REDUPLICATION IN THE M’NONG LANGUAGE

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0 Introduction
The M’nong language belongs to the South Bahnaric language subgroup of Mon-Khmer, part of the greater Austroasiatic language family. M’nong is native to the southern and southwest parts of Dak Lak province and the northern part of neighboring Song Be and Lam Dong provinces, all in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. The M’nong language is spoken by 67,062 people in Viet Nam (1989 census). This paper on morphological reduplication in M’nong is based on the dialect of M’nong Preh spoken in the villages of Cu Jut and Dakgan in Dak Lak province.

1 The Forms of Reduplication in the M’nong Language
The M’nong language has several forms of reduplication. Each form expresses a distinct meaning and follows a phonetic rule. Reduplication in M’nong is used in some of the following ways: to describe an emotion or an attitude of the speaker in a particular situation, to indicate the degree or the characteristic nature of the base word, or to express onomatopoeia, among others. The reduplicants often consist of either a series of two-syllable or four-syllable units, though some three-syllable units do occur.

1.1 Two-Syllable Constructions
The first (or the second) syllable of a two-syllable series generally is a free root and does not change as reduplication occurs, and its meaning also remains the same. This reduplication occurs mainly with adjectives, verbs, nouns and descriptive roots, but it also occurs to a lesser degree with other classes of roots. In onomatopoeic words, the reduplicated syllable has no lexical meaning. There are two types of reduplication which form two-syllable constructions: total and partial reduplication.

1.1.1 Total Reduplication
Total reduplication involves the complete repetition of the original free root. The free root has a syllable structure which falls into one of three structural types: an open syllable (ending in a vowel), a sonorant syllable (ending in a nasal or semivowel), or a closed syllable (ending in an unreleased stop). The following are examples.¹

¹ The script used in this paper is based on the Vietnamese Quoc Ngu alphabet, commonly used to represent other indigenous languages spoken in Vietnamese. Many consonants and are pronounced as they are in English, while the vowels used in this paper require some explanation: ‘a’ is IPA /a/, ‘â’ is /ʌ/, ‘e’ is /ɛ/, ‘ê’ is /ɛ/, ‘i’ is /ɪ/, ‘o’ is /ɔ/, ‘ô’ is /ɔ/, ‘u’ is /u/, ‘û’ /u/. Among the notable exceptions for consonants, ‘ng’ is /ŋ/ and ‘nh’ is /ɲ/. Long vowels can be indicated by a line above.

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a) **Open syllables**: *bro* bro* ‘continuously’, *bru* bru* ‘homeless, neglected’, *mhaor* mhaor* ‘every afternoon’

b) **Sonorant syllables**: *blao* blao* ‘stagger, reel’, *iom* iom* ‘quietly, softly’, *blun* blun* ‘very fast’, *hol* hol* ‘shoulder’, *vir* vir* ‘mooching around/moping about’, *đúng* đúng* ‘flame, blaze’

c) **Closed syllables**: *bik* bik* ‘thumps’, *groc* groc* ‘flock’, *hop* hop* ‘open the mouth wide, gape’

The initial consonant of a reduplicated syllable can be a single consonant or a consonant cluster. The combinations of bilabial voiced stops with liquids such as: [br], [бл], [-br], [-бл] and the single consonant [ɾ] are particularly common in the reduplicated root. Other consonant clusters found in reduplicated forms include: [ɡr], [ɡl], [ɡr], [kl], [dr], [pl], [tr], [nd], [nʰ], [rʰ], among others.

1.1.2 Partial Reduplication
This reduplication can be divided into several types: (a) changes of the initial consonant, (b) changes of the vowel, (c) changes of the final consonant, and (d) changes of both the vowel and final consonant. Each type is discussed and illustrated below.

(A) Changing of the initial consonant:
In this construction, the vowel and the final consonants of the syllable remain unchanged, while the initial consonant or consonant cluster is changed according to a particular pattern. For the majority of the data fitting this form, the initial consonant of the first syllable is a liquid, either an [ɾ] or an [l], and the second syllable can begin with any consonant. The following are examples of these alternations.

- **r - b** : rik bik* ‘swarm, teem - insects’, rôc bôc* ‘whisper’, rok hok* ‘in a hushed tone’
- **r - c** : rip cip* ‘sound of small bird- tweet tweet’, rúc cúc* ‘bend over some work’
- **r - d** : rup dup* ‘of house: lowly, shabby’, nun dun* ‘stooping’
- **r - h** : raăng haăng* ‘scorching, burning-hot’, rok hok* ‘wait’
- **r - kh** : rik khik* ‘giggle’, rok khok* ‘roar of laughter’
- **r - ng** : rok ngok* ‘swarming, teeming (with people)’, rôc ngôc* ‘clean, tidy’
- **r - s** : rap siap* ‘rustling of leaves, of gravel’, rap swap* ‘rustle, rustling’
- **r - bl** : rip blip* ‘shine, glitter of eyes’, rèp blêp* ‘twinkle’
- **r - kl** : rük klik* ‘silence of nature’, rûk klik* ‘in silence, quiet of people’
- **l - h** : lût hut* ‘flying low’, lût hutq* ‘sound of agreement’
- **l - v** : lah vah* ‘rock’, lûg vûng* ‘supple of movements’

(B) Changing of the vowel
(B.1) Change in the pitch only: This change can be predicted for the majority of the data on the basis of the vowel pitch. The tongue height never changes between the first and second syllable, but the pitch always changes from high to low between the two syllables. The change can also be considered as a change from a front vowel to a back vowel with the same tongue height. This applies equally whether the vowel is long or short. Some examples follow.
a. Alternation between long vowels [i-u] and short vowels [ɨ – ʉ]:

i - u: plip plup ‘chubby, plump’, hik huk ‘untidy’, ntik ntuk ‘be hanging in the air’, plih pluh ‘wag’, bit but ‘shake, vibrate’

ɨ - ʉ: din düm ‘stooping, bending’, cît cüit ‘sound of pounding rice’, bit büt ‘smile, smiling’

b. Alternation between long vowels [e–o] and short vowels [ē-ō]:

e - o: en on ‘feeble, weak’, lo le ‘be abandoned, helpless’, ceq coq ‘timid; abashed’, eng ong ‘be furious; irascible’

ē - ē: ēm ôm ‘threaten’, krēp krēp ‘noise of ox cart running on stone-road’

(B.2) Change in the tongue height only: This is a second type of vowel change between the high and close vowels [i, u] and the one low and open vowel [a]. Some examples for the alternation [i-a] and [u-a] follow.

i - a: brim bram ‘closely-planted’, nhîp nhap ‘very dirty, soiled’, gik gak ‘strut; go slowly like an important person’, sūt saut ‘dark, gloomy’

u - a: hur har ‘thirst for, hunger for’, bru bra ‘be dispersed, flee in all directions’, rju rja ‘stay too long, linger’, ruq raq ‘drip drop’

(C) Changing of the final consonant

In this case, the final consonant of the first syllable must be a voiceless stop: [p], [t], [k], [q] or a voiceless glottal fricative [h]. The final consonant occurring in the second syllable is either a liquid [l] or [r], a nasal [m], [n], [nh], [ng], or it is zero.

p - l: nôt nól ‘durable, be lasting’

k - l: hok hol ‘in a mess’, hik hil ‘playful, mischievous’

k - r: blip blir ‘boast, talk big’

k - t: ndēt ndēr ‘helpless’

c - r: ngâm ngår ‘nimble, briskly’, hoc hör ‘panic-stricken’

c - m: gāc gām ‘honest, good’

q - n: luq lun ‘grow a paunch’, dhiq din ‘fat, corpulent’

h - nh: bhioh bhionh ‘have the gift of the gab, loquacious’, jôh jônh ‘uneven’

h - l: bhiah bhial ‘dripping wet’

k - t - zero: viēt viē ‘confused, embarrassed’, kut ku ‘cuckoo’

Of the different combinations listed above, the most common pairs found are [k-l], [c-l], [c-r], [t-r]. These account for 51.8% of all final consonant changes found in our field work data.
(D) Changing of both the vowel and the final consonant
There seems to be no regularity or predictability to either the vowel quality or the final consonant change. However, there is a tendency for the second syllable to be more sonorant than the first syllable.

blâk blo‘wander’, râk rong ‘take care’, roh rai ‘disperse’
blênh blu‘appear and disappear’, laq lêng ‘roll of a drum’

One syllable words can also reduplicate just the initial consonant to form a presyllable. The first syllable is more sonorant than the second syllable.

bok ‘white’ > bêbok ‘off white, whitish’
duh ‘hot’ > doruh ‘lukewarm’
nhot ‘tough’ > nho nthot ‘slightly tough’
kot ‘strong, thick’ > kakot ‘a little strong/ thick’

1.2 Four-syllable constructions
Four-syllable constructions occur with two-syllable free roots, which may be completely reduplicated or partially reduplicated. The reduplication formula is expressed with the following symbols.

A- one syllable in the root
B- a second syllable in the root different from A
A’- partial reduplication of A
B’- partial reduplication of B
x- a syllable, completely different from A or B
x’- partial reduplication of X

(A) AB > ABAB (A two-syllable root is reduplicated completely.)

mbrêh nhaâp ‘scintillate’ > mbrêh nhaâp mbrêh nhaâp
blê blêp ‘shine’ > blê blêp blê blêp
du hû ‘in turn’ > du hû du hû

(B) AB > AABB (A and B are both free roots, each one is reduplicated completely. AA always occurs before BB.)

kho ao ‘clothes’ > kho kho ao ao
ur sai ‘wife and husband’ > ur ur sai sai
en on ‘mincing’ > en en on on
gân ngôi ‘laugh and speak’ > sân sân ngôi ngôi
guq dok ‘sit and stand’ > guq guq dok dok

(C) AB > ABAB’ (AB is a two-syllable compound word.)

êng ang ‘strange’ > êng ang êng rang
cê lêt ‘small, unimportant’ > cê lêt cê lanh