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 onomatopoetic 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 /o/, ‘ô’ is /ʌ/, ‘u’ is /u/, ‘ù’ /u/. Amo ng 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**: *bław bław* ‘stagger, reel’, *iôm iôm* ‘quietly, softly’, *blun blun* ‘very fast’, *hôl hôl* ‘shoulder’, *vir vir* ‘moocling around/moping about’, *dòm dòm* ‘flame, blaze’

c) **Closed syllables**: *bék bék* ‘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], [bl], [-br], [-bl] and the single consonant [r] are particularly common in the reduplicated root. Other consonant clusters found in reduplicated forms include: [gr], [gl], [kr], [kl], [dr], [pl], [tr], [nd], [n’h], [r’h], 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 [r] or an [l], and the second syllable can begin with any consonant. The following are examples of these alternations.

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>r - b</th>
<th>r - c</th>
<th>r - d</th>
<th>r - h</th>
<th>r - kh</th>
<th>r - ng</th>
<th>r - s</th>
<th>r - bl</th>
<th>r - kl</th>
<th>l - h</th>
<th>l - v</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
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(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 [ɪ – ŭ]:

* i - u: plip plup ‘chubby, plump’, hik huk ‘untidy’, ntk ntk ‘be hanging in the air’, plih pluh ‘wag’, bit but ‘shake, vibrate’
* ŭ - ŭ: din din ‘stooping, bending’, cît cût ‘sound of pounding rice’, bit but ‘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 eng ‘be furious; irascible’
* ō - ō: ēm ōm ‘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’, nhip nhap ‘very dirty, soiled’, gik gak ‘strut; go slowly like an important person’, suit suat ‘dark, gloomy’
* u - a: hur har ‘thirst for, hunger for’, bru bra ‘be dispersed, flee in all directions’, rja 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], [c], [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: nɔp ɔl ‘durable, be lasting’
* c - l: khoc khol ‘tattered, in rags’, khuc khul ‘beat about the bush’
* k - l: hok hol ‘in a mess’, hik hil ‘playful, mischievous’
* p - r: blip blir ‘boast, talk big’
* t - r: ndet ndër ‘helpless’
* c - r: ngac ngăr ‘nimble, briskly’, hoc hör ‘panic-stricken’
* k - r: gok gor ‘for a long time’
* p - ng: brip bring ‘a very large quantity’
* t - ng: hit hing ‘burning, hot’
* c - m: grć grăm ‘honest, good’
* q - nh: luq lun ‘grow a paunch’, dhiq din ‘fat, corpulent’
* h - nh: bhioh bhionh ‘have the gift of the gab, loquacious’, jot jotn ‘uneven’
* h - l: bhiah bhial ‘dripping wet’
* t - zero: vēt vē ‘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.

\begin{itemize}
  \item blâk blô ‘wander’, râk rong ‘take care’, roh rai ‘disperse’
  \item blênh blu ‘appear and disappear’, laq lêng ‘roll of a drum’
\end{itemize}

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

\begin{itemize}
  \item bôk ‘white’ \quad \implies \quad bôbôk ‘off white, whitish’
  \item duh ‘hot’ \quad \implies \quad doûbuh ‘luky warm’
  \item nhôt ‘tough’ \quad \implies \quad nhôtnhot ‘slightly tough’
  \item kót ‘strong, thick’ \quad \implies \quad kakôt ‘a little strong/thick’
\end{itemize}

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.)

\begin{itemize}
  \item mbrêh nhaâp ‘scintillate’ \quad \implies \quad mbrêh nhaâp mbrêh nhaâp
  \item blê blêp ‘shine’ \quad \implies \quad blê blêp blê blêp
  \item du hû ‘in turn’ \quad \implies \quad du hû du hû
\end{itemize}

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

\begin{itemize}
  \item kho ao ‘clothes’ \quad \implies \quad kho kho ao ao
  \item ur sai ‘wife and husband’ \quad \implies \quad ur ur sai sai
  \item en on ‘mincing’ \quad \implies \quad en en on on
  \item gôm ngoi ‘laugh and speak’ \quad \implies \quad gôm gôm ngoi ngoi
  \item guq dok ‘sit and stand’ \quad \implies \quad guq guq dok dok
\end{itemize}

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

\begin{itemize}
  \item êng ang ‘strange’ \quad \implies \quad êng ang êng rang
  \item cê lêt ‘small, unimportant’ \quad \implies \quad cê lêt cê lanh
\end{itemize}
(D) $\text{AA'} > \text{AA'}\text{BB'}$ (AA’ is a two-syllable reduplicated root, and BB’ is a partial reduplication of AA’.)

\[
\begin{align*}
luk\ lák & \text{‘disorderly’} & > & \text{luk lák ták tai} \\
vět\ vě & \text{‘confused’} & > & \text{vět vě ců cuang} \\
cĕ\ cĕl & \text{‘compel’} & > & \text{cĕ cĕl dĕl dĕl} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(E) $\text{AA'} > \text{xAxA'}$ (AA’ is a two-syllable reduplicated root, x is an open syllable: mö, ma, dĕ etc.)

\[
\begin{align*}
laq\ lăng & \text{‘not serious’} & > & \text{mŏ laq mŏ lang} \\
ngŏq\ ngŏq & \text{‘lazy’} & > & \text{mŏ ngŏq mŏ ngŏ} \\
blem\ blom & \text{‘corpulent, fat’} & > & \text{ma blem ma blom} \\
-brôc\ -brôc & \text{‘timid’} & > & \text{dĕ -brôc dĕ -brôc} \\
egng\ eng & \text{‘be furious’} & > & \text{dĕ eng dĕ eng} \\
\end{align*}
\]

2 Meanings of reduplicated forms

Two factors which influence the meaning of a construction are the word class of the free root and the form of reduplication. In each construction, the form can express a distinct meaning which depends on the nature of the free root, for example, whether it is a noun, verb, adjective, or descriptive root.

There is often stark contrast between the initial consonants, the vowels, and the final consonants of the two syllables in partial reduplication formations. This contrast in sounds makes the reduplicated word very rich in imagery and description. If the root is a verb, the partial reduplication formation expresses the action while at the same time also expressing the means by which that action occurs. Thus, rĕp blĕp not only means ‘twinkle’, but it also expresses the means by which this process occurs (i.e. it is the periodic repetition of ‘twinkle’ with different degrees of light). If the root is an adjective, the partial reduplication formation expresses the meaning more precisely. Thus, vil’round’ becomes vil rýt ‘perfectly round’.

In the M’nong language, the pitch or method of articulation of a vowel or a consonant in total or partial reduplication often has a relationship with the meaning of the construction. Constructions often resemble natural sounds. The shape of the articulators can be associated with the shape, form, or appearance of things. In addition, pitch can indicate colors, varying degrees of light or darkness, or similar distinctions. This is similar to the reflection of the natural world in the sound of music.

It is hard to define exactly how many types of meaning reduplication expresses in the M’nong language. However, based on data collected in the field and from the M’nong-Vietnamese dictionary, the most common meanings are listed and described below.

2.1 There are a large number of onomatopoetic words formed as a result of total reduplication: crak crak ‘sound of the rain’, dùng dùng ‘sound of the drum’, hurè hûr ‘sound of the wind’, krao krao ‘sound of baby crying’, and other similar types. The original free root of the onomatopoetic words is often found with the initial consonant /p/: păng păng ‘sound of firing’, pin pin ‘sound of car horn’, plop plop ‘sound of applause’,
pak pak ‘sound of cutting down trees’, and so on. There are also a large number of two-
syllable onomatopoetic words formed as a result of partial reduplication.

rek phek ‘noise of firewood burning’
rek bhek ‘noise of mouse eating rice’
ing tlang ‘noise of frog croaking’
kêng kông ‘noise of the bells ringing’

2.2 Noun constructions are commonly used for the names of plants or animals: ka ka
‘beech-tree’, ket ket ‘tree with rugged leafs’, bul bul ‘small ophi cephalidae fish’, and
others. Several names of animals and plants are also a result of partial reduplication.

kô kim ‘butterfly’, mrok mro ‘cricket’,
geng gong ‘praying mantis’, hêp tu ru ‘grass rush’.

2.3 Two-syllable total reduplication formations with a noun as the original free root
express the meaning of plurality ‘every x’.

ngîh ‘house’ > ngîh ngîh ‘every house’
bûnh ‘person’ > bûnh bûnh ‘every person’
nôk ‘place’ > nôk nôk ‘every place’
ôi ‘morning’ > ôi ôi ‘every morning, morning after morning’
nar ‘day’ > nar nar ‘every day, day after day’
khay ‘month’ > khay khay ‘every month, month after month’

2.4 Verb constructions carry a sense of repetition and continuation.

dût ‘to nod’ > dût dût ‘nod repeatedly’
par ‘fly’ > par par ‘fly repeatedly’
kdût ‘jump’ > kdût kdût ‘jump repeatedly’

2.5. Two-syllable total reduplicative formations with adjectives or verbs as the original
free roots express lightened meaning (e.g., ‘a little x’, ‘somewhat x’).

noûh ‘easy’ > noûh noûh ‘a little easy’
m’broî ‘slow’ > m’broî m’broî ‘a little slow’
rûî ‘thin’ > rûî rûî ‘a little thin’
bên ‘familiar’ > bền bền ‘somewhat familiar’
bo ‘to love’ > bo bo ‘to love less’

This lightened meaning is also expressed by two-syllable partial reduplication
constructions that can be categorized semantically.

(A) Lightening of smell and taste

ćiât ‘salty’ > cia ciaût ‘a little bit salty’
nhôt ‘sweet’ > nhô nhôt ‘a little sweet’
sôt ‘tasteless’ > só sót ‘plain’
Reduplication in M’nung

kah ‘delicious’ > ka kah ‘tasty’

(B) Lightening level of character, colour, temperature
dăng ‘hard’ > да danh ‘a little hard’
kloh ‘clean’ > klo klot ‘a little clean’
drück ‘green’ > drück drück ‘light green’
guh ‘red’ > guh guh ‘light red, reddish’
duh ‘hot’ > duh duh ‘warm, a little hot’
kätt ‘cold’ > kätt kätt ‘cool, chilly, a little cold’

(C) Lightening of size, quantity, weight
jèè ‘small’ > jèè jèè ‘a little small’
tèh ‘large’ > tèh tèh ‘somewhat large’
prèh ‘tall’ > prèh prèh ‘somewhat tall’
gleh ‘short’ > gleh gleh ‘somewhat short’
jôk ‘heavy’ > jôk jôk ‘somewhat heavy’
thông ‘light’ > thô thônh ‘somewhat light’
dôk ‘much, many’ > dôk dôk ‘not too much/ many’

2.6 The two-syllable partial reduplication form with the rhyme [-en] in the reduplicant occurs in nouns, verbs, and adjectives, giving them general meanings with negative connotations.

tok ‘hair’ > tok ten
môp ‘hats’ > môp men
sa ‘to eat’ > sa sen
nti ‘to study’ > nti nten
ueh ‘beautiful’ > ueh uen
bok ‘white’ > bok ben

2.7 Some partial reduplication forms occur with [-a-] between the two syllables. The first syllable is an adjective root, while the final syllable is a reduplicant with the initial consonant [r-]. This reduplication formation intensifies the meaning.

jôk ‘heavy’ > jôk a rõk ‘very heavy’
prèh ‘tall’ > prèh a rõh ‘very tall’
gleh ‘short, low’ > gleh a rõh ‘very short, very low’
toyh ‘big’ > toyh a rõh ‘very big’
dôk ‘many, much’ > dôk a rõk ‘too many, too much’

2.8 Four-syllable reduplication forms emphasize the meaning more fully. The following are examples.

(A) A sense of plurality:
ko ao ‘clothes’ > koho ko ao ao ‘many clothes’
ngih vorn ‘houses’ > ngih ngih vorn vorn ‘many houses’
(B) A sense of repetition:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{sa nhêt ‘eat and drink’} & \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{sa sa nhêt nhêt ‘eat and drink again’} \\
\text{gồm Ngọc ‘laugh and speak’} & \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{gồm gồm Ngọc Ngọc ‘laugh and speak again’}
\end{align*}
\]

(C) A sense of degree of character or characteristics:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{en on ‘walk or behave flirtatiously or affectedly’} & \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{ren en ron on ‘walk or behave more flirtatiously or affectedly’} \\
\text{lop lop ‘lean, thin’} & \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{rep lop lop lop ‘very thin with long arms & legs’} \\
\text{sằng ‘obscene’} & \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{sằng sằng sằng lói ‘completely obscene’}
\end{align*}
\]

3 Concluding Thoughts
It is worth noting that the M’Nong language sometimes deploys affixation, the main function of which is to change the class or subclass of the word to which it is affixed: e.g., it may turn a verb into a noun, an intransitive verb into transitive verb, etc. The reduplicative formations and their meaning probably have a relationship with affixation in M’Nong. It is the hope of the author to touch upon this subject in the future.

References
1 Introduction
The aim of this paper is to examine the issues of segmentation in continuous discourse and present a theoretical framework that somewhat eases its segmentation into fragmented parts. The difficulty encountered in segmenting a stretch of speech into separate tone groups provides the impetus for carrying out research of this nature. The paper presents arguments for segmenting discourse into units of speech whose boundaries are defined by audible prosodic cues. The conclusion is that this less restrictive framework enables the identification of prosodic cues in segmentative work and the roles they play in discourse development.

The standard approach to the description of intonation, especially in the British tradition of intonation, is to establish a unit of phonological organization within which the nucleus or focus can be defined. The assignment of tonal features in turn depends on the necessity of having appropriate information points pre-established. The recognition of this central unit in the study of intonation is described succinctly by Scuffil (1982:34) as follows:

All analyses of intonation postulate a unit which is central in the sense that it provides the framework within which intonational features can be described.

These units share a theoretical orientation and characterize some units of intentional description, the neutral and unmarked case coinciding with a clause. The intimate relationship between prosody and segmentation of speech is expressed in the words of Gardiner (1977:4) who postulates that intonation segments utterances into 'phrases signaling to what extent the phrases are related to one another and element within the phrase is the center of attention.'

The fact that it is impossible to utter an extended stretch of speech without some kind of break, and that it is impossible for the hearer to interpret what is said unless what is perceived is chunked into manageable units makes segmentation into divisible unit obligatory. Nevertheless, the decision as to how the verbal content of his discourse should be segmented is optional in the sense that it lies with the speaker. The belief that segmentation of discourse is prosodically identifiable and that often (but not always) segmentation is based on speaker decision in pursuit of a purpose provides the impetus for the investigation into the relationship between segmentation and the role that the segmented chunks play in discourse development.

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