Bahnar Affixation

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O. Introduction

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4. Passive
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O. Introduction

Many of the Mon-Khmer languages, in contrast with the better known monosyllabic languages of Southeast Asia, have affixation. Affixes have been described in Khmer, Old Khmer,

1. Bahnar is a member of the Mon-Khmer language family and is spoken by approximately eighty thousand people in Kontum, Pleiku, and Bình Dinh provinces of South Viet Nam. This paper is based on the dialect of Plei Bong Mohr in Pleiku province.

I am indebted to David D. Thomas for help in the analysis and writing of this paper.
Mon, Khmu?, and Khasi, and have been reported to occur in many other Mon-Khmer languages.\(^2\) Bahnar also has considerable affixation, as was briefly outlined by Dourisbourne and noted by Guilleminet.\(^3\) The purpose of this paper is to present the affix system of Bahnar in detail.

Most Bahnar affixes can only occur on one-syllable roots because the Bahnar word limit is two syllables. *Bor-* , the one exception, can occur with two-syllable roots by replacing their first syllable. *Jo-* , which is a clitic, can occur with two-syllable roots and derived stems.

1. Nominalizer

1.1. Function of *on*. The only infix found in Bahnar is *on-, which functions syntactically as a nominalizer, converting verbs to nouns.

In many instances the derived noun has a meaning of

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result, ‘that which is made by the action of the verb’; e.g.

*tūr* ‘to weave’, *tơnăr* ‘woven bamboo’
*bāt* ‘to make a dam’, *bônât* ‘a dam’
*dō* ‘to divide into parts’, *dônô* ‘divided out parts’
*gūk* ‘to make a pile’, *gonūk* ‘a pile’
*kao* ‘to make a wedge’, *konao* ‘a wedge’
*bâng* ‘to make a lid’, *bonâng* ‘a lid’
*chêng* ‘to make a partition’, *chônêng* ‘a partition’
*chât* ‘to sprout’, *chônât* ‘new leaves’
*jît* ‘to shave (as wood)’, *jônît* ‘shavings’
*pât* ‘to make a tail of arrow’, *pônât* ‘tail of arrow’
*pah* ‘to split’, *ponah* ‘split bamboo’
*dan* ‘to place (as target)’, *dônân* ‘a target’
*jôr* ‘to put liquid in bottle’ *jônôr* ‘wine in bottle’
*pū* ‘to carry on back’, *pônû* ‘a backload of thatch’
*chok* ‘to make a trough’, *chônok* ‘crossbow trough’
*dâng* ‘to stand’, *dônâng* ‘place where people stand’

In other instances the derived noun has an instrumental meaning, ‘that which is used to perform the action of the verb’; e.g.

*pâr* ‘to fly’, *ponâr* ‘wing’
*tôn* ‘to hit with stick’ *tonôn* ‘a hitting stick’
*pai* ‘to cook’, *ponai* ‘a stirring stick’
tung ‘to carry on shoulder’, tonung ‘stick for carrying things on shoulder’

tanh ‘to weave’, tonanh ‘weaving materials’
punh ‘to put burr in hair’, ponunh ‘a burr’

In a few instances the derived noun has a locational meaning, ‘that place where the action of the verb is performed’; e.g.
pung ‘to wallow’, ponung ‘wallowing hole’

The ‘result’, ‘instrumental’, and ‘locational’ meanings of the derived nouns can be shown to be structurally contrastive with each other when the verb root and the derived noun are used together in a sentence. An ‘instrument’ must be preceded by one of the following prepositions: păng, sën, hăm ‘with’. A ‘location’ must be preceded by one of the following prepositions: tor ‘to, in, at’, lăm ‘in’, gah ‘side’, bát ‘place’, kie ‘place’. A ‘result’ cannot be preceded by a preposition; e.g.

Result:

inh tăr tonăr ‘I weave-bamboo woven-bamboo’
inh bát bonát ‘I make-dam a-dam’
inh dô donô ‘I divide-out divided-out-parts’

Instrument:

sem păr păng ponăr ‘bird fly with wings’
inh tôn kō păng tonôn ‘I hit-with-stick dog with hitting-stick’

inh pai păng ponai ‘I cook with stirring-stick’

Location:

copó pung to ponung ‘carabao wallow in wallowing-hole’

On a given verb root it is not possible to predict which meaning the affixation will take.

The infix is apparently still active in Bahnar as seen in such new coinages as toneh ‘cigarette lighter’ from teh ‘to strike’. inh teh toneh ‘I strike cigarette lighter’. But the infix cannot be used freely to convert verbs to nouns.

1. 2. Allomorphs of -on-. The infix -on- has phonologically conditioned allomorphs -om- and -od- before r, and -ong- before l (because ‘nr and nl sequences are not allowed in Bahnar), and bo- before verb root initial m.

-om- occurs before r when the initial consonant of the root is bilabial.

preh ‘to hit at’, bomreh ‘dead stick used for hitting at things’

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4. a- ’nominalizer’ has been found with one verb root chō ‘to tie up’ giving achō ‘a bundle’. This does not fit the other nominalizing patterns.
Because verb roots beginning with \( m \) take the \( bo \) — allo-morph giving a \( bom \) — sequence, here the \( bom \) — sequence is also preferred to the expected \( pom \) —.

-\( od \) — occurs before \( r \) when the initial consonant of the root is not bilabial.

\( krōu \) ‘to poison fish’, \( kordōu \) ‘fish poison’

\( kruh \) ‘to make a pile’, \( kordruh \) ‘fishtrap made by piling trees and leaves over water’

\( hring \) ‘to string fish, etc’, \( hordring \) ‘a string’

-\( ong \) — occurs before \( l \).

\( klat \) ‘to slice’, \( konglat \) ‘a slice’

\( kláp \) ‘to cover’, \( tongláp \sim kongláp \) ‘a cover’

\( klang \) ‘to construct bamboo-tube water system’, \( tonglang \) ‘bamboo-tube water system’

In Bahnar initial \( k \) sometimes alternates with \( t \) before velars.

\( bo \) — occurs before verb roots beginning with \( m \).

\( muih \) ‘to make field in woods’, \( bomuih \) ‘field in woods’

\( māt \) ‘to enter’, \( bomāt \) ‘west, place where sun enters’

Preglottalization cannot occur presyllable-initial in Bahnar except as reduplication of the initial consonant of the main syl-
lable. When verb roots beginning with preglottalization occur with the nominalizing infix they take various forms:

The preglottalization may be completely lost and the infix keep its regular form -orn-.

‘dâr ‘to stamp the earth’, donâr ‘a mound of stamped earth on a grave’

The preglottalization may be transferred to the infix as -o’n-, and the initial consonant of the noun stem become voiceless.

‘dâp ‘to cover’, to’nâp ‘a cover’

Or the initial consonant of the verb root may be lost and its preglottalization occur presyllable initial, the infix taking the form -an-.

‘nûng ‘to wrap up’, anûng /‘anûng / ‘a package’

2. Causative

2.1. Pop-~to-~a- occur with verb roots giving them a causative meaning, e.g.

lôch ‘to die’

jî ‘to be hurt’

hîong ‘to be lost’

bât ’to know’

lök ‘to go up’

polôch ‘to kill’

pojî ‘to make to hurt’

tohîong ‘to lose on purpose’

tobât ‘to make to know’

atôk ‘to make to go up’
Pó-~ to-~ a- are unconditioned allomorphs. Each verb root can occur with only one of the causative allomorphs with the exception of 'bōu ‘to smell’ and wir ‘to be deceived’ which have free variation between pó- and to-.

Following is a sampling of the verb roots that occur with pó- ‘causative’ : 'dōh ‘to explode, burst’, drāng ‘to answer’, hrūk ‘to dress’, chē ‘to despise’, kāp ‘to bite’, lāng ‘to be good’, oh ‘to be sad’, tah ‘to put in’, wao ‘to understand’.

Following is a sampling of the verb roots that occur with to- ‘causative’ : lēch ‘to go out’, bīch ‘to lie down’, hli to fear’, iung ‘to stand up’, jur ‘to go down’, māt ‘to enter’, oēi ‘to be at’, pū ‘to carry on back’, wih ‘to go home’.

Tōk ‘to go up’ is the only verb root found to occur with a- ‘causative’.

The causative prefix is apparently still active in Bahnar as seen in such new coinages as pó-ao-wi ‘to make to hurt’ from the English word owie (ouch). This prefix is used more extensively than the nominalizing infix but cannot be used freely.

2.2. A simple transitive verb takes only a direct object. When it occurs with the causative prefix an indirect object
must be added. 5

Rök ’bôh ’long ‘Rok see tree’

Rök to’bôh ko’ Set ’long ‘Rok show to Set tree’

A simple intransitive verb root takes no object. When it occurs with the causative prefix a direct object must be added.

Rök jur ‘Rok go-down’

Rök tojur Set ‘Rok let-down Set’

3. Reciprocal

3.1. To- occurs with many verb roots giving them the reciprocal meaning ‘I do it to you, and you do it to me’.

jil ‘to butt’, tojil ‘to butt each other’

druh ‘to chase’, todruh ‘to chase each other’

blah ‘to fight’, toblah ‘to fight each other’

Following is a sampling of the verb roots that can occur with to- ‘reciprocal’: bet ‘to stab’, chā ‘to look for’, choh ‘to peck’, glâm ‘to knock down’, kāp ‘to bite’, pi ‘to fan’, tōn ‘to hit with a stick, trēng ‘to look at closely’.

Some of the verb roots that occur with po- ‘causative’

5. Because of the nature of a few verb roots the presence of the causative prefix does not require an indirect object. e.g. drāng ‘to answer’, podrāng ‘to ask’ and wao ‘to understand’, po’wao ‘to make self understand’.
can also occur with *to*- ‘reciprocal’, e.g.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb Root</th>
<th>Causative</th>
<th>Reciprocal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ķràng ‘to answer’</td>
<td>podràng ‘to ask’</td>
<td>todràng ‘to answer each other’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chê ‘to despise’</td>
<td>pochê ‘to make to despise’</td>
<td>tochê ‘to despise each other’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orh ‘to be sad’</td>
<td>poorh ‘to make sad’</td>
<td>toorh ‘to be sad because of each other’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>krê ‘to fear’</td>
<td>pokrê ‘to frighten’</td>
<td>tokrê ‘to fear each other’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kâp ‘to bite’</td>
<td>pokâp ‘to make to bite’</td>
<td>tokâp ‘to bite each other’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The verb roots that occur with *to*- ‘causative’ cannot occur with *to*- ‘reciprocal’.

When the reciprocal prefix occurs with the verb root it requires two actors or a plural actor, e.g.

*Rôk pâng Set totôn (dih-bâl)*
‘Rok and Set hit-each-other-with-sticks (each-other)’

*Lû su totôn (dih-bâl)*
‘Plur. he hit-each-other-with-sticks (each-other)’

*Rôk totôn pâng Set*
‘Rok hit-each-other-with-sticks and Set’
Dih-bäl ‘each other’ may be used following all reciprocal constructions except those in which one of the actors follows the verb (note example 3 above). But it is able to be omitted without affecting the meaning, except when the action of the verb root is being performed on the possessions of the actors; e.g.

Rök pänɡ Set tɔtɔn dih-bäl ñ
‘Rok and Set hit-each-other-with-sticks each-other dog’

*Rok and Set hit each other’s dog with sticks*

3.2. Dih-bäl can be used alone, without tɔr- reciprocal prefix, to give the verb roots a reciprocal meaning. Verb roots that occur with tɔr- ‘causative’ cannot occur with tɔr- ‘reciprocal’, therefore must form their reciprocal with dih-bäl. Affixed stems and two-syllable verb roots must also form their reciprocal in this manner, e.g.

Rök pänɡ Set hli dih-bäl
‘Rok and Set fear each other’

Rök päng Set tɔhli dih-bäl
‘Rok and Set scare each other’

Rök päng Set kɔdah dih-bäl
‘Rok and Set kick each other’

4. Passive

4.1. Bahnar has a tɔr- ‘passive’ prefix which is ho-
mophonous with to- ‘reciprocal’ and to- ‘causative’ prefixes. This passive prefix can be clearly distinguished from the reciprocal and causative prefixes by its syntactic function.

To- ‘passive’ occurs with a few verb roots giving them the meaning ‘the action of the verb root performed on the subject’, e.g.

’long togà ‘tree broke’

The passive prefix has been found with only the following verb roots:

- **glëch** ‘to twist’
- **gà** ‘to break’
- **hak** ‘to spread apart’
- **hek** ‘to tear’
- **hleh** ‘to take apart at seams’
- **plö** ‘to peel off’
- **plà** ‘to turn inside out’
- **plorih** ‘to open’
- **yaih** ‘to untie’

- **toglëch** ‘to be twisted (as joint)’
- **togà** ‘to be broken’
- **tohak** ‘to be spread apart’
- **tohek** ‘to be torn’
- **tohleh** ‘to be apart at seams’
- **toplö** ‘to be peeled off’
- **toplà** ‘to be turned inside out’
- **toplorih** ‘to be open’
- **toyaih** ‘to be untied’

The verb roots that occur with to- ‘passive’ can also occur with to- ‘reciprocal’, but cannot occur with to- ‘causative’.
4. 2. The functional contrast between the three *to*- affixes may be clearly seen when the affixed constructions are transformed to an unaffixed form.

S = subject, P = predicate, and O = object. Within a given battery the occurrence of a certain number indicates the occurrence of its manifesting root, whether in the subject or object position.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passive</th>
<th>Causative</th>
<th>Reciprocal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$S_1 - to - P$</td>
<td>$S_1 - to - P - O_2$</td>
<td>$S_1 - S_2 - to - P$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$S_2 - P - O_1$</td>
<td>$S_2 - P$</td>
<td>$S_1 - P - O_2$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Passive:

'long toqâ ‘tree broken'
Rök gâ 'long ‘Rok broke tree’

Causative:

Rök to jur Set ‘Rok let-down Set’
Set jur ‘Set went-down’

Reciprocal.

Rök pâng Set totôn ‘Rok and Set hit-each-other-with-sticks’
Rök tôn Set ‘Rok hit-with-stick Set’

5. Similitive *Lor*- ‘similitive’ occurs with demonstrative roots giving them the meaning ‘to be like’. This prefix
has been found with the following six roots:

õu ‘this’

‘nu ‘this’

ēi ‘that’

noh ‘that’

‘noh ‘that’

yor ‘what’

lolo ‘like this’

no’nu ‘like this’

loloēi ‘like that’

no’noh ‘like that’

no’noh ‘like that’

loloio ‘like what’

Before n, lol- becomes no- by assimilation, the second l dropping out because the ln cluster is not permitted in Bahnar.

6. Completed Action

6.1. Jor- is a clitic meaning ‘completed action’. Affixes can only occur with one-syllable roots, but the clitic jor- is able to occur with two-syllable roots and prefixed stems as well; e.g.

One-syllable verb roots:

bāt ‘to know’

khan ‘to say’

thuor ‘to lose’

nōng ‘to try’

jāk ‘to escape’

oh ‘to be sad’

jobāt ‘to have known’

jokhan ‘to have said’

jothuor ‘to have lost’

jonōng ‘to have tried’

jojāk ‘to have escaped’

joorh ‘to have been sad’
Two-syllable verb roots:

- chokāl ‘to lock door’
- doliēl ‘to stick out tongue’
- gonam ‘to threaten’
- homet ‘to prepare’
- kordah ‘to kick’
- so’nār ‘to wake up’

- jochokāl ‘to have locked door’
- jodoliēl ‘to have stuck out tongue’
- jogonam ‘to have threatened’
- johomet ‘to have prepared’
- jokordah ‘to have kicked’
- joso’nār ‘to have waked up’

Prefixes:

- Caus:
  - polōch ‘to kill’
  - to’bōh ‘to show’

- Recip:
  - tochā ‘to look for each other’
  - tohil ‘to be angry with each other’

- Passive:
  - togā ‘to be broken’
  - toyaih ‘to be untied’

- jopolōch ‘to have killed’
- joto’bōh ‘to have shown’
- jotochā ‘to have looked for each other’
- jotohil ‘to have been angry with each other’
- jotogā ‘to have been broken’
- jotoyaih ‘to have been untied’
Simil:

\[ l\text{ol\text{\'e}i} \] ‘like that’  \[ j\text{o}l\text{ol\text{\'e}i} \] ‘to have been like that’
\[ l\text{ol\text{\'o}u} \] ‘like this’  \[ j\text{o}l\text{l\text{\'o}u} \] ‘to have been like this’

6. 2. In normal Bahnar speech the meaning of ‘completed action’ is more often expressed by \textit{boih} ‘already’ than by the clitic \textit{j\text{o}r-}. Both the clitic and \textit{boih} may occur at the same time, but either can be omitted without affecting the meaning; e. g.

\[ \text{i\text{n}h \text{j}o\text{b\text{a}t} \] ‘I know already’
\[ \text{i\text{n}h \text{b\text{a}t \text{boih} \] ‘I know already’
\[ \text{i\text{n}h \text{j}o\text{b\text{a}t \text{boih} \] ‘I know-already already’

7 Other Affixal Forms\textsuperscript{6}

7. 1. \textit{Bo}- ‘Pig-latin’

Bahnar has a type of ‘pig-latin’ that is formed by prefixing \textit{bo}- to all the words in a given utterance, except the connective \textit{k\text{o}r} and the preposition \textit{to}, which are omitted. When two-syllable words occur the \textit{bo}- prefix replaces the first syllable. The clitic \textit{j\text{o}-} does not figure as an integral part of the word, so \textit{bo}- is inserted between \textit{j\text{o}-} and the word root.

\textsuperscript{6} Guilleminet described a \textit{ho}- prefix in his article, ‘Langages Spéciaux Utilisés Dans La Tribu Bahnar Du Kontum (Sud Viêt-Nam-Indochine)’, p. 125. \textit{BEFEO} Tome L, Fasc. I.
The *bo*- affix in no way changes the meaning of the utterance.

This form of speech is characteristic of Rok, one of the popular characters of Bahnar legends. It is not used in normal speech except in imitation of the legendary Rok. Following are examples of the occurrence of *bo*-

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{inh tār tonār} & \quad \text{‘I weave-bamboo woven-bamboo’} \\
\text{boənh botār bonār} & \quad \text{‘I weave-bamboo woven-bamboo’} \\
\text{inh to‘bōh ko Set ‘long} & \quad \text{‘I show to Set tree’} \\
\text{boənh bo‘bōh boSet bo‘long} & \quad \text{‘I show to Set tree’} \\
\text{inh jopolōch Set ‘I kill-already Set’} \\
\text{boənh jopolōch boSet ‘I kill-already Set’}
\end{align*}
\]

7. 2. *To*.- ‘Measure’

*To*- is prefixed to the numbers ‘*bar*’, ‘two’, ‘*pêng*’, ‘three’, and ‘*puān*’ ‘four’ giving them the meaning ‘two-fingers size’, ‘three-fingers size’, and ‘four-fingers size’ respectively.

The Bahnar people describe the size of some things in comparison with the size of their fingers. A fish may be two-fingers size. A cloth may have a hole in it three-fingers size, etc. They also use this system to measure or compare abstract qualities. This measuring system does not exceed five-fingers size. The words expressing one-finger size and five-
fingers’ size are separate roots,.bat and pah, respectively; e.g.

ih rät hönhuä’l ih näng lün tō topëng
‘you buy fish net you look put-in size three-fingers’

You buy a fish net with holes big enough to put three fingers in

porgë īnh ’bôh ’dēl së’ke, mah tō topuân
‘morning I see footprint wild-pig, enough size four-fingers’

This morning I saw the footprint of a wild pig that was the
size of four fingers

īnh apo brū’ tō to’bar apo hmar tō topëng
‘I dream bad size two-fingers dream good size three-fingers

There was more good in my dream than bad

7.3. Ko- ‘Negative’

Ko- can occur with all one-syllable verb roots making
them negative. Following is a sampling of the verb roots that
can occur with ko- ‘negative’:

‘bôh ‘to see’ ko’bôh ‘not see’
ăn ‘to give’ koăn ‘not give’
iung ‘to stand up’ koιung ‘not stand up’
châ ‘to look for’ kochâ ‘not look for’
wênh ‘to wring’ kowênh ‘not wring’
wih ‘to go home’ kowih ‘not go home’

The free form of the negative which is more often used
consists of \textit{uh} 'negative' followed by \textit{kō} 'connective'.

Free form:

\textit{inh uh kō bāt} 'I neg. conn. know' \textit{I don't know}

Affixed form:

\textit{inh kōbāt} 'I neg.—know' \textit{I don't know}

When the negative prefix occurs with \textit{wā} 'to want' it contracts to \textit{kuā}. \textit{uh kō wā} 'don't want' is one of the more widely used negative Bahnar expressions and has probably contracted to the form \textit{kuā} for convenience. Similar verb roots such as \textit{wēnh} 'to wring' and \textit{wih} 'to go home' leave the prefix uncontracted. (See examples above).