pʰut₄~pʰut₄*, which can attach to certain basic colour terms such as 'white' and modifies the stem to mean 'speckled white'. This is almost certainly a result of borrowing from contact between Patkaian and Assamese, which has *pʰut-pʰut* with the same meaning.

2.2 ABB Constructions in Tai

Tai varieties were once widely spoken throughout the Northeast. Today, varieties of Tai have only a small number of speakers, the languages having largely been replaced by Indo-Aryan languages such as Assamese. However, the influence of Tai varieties on languages from other families in the Northeast is substantial. This section investigates patterns from NEI Tai varieties. These languages show a much greater range of intensifying reduplication patterns beyond the ABB pattern being discussed here, although ABB is one of the most frequent forms.

For example, the forms in Example 15 are taken from Tai Khamti as spoken in the Chindwin River Valley in Myanmar (Dockum, 2022, p.c.). They provide an example of two distinct modifiers in the language that both apply to 'tall' $s^huŋ_1$.

(15a)	$s^huŋ_1$	hi_4~hi_4		(15b)	$s^huŋ_1$	wi_4~wi_4	
	tall	INT~RED			tall	INT~RED	
	'exceptionally tall'				'exceptionally tall'		

The remainder of the Tai examples presented here are from Tai Phake, a small language spoken mostly in Tinsukia District, Assam. Data are from Hailowng (forthcoming), a massive dictionary of the language built upon the late Banchob Bandhumedha's self-published Phake-Thai-English Dictionary (1987). This effort expands the original approximately 10,000 entries into nearly 25,000 unique entries today. Early versions of the modern *Phake-English Dictionary* (hereafter PED) offer over 320 unique phrases defined as intensifiers. It is therefore perhaps the best source available today for intensification patterns of any Tai language of the immediate region.

Of these entries, the most common pattern to occur in the dictionary is ABB, in which a monomorphemic, monosyllabic stem takes a reduplicated intensifier as defined above. For roughly 320 intensifier phrases in total, nearly two hundred of these are in the form ABB. Half as many intensifiers appear in the PED, which have a similar pattern but in which the second syllable is either different by the initial of one of the intensifier morphemes. These are more similar to echo constructions, illustrated in Examples 16 and 17.

(16)	$cāŋ_1$	$sɛu_1$	$lɛu_2$		(17)	$yɔm_6$	$kāk_1$	$yāk_1$
	thin	INT	ECHO			long	INT	ECHO
	'thin, of liquids'					'emaciated'		

The great majority of these echo constructions contain alternations in the onset of the intensifier morphemes. Very few alternate the syllable rime, although examples such as *yam*$_2$ *yük*$_4$~*yāk*$_4$ ယံယိုက်ယက်, 'exceptionally wet', do occur. The number of intensifiers that are only a monomorphemic stem followed by a lexically-restricted monosyllabic intensifier is incredibly small in the PED. Only two such cases were found, *haiŋ*$_3$ *tɛt*$_3$'dry' and *phək*$_1$ *phān*$_1$ 'white'. Phake also has a few interesting cases that are not functioning as adjectives at all. These include *tə̄n*$_1$ *khut*$_4$~*khut*$_4$ for 'scratching intensively to relieve itch' and *waŋ*$_1$ *ŋa*$_8$~*ŋa*$_8$ meaning 'intensely confused'.

The remainder are essentially ABB patterns, but for which the stem is bi- or tri-morphemic, such as *lap*$_1$*siŋ*$_1$ *tük*$_4$~*tük*$_4$ meaning 'intensely dark'. The stem *siŋ*$_1$ is not used without *lap*$_1$ to mean 'dark'. An example of a tri-morphemic stem with a reduplicated intensifier is *phā*$_4$*phon*$_6$*lɔ̄*$_1$ *lauk*$_4$~*lauk*$_4$ or *phā*$_4$*phon*$_6$*lɔ̄*$_1$ *khum*$_4$~*khum*$_4$, both referring to an intense downpour. The stem *phā*$_4$*phon*$_6$*lɔ̄*$_1$ is a compound of *phā*$_4$ 'sky' *phon*$_6$ 'rain', and *lɔ*$_1$ 'to pour'.

These cases are not actual exceptions to the ABB pattern despite the entry in the PED having a polysyllabic head. Instead, the intensifiers such as *khum*$_4$~*khum*$_4$ can be analysed as simply attaching to the final morpheme in the pattern, in this case *lɔ*$_1$ 'to pour', and not to the whole phrase. For this reason, we analyse such examples as still being consistent with the definition for ABB patterns.

This same situation occurs elsewhere in the region. Example 18 is from Muishaung Tangsa, a Tibeto-Burman variety with around 2000 speakers in India.

(18) *rɐuŋ*$_2$*-ɲɐuk*$_4$ *tɨŋ*$_1$~*tɨŋ*$_1$
sky-dark MOD~RED
'rapid darkening of the sky'

Speakers will typically interpret *tɨŋ*$_1$~*tɨŋ*$_1$ as modifying rɐuŋ$_2$ɲɐuk$_4$ as a whole. The modifier is also lexically conditioned, in that removal of *rɐuŋ*$_2$ breaks the appropriateness of *tɨŋ*$_1$~*tɨŋ*$_1$ as a modifier. In spite of this, it should still be analysed as a monosyllabic head, *ɲɐuk*$_4$, followed by a modifier in the usual ABB pattern. The necessity of 'sky' as part of the phrase is likely the result of fossilisation of the phrase that has caused the modifier to be more restricted in this way. In such a case, *tɨŋ*$_1$ as a modifier would have fallen out of use with *ɲɐuk*$_4$ 'black, dark' more generally, leaving only the more complex form behind in the modern language.

Finally, one word occurs in the Phake-English dictionary, which patterns as ABBCC that evades further analysis here but is still worth mentioning. This is *lɔt*$_1$ *pit*$_1$~*pit*$_1$ *pɔt*$_1$~*pɔt*$_1$ meaning 'in many tiny fragments'. In this case, reduplication appears to function both as an intensifier as well as to convey a multitude. The phonetic shape of the intensifiers may also reflect some iconicity.

As with Tangsa-Nocte (van Dam, 2018), the presence of such modifiers on basic colour terms appears to correspond with the hierarchy of Berlin and Kay (1969). The term for 'grey' in Phake has a non-reduplicated form of intensification, *mun*$_1$ *khū*$_6$ *lū*$_2$. Grey occurs late in the hierarchy, and also often lacks ABB pattern intensifiers in Tangsa-Nocte. However 'yellow', an earlier term, has both an ABB pattern as in *ləŋ*$_6$ *phauŋ*$_4$~*phauŋ*$_4$ with reduplication as well as *ləŋ*$_6$ *ā*$_1$ *hā*$_4$, both meaning 'intensely yellow', as an intensifier without the pattern.

3. Absences in Northeastern languages

ABB patterns of reduplication are not found in all languages of the region. For example, as mentioned above, they are absent in Wancho despite being commonly found in closely related languages such as Tangsa-Nocte and Khiamniungan. Zooming out further, such patterns are found in some Barish (Bodo-Garo) languages as described above, but not in Jinghpaw, a major part of the easternmost branch of the Sal languages (Kurabe 2016). They are also notably absent from languages such as Tangam (Post 2017; Borang et al., 2020) and Meiteilon (Chelliah, 1997).

It is also unattested in Changki (Glottolog: chan1311), an undescribed variety of Ao, which has instead full reduplication of disyllabic verbs followed by a single morpheme. Thus *seplep-seplepü* for 'very careless' from *seplep* 'careless', of which many examples can be found. Likewise, in the closely related Mongsen Ao, Coupe (2017, p. 81) states that 'reduplicated stative verbs express intensified meanings, whereas reduplicated activity verbs express durative meanings'. However, no such ABB patterns are attested. It is also unattested in Amri Karbi (Glottolog: amri1238, Konnerth 2014) or Galo (Glottolog: galo1242, Post 2007).

Likewise, in Mizo (Glottolog: lush1249), there is little explanation for such constructions when found in the literature. At least one is given in Subbarao & Murthy (1998), adapted in Example 19.

(19) *pang-paar*$_1$ *moi*$_1$ *em*$_3$ *em*$_3$ *ka*$_1$ *mhuu*
flower pretty INT~RED 1NOM see
'I saw a gorgeous flower'

This is the only example given in Subbarao and Murthy (1998), and it is unclear if this entirely fits the necessary criteria. Chhangte (1986) provides instances which appear to fit the pattern, but for which the modifier is *tak* 'very', and reduplication simply emphasises this. Thus, it is not considered a proper example in the construction discussed here. Whether or not this is or has been a more productive construction is yet to be seen and requires additional analysis.

4. Conclusion

This study has presented examples from languages across Northeast India and neighbouring Myanmar showing a particular construction of stative verb plus a reduplicated modifier. This ABB pattern is frequently attested in a range of languages, however, its distribution cannot be attributed to shared inheritance for several reasons.

First, there is often a lack of cognacy between not only the verb stem but also the modifiers from one language to the next; basic terms which fall under Dixon's type-B set (Dixon, 1977) are often unrelated even between some closely related languages. As seen in van Dam (2018), even for very closely related language varieties with a high degree of mutual intelligibility, modifiers are not consistently shared between varieties.

Language	Subgroup	Glottolog	ABB?
Amri Karbi	South Central	armi1238	no
Assamese	Indo-Aryan	assa1263	marginal
Atong	Bodo-Garo	aton1241	no
Boro	Bodo-Garo	bodo1269	no
Changki	Aoic	chan1311	no
Galo	Macro-Tani	galo1242	no
Garo	Bodo-Garo	garo1247	yes
Meiteilon	Manipuri	mani1292	no
Mizo	Mizoic	lush1249	possible
Muishaung Tangsa	Patkaian	mosa1240	yes
Rabha	Bodo-Garo	rabh1238	no
Rupini Kok	Bodo-Garo	rupi1234	yes
Thang Khiamniungan	Patkaian	khia1236	yes
Tai Khamti	Tai	kham1290	yes

Tai Phake	Tai	phak1238	yes
Uipo	Maringic	khoi1251	no
Wolam Khiamniungan	Patkaian	wola1254	yes
Yongkuk Tangsa	Patkaian	yong1272	yes

Table 2: Languages referenced in the text

Second, while the construction occurs within multiple sub-branches of a given language, it is notably absent in others. Table 2 shows which languages were included in our study and whether or not the pattern is found. We find the pattern in Khiamniungan and Tangsa-Nocte, but not in Wancho. It occurs in Kokborok and Garo, but not Boro or Rabha. Additionally, the construction is found between unrelated language families. It is incredibly widespread in Southwestern Tai varieties spoken in Northeast India, with hundreds of examples found in Tai Phake making up nearly two thirds of all attested instances of reduplicative intensification in the language.

Abbreviations

ECHO	echo formation, partial reduplication of previous morpheme
INT	intensifier
MOD	modifier without intensifying function
NOMZ	nominalising prefix
RED	full reduplication of previous morpheme

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