THE PROCESS OF CHIMING IN TIDDIM CHIN

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I. Henderson (1965:57) noted the occurrence of chiming in adverbs of Tiddim Chin. According to her, a chiming adverb is "...a special kind of reduplicated adverb, very common in the colloquial style, in which there is a variation in the vowels of the adverb...". Tiddim Chin has considerable differences between what are called narrative style and colloquial styles—thus reflecting a diglossic situation. One of the characteristics of the colloquial style is the availability of a large number of chimed adverbs in it. Henderson identified the fact that chiming is peculiar to adverbs as a class. Simple reduplication is less common among adverbs as compared to chiming. An example of simple reduplication is: gem⁷—gem⁷ "doing something in a fast but unskilled manner".

Chimed adverbs are always composed of two syllables which begin with a consonant: the second syllable being a copy of the first syllable except that in a majority of cases the vowel of the second syllable is more open than that of the first syllable. E.g.:

dim³—dem³ 'describing things kept in an order e.g., guns, swords'

gem³—gan³ 'describing objects which appear to be old and rugged'.

In a chimed adverb in the first syllable only /i/ and /e/ occur with the exception of /iːu/ and /ia/. /o/ does not appear in either the first syllable or in the second syllable. A good number of the chimed adverbs have alternate forms which do not differ in meaning. E.g. gin⁷—gen⁷ alternating with gen⁷—gan⁷ [describing animals or persons with long legs but strong bodies].

II. Onomatopoeic words are known to have exceptional phonological behaviour. In Tiddim Chin we find an exception to a synchronic phonological rule: [t] and [c] do not contrast in the data except in the case of the chiming adverbs. In words other than the chimed adverbs [c] occurs before /i/ and [t] occurs in other contexts. But in the chiming adverbs both [t] and [c] can occur before /i/. Dahal (1971) defines a phonesthetic element as "either a phoneme component (e.g. voicing or aspiration) or a single phoneme (eg /i/ or /a/) or a sequence of phonemes (e.g. /ya/,/wa/) which recurs in different bases and which can be associated vaguely with some meaning dependent on some imaginable resemblance between sound and meaning". He prefers to call them elements rather than morphemes "because the correlation and patterns are too tenuous to justify the use of the latter term". Similar observations are made about Telugu (Bhaskararao 1977). Several of the chimed adverbs could be put into groups which have similarity both in their meanings and in their shapes. There are several other single items which do not seem to share sound-meaning relationship with each other. The following are the categories of
chimed adverbs that have meaning-form similarity:

**Long**

- $\text{di:}^1\text{-dial}^2$; $\text{di:}^2\text{-deu}^2$; $\text{di:}^3\text{-gial}^1$; $\text{di:}^4\text{-dian}^2$; $\text{din}^1\text{-den}^1$
- [time]; $\text{dim}^1\text{-dei}^2$ [distance]; $\text{dem}^1\text{-dam}^1$

**Long and thin**

- $\text{zik}^1\text{-zek}^1$; $\text{zil}^1\text{-zel}^1$; $\text{zel}^1\text{-zal}^1$; $\text{zi:}^1\text{-zial}^1$

**Long limb'd/stick like/with slender connection**

- $\text{gin}^2\text{-gen}^2$; $\text{ging}^2\text{-geng}^2$; $\text{gin}^2\text{-geng}^2$; $\text{gi:e}^2\text{-ge:i}^2$; $\text{gi:k}^2\text{-ge:k}^2$

**Spider-like/light**

- $\text{ki:m}^2\text{-kiam}^1$; $\text{kiang}^1\text{-kiang}^1$

**Chunky**

- $\text{beu}^2\text{-bau}^2$; $\text{be:}^2\text{-ba:}^2$; $\text{be:}^3\text{-ba:}^1$

**Bright**

- $\text{se}^1\text{-sa}^1$; $\text{sia}^2\text{-sus}^2$; $\text{sial}^1\text{-sial}^1$; $\text{sial}^1\text{-sial}^1$

**Bright and shining**

- $\text{ki:}^1\text{-kial}^1$; $\text{ki:}^1\text{-kel}^1$

**Shining/smooth**

- $\text{del}^1\text{-dell}^1$; $\text{del}^1\text{-dall}^1$

**Dark/black**

- $\text{mek}^1\text{-mak}^1$; $\text{men}^2\text{-mang}^2$; $\text{mi:}^1\text{-mial}^1$

**Dark/covered/hidden/quiet**

- $\text{khim}^2\text{-khem}^2$; $\text{kham}^2\text{-khem}^2$; $\text{khi:}^1\text{-khial}^1$; $\text{khi:}^2\text{-khe:}^2$; $\text{khi:n}\text{-khan}^1$

**Green**

- $\text{dim}^2\text{-dem}^2$; $\text{dek}^1\text{-dak}^1$

**Low**

- $\text{di:e}^3\text{-diai}^3$; $\text{ding}^2\text{-deng}^2$ [low in status]

**High**

- $\text{ve:}^1\text{-va}^1$; $\text{vang?}^3\text{-vang}^3$; $\text{veu}^2\text{-vau}^2$

**Heat**

- $\text{lin}^1\text{-len}^1$; $\text{lian}^2\text{-luan}^2$

**Shabby/dirty/drooping/muddy/non-respectable looking**

- $\text{nen}^2\text{-nan}^2$; $\text{ne:i}^2\text{-nai}^2$; $\text{nai:}^2\text{-nai:}^2$; $\text{niang}^1\text{-nuang}^1$; $\text{nie}^2\text{-nei:}^2$; $\text{ni\?}^3\text{-ne\?}^3$; $\text{nik}^1\text{-nek}^1$; $\text{ni:}^1\text{-nian}^1$; $\text{ne:p}^3\text{-ne:p}$

**Strong/rugged**

- $\text{gem}^2\text{-gam}^2$; $\text{gia}^2\text{-gua}^2$; $\text{gi:}^3\text{-gem}^3$

**Well-built/fatty**

- $\text{keng}^2\text{-kang}^2$; $\text{kang}^1\text{-keng}^1$
Orderly
\textit{dim}^3-\textit{dem}^3; \textit{dit}^3-\textit{det}^3; \textit{di}:\textit{m}^1-\textit{diam}^1; \textit{dieu}^3-\textit{deu}^3

\textit{Hairy/thick and soft/puffy}
\textit{chem}^1-\textit{cham}^2; \textit{chel}^2-\textit{chal}^2; \textit{them}^2-\textit{tham}^2; \textit{then}^2-\textit{than}^2;
\textit{theu}^2-\textit{thau}^2; \textit{the}:\textit{u}^2-\textit{thau}:\textit{u}^2; \textit{thiu}^2-\textit{theu}^2; \textit{thiau}^2-\textit{thau}:\textit{u}^2;
\textit{thi}:\textit{p}^3-\textit{thiap}^3

\textit{Muddy}
\textit{di}^3-\textit{de}^3; \textit{di}:\textit{r}^3-\textit{dia}^3

\textit{Remote}
\textit{veng}^3-\textit{vang}^3; \textit{viau}^2-\textit{viau}^2 \textit{ving}^3-\textit{veng}^3; \textit{vi}:\textit{u}^2-\textit{viau}^2

\textit{Large numbers}
\textit{zai}^2-\textit{zai}^2; \textit{\textit{ji}^1-\textit{zia}^1}; \textit{zi}^2-\textit{zia}^2; \textit{zie}^2-\textit{zei}^2; \textit{zi}^3-\textit{zia}^3
\textit{zeng}^3-\textit{zeng}^3; \textit{zu}^3-\textit{zua}^3

\textit{Plenty/massive}
\textit{mei}^2-\textit{mai}^2; \textit{muai}^2-\textit{muai}^2; \textit{mai}^2-\textit{mai}^2; \textit{mie}^2-\textit{mai}^2; \textit{muai}^2-\textit{muai}^2

\textit{Persistent}
\textit{tin}^1-\textit{ten}^1; \textit{te}:\textit{2}-\textit{ta}:\textit{2}; \textit{te}:\textit{i}^3-\textit{te}:\textit{i}^3; \textit{ta}:\textit{1}-\textit{ta}:\textit{1}

\textit{Emaciated/helpless}
\textit{li}:\textit{k}^1-\textit{le}:\textit{k}^1; \textit{li}:\textit{k}^1-\textit{liak}^1

\textit{Unclear}
\textit{mial}^1-\textit{mual}^1; \textit{mual}^1-\textit{mual}^1

\textit{Paired}
\textit{hel}^1-\textit{hal}^1; \textit{hi}:\textit{1}-\textit{hial}^1

III. Kim-Renaud (1976) suggests that "we have to admit some semantic features and some semantic conditioning in phonology if we want to capture generalisations underlying certain phonological phenomena". Her main argument is based upon the fact that in Korean "certain semantic features which are predictable from phonetic features may acquire a classificatory function because of various sound changes that affect the original phonetic values of different segments". In Korean light vowels (E, E, a, o) "are usually correlated with the impression of smallness, brightness, and shallowness, often called the diminutive connotation..." and dark vowels (i, e, u, e, o) "give a feeling of size, darkness and depth". Her observation (p.408) that "semantic features have a role to play in phonological analysis" gets additional support from another sub-process of chiming in Tiddim Chin adverbs.

So far we have seen how chiming affects the vowels of the two syllables in these adverbs. A large number of the chiming adverbs have corresponding forms with the vowel of the second syllable replacing the vowel in the first syllable. These forms are used to modify a verb denoting an action as opposed to the original forms which are used to
modify stative verbs. Observe:

(a) hiʔ³ mi²-pa¹ sa:nɡ² gen²-gan² hi¹
   this man tall
   'This man is tall'
(b) ka²-la²-ou¹ a² sa:nɡ² gen²-gan² kha³ hong¹-pa² gen²-gan² hi¹
   camel tall one came
   'The tall camel is coming in a gan-gan way'

We have noted that some chimed adverbs have alternate forms which do not differ in their meaning. The set of vowels of one form are replaced by a related set of vowels of the alternate form. Out of these two sets one is considered basic. Thus out of the two alternate forms [form 1 and form 2], it is the form 2 that is mostly used for deriving the adverb of motion mentioned above. In such forms there is a relationship between the vowel(s) in Form 1 and the vowel(s) in Form 2. The corresponding sets of vowels are listed below:

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<tr>
<th>Vowel(s) in Syllable</th>
<th>Form 1</th>
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<th>Form 2</th>
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E.g. Form 1: ci:u³-ciu³ > Form 2: ciu³-ciu³ describes small sized things and beings which are relatively of smaller size [e.g. a small insect as compared to a large beetle, a mouse compared to other big four-legged animals, a small baby] > ciu³-ciu³ describes the movement of such small sized beings or things.

Some more examples of derived adverbs follow: [An adverb of motion derived from a stative adverb is marked with the \( \Rightarrow \) prefix.]

beu²-bau²
a big chunk of meat or a large piece of timber [cf. beu² 'a log']. While referring to a 'a chunk of meat', this stands for a naturally separable chunk like the leg of a chicken. cf. be:²-ba:² stands for a chunk which is cut from any part of the body. \( \Rightarrow \) bau²-bau² eating a chunk denoted by beu²-bau²

dit³-det³ = det³-det³
being in a row with absolute calmness [usually in a sitting position as people sitting in a row near a dead person] \( \Rightarrow \) dit³-det³ movement as in a funeral procession or prisoners moving in a row silently as in a jail

king¹-keng¹ = keng¹-kang¹