The Variation of Free Morphemes in Compound Words in Jinghpo

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In the Jinghpo language when free morphemes appear in compound words they often undergo variation in their phonetic form and/or meaning. Many of the variations occur when they are the initial morphemes of compound words. Not only is there variation in the characteristics of these morphemes, but this variation also gives rise to changes in the structural pattern of compound words. Furthermore, this variational phenomenon raises a new question as to how to understand the morpheme.

Part I. Phonetic Variation

Phonetic variation of free morphemes in compound words can be divided into three types according to the locus of the variation. In the first type the variation occurs in the initial consonant, in the second type the variation occurs in the rhyme, and in the third type variation occurs over the whole syllable. When the free morpheme is disyllabic, usually the second syllable is used to form the compound word, and phonetic variation will occur in this second syllable. Another point to be noted is that the tone often changes when a free morpheme appears in a compound word.

1.1 Types of phonetic variation

1.1.1 Rhyme variation

The first type of phonetic variation is variation in the rhyme. This is rather common. Especially important is the reduction of a vowel to schwa. For example:

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kä³⁵wa⁵⁵ 'bamboo' → wä³¹

wä³¹ tʃen³³ 'bamboo slice'
  bamboo slice
wa³¹ pɔt³¹ 'bamboo root'
  bamboo root
wä³¹ tsit³¹ 'green bamboo'
  bamboo green
wa³¹ kʃip³¹ 'shriveled bamboo'
  bamboo shriveled

ka⁵⁵ 'soil' → kä³¹

kä³¹ kʰjer³³ 'red soil'
  soil
  red
kä³¹ mut³¹ 'fertile soil'
  soil
  gray
kä³¹ tʃaj³³ 'black soil'
  soil
  fine
kä³¹ ni³¹ 'watery mud'

pä³¹si³³ 'cotton' → sä³¹

sä³¹ phɔ³³ 'cotton farmland'
  cotton
  farmland
sä³¹ ʒin⁵⁵ 'rolled cotton'
  cotton
  roll
sä³¹ khap⁵⁵ 'a shoulder-pole
  of cotton'
  cotton
  shoulder-pole
sä³¹ phuŋ⁵⁵ 'thick-shaft cotton'
  cotton
  thick.shaft

tum³¹si³³ 'porcupine' → sä³¹

sä³¹ tʃap³¹ 'smell of porcupine'
  porcupine
  smell
sä³¹ pʃum³¹ 'arrow of porcupine'
  porcupine
  arrow.shape
sä³¹ ku⁵⁵ 'buttock meat
  of porcupine'
  porcupine
  full.and.round
sä³¹ phaj⁵⁵ 'porcupine cave'
  porcupine
  cave

mä³¹sin³¹ 'liver; heart; vital organ; seat of emotions' → sä³¹

sä³¹ lum³³ 'heart'
  organ
  round
sä³¹ kʒi³¹ 'gallbladder'
  organ
  gallbladder
sä³¹ te⁵⁵ 'kidney'
  organ
  kidney

wa³³ 'tooth' → wä⁵⁵

wä⁵⁵ thap⁵⁵ 'bucktooth'
  tooth
  overlap
wä⁵⁵ ʒon⁵¹ 'crooked tooth'
  tooth
  erect
wä⁵⁵ tʃi⁵⁵ 'alveolus'
  tooth
  convex
wä⁵⁵ ʒum⁵¹ '(teeth) all fallen out'
  tooth
  fallen.out
nin³³wa³³ ‘axe’ → wä³³

wä³³ thon⁵¹ ‘back of axe’ wä³³ na³³ ‘holes in axe’
axe back axe ears
wä³³ lan⁵¹ ‘axe handle’
axe handle

tjën³³kha³³ ‘door’ → kha³³
khä³³ noi⁵⁵ ‘door lintel’ khä³³ lap⁵⁵ ‘window’
door hang door leaf
khä³³ tun⁵⁵ ‘threshold’
door surface

pu³¹ ‘intestines’ → pa³¹
pa³¹ tun³¹ ‘starch sausage’ pa³¹ tsät³¹ ‘womb’
intestines starch intestines add
pa³¹ ʒan³¹ ‘put in order’ (intestines)
intestines put.in.order

lā³¹py³³ ‘snake’ → pā³³
pā³³ nen³³ ‘snake saliva’ pā³³ nui³³ ‘boa’
snake smooth snake soft

In a few cases, a constituent undergoes a change from an originally open syllable to a syllable closed with a final glottal stop. For example:

lā⁵⁵ŋə³³ banana (wild) → ŋə³³

ŋə³³ tun³¹ ‘top of banana leaf’ ŋə³³ li³³ ‘banana leaf bud’
banana leaf.tip banana leaf.bud
ŋə³³ kəŋ³³ ‘a kind of banana’
banana wither

Most of the stop-final rhymes do not change, e.g. compound words which contain wa³¹ ‘pig’. There are only one or two other stop-final syllables in the lexicon which are neutralized to open syllables in compound words. See the following example:

tjën³¹pho³³ ‘people’ → phä³³
phä³³ on³³ ‘leader’ phä³³ ʒen³³ ‘commander’
people lead people command
1.1.2 Initial consonant variation

The second type of phonetic morpheme variation is initial consonant variation. These include $\eta \rightarrow w$, $n \rightarrow l$, $w$ and $l \rightarrow m$, etc. Initial consonant variation often occurs simultaneously with vowel neutralization to schwa.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$\eta\acute{a}^{33}$ 'ox'</th>
<th>$\rightarrow$</th>
<th>$\text{w}^{\grave{a}}^{55}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\text{w}^{\acute{a}}^{33}$ lam$^{55}$ 'loitering ox'</td>
<td>$\rightarrow$</td>
<td>$\text{w}^{\acute{a}}^{55}$ tat$^{55}$ 'livestock farm'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ox</td>
<td>loiter</td>
<td>ox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\text{w}^{\acute{a}}^{33}$ pja$^{33}$ 'aborted ox'</td>
<td>$\rightarrow$</td>
<td>$\text{w}^{\acute{a}}^{55}$ tam$^{55}$ 'running-around ox'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ox</td>
<td>abort</td>
<td>ox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\eta\acute{a}^{55}$ 'fish'</td>
<td>$\rightarrow$</td>
<td>$\text{w}^{\grave{a}}^{31}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\text{w}^{\acute{a}}^{31}$ lun$^{55}$ 'fish swimming'</td>
<td>$\rightarrow$</td>
<td>$\text{w}^{\acute{a}}^{55}$ zat$^{31}$ 'carp'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fish</td>
<td>up</td>
<td>fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\text{w}^{\acute{a}}^{31}$ khje$^{33}$ 'yellow croaker'</td>
<td>$\rightarrow$</td>
<td>$\text{w}^{\acute{a}}^{31}$ man$^{55}$ 'shark'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fish</td>
<td>red</td>
<td>fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>na$^{33}$ 'ear'</td>
<td>$\rightarrow$</td>
<td>$\text{l}^{\grave{a}}^{55}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\text{l}^{\acute{a}}^{55}$ tsqp$^{55}$ 'eardrum'</td>
<td>$\rightarrow$</td>
<td>$\text{l}^{\acute{a}}^{55}$ tan$^{55}$ 'ear adornment'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ear</td>
<td>membrane</td>
<td>ear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\text{l}^{\acute{a}}^{55}$ kjo$^{51}$ 'earwax'</td>
<td>$\rightarrow$</td>
<td>$\text{l}^{\acute{a}}^{33}$ pjen$^{33}$ 'earlobe'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ear</td>
<td>shriveled</td>
<td>ear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>khai$^{55}$nu$^{33}$ 'corn'</td>
<td>$\rightarrow$</td>
<td>$\text{w}^{\grave{a}}^{55}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\text{w}^{\acute{a}}^{55}$ kh30$^{55}$ 'dried corn'</td>
<td>$\rightarrow$</td>
<td>$\text{w}^{\acute{a}}^{33}$ p$^{\acute{a}}^{33}$ 'corn cord'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corn</td>
<td>dry</td>
<td>corn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\text{w}^{\acute{a}}^{33}$ ph3a$^{33}$ 'cornfield'</td>
<td>$\rightarrow$</td>
<td>$\text{w}^{\acute{a}}^{55}$ phi$^{55}$ 'corn skin'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corn</td>
<td>field</td>
<td>corn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lam$^{33}$ 'road'</td>
<td>$\rightarrow$</td>
<td>$\text{m}^{\acute{a}}^{31}$, num$^{31}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mÄ$^{31}$ sun$^{33}$ 'path'</td>
<td>$\rightarrow$</td>
<td>mÄ$^{31}$ p3o$^{31}$ 'branch road'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>road</td>
<td>small</td>
<td>road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>num$^{31}$ je$^{55}$ 'branch road'</td>
<td>$\rightarrow$</td>
<td>(=mÄ$^{31}$ je$^{55}$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>road</td>
<td>branch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>num$^{31}$ sat$^{31}$ 'make road'</td>
<td>$\rightarrow$</td>
<td>num$^{31}$ p3o$^{31}$ 'crossroads'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>road</td>
<td>scratch</td>
<td>road</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.1.3 Full syllable variation

The third type of variation is that which occurs over the whole syllable. In this type of variation the whole syllable is simplified to syllabic $n$-. Both nasal-final syllables and nasal-initial syllables are often simplified to $n$-. The