

## Reduplicated Structure in Manipuri

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**Abstract:** Reduplication is a predominant phenomenon in Manipuri, a language belonging to the Tibeto-Burman family of the Sino-Tibetan languages. The language productively employs both partial and full reduplication. The present paper is an attempt to analyse and systematize some characteristic type of partial reduplication structure in Manipuri. The study of reduplication has generated a great deal of interest in terms of understanding a number of properties associated with the word-formation process. As with morphology in general, two considerations that arise in reduplication are related to form and meaning. As for form, the term “reduplicant” has been widely used to refer to the repeated portion of a word, while “base” is used to refer to the portion of the word that provides the source material for repetition. There are three key issues regarding reduplicative form for which theories of reduplication aim to account: segmental identity effects between base and reduplicant, the shape of reduplicants, and factors to consider in identifying the base of reduplication.

**Keywords:** Reduplication, Syntactic structure, Prefix, Suffix, Verb.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Reduplication is the repetition of all or part of a lexical item carrying a semantic meaning. Reduplication refers to a word formation process that repeats all or part of a word or phrase. The definitive feature of reduplication—that it involves copying a portion of the word—has generated a large variety of mechanisms to account for how repetition takes place. Because there are other phenomena in languages that involve the repetition of linguistic elements, there has also been research in how to determine whether or not a repetition is reduplication. In terms of the meaning, several recurrent meanings arise in reduplication, often related to “plurality” and “repetition.” This has led to research that explores issues related to iconicity in language.

#### Partial reduplication:

Partial reduplication involves reduplication of only part of the word (generally a syllable).

The following three types of reduplication are discussed:-

- I. Reduplication of prefix
- II. Reduplication of suffix and
- III. Reduplication of verbs.

### II. REDUPLICATION OF PREFIX

In this type of reduplication, the reduplicating element is prefixed to the two elements:

1. ‘□□’

1.1 ə-nem (low) ə-waŋ (high) > əneməwaŋ ‘low and high situation’.

ə- is prefix to the two elements which are opposite or complementary in meaning. Its form is ə-\_\_\_+ ə-\_\_\_; the slots can be filled by elements indicating relativeness. The reduplicated form gives a sense of relativity and the meaning is context dependent. It indicates:-

i. The relative measurement:

|                        |             |
|------------------------|-------------|
| əneməwaŋ               | o-lu        |
| RED                    | measure-CMD |
| ‘Measure the heights.’ |             |

ii. Stating a universal truth:

|          |             |       |     |
|----------|-------------|-------|-----|
| əneməwaŋ | nai-bə      | punsi | ni  |
| RED      | depend -NZR | life  | COP |

- ‘Life is full of ups and down.’
- iii. In warning against a particular act:  
 əneməwaŋ khai-gənu  
 RED divide-PRHB  
 ‘Do not divide people by class.’
- iv. In giving an advice in general:  
 əneməwaŋ khai-bə phət-te  
 RED divide-NZR good-NEG  
 ‘It is not good to divide people by class (high and low).’

The same form can be drawn as in:-

|   |                         |                   |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------|
| əhao (tasty) ət <sup>h</sup> um (sweet) | >əhaoət <sup>h</sup> um | ‘sweet and tasty’ |
| əsəŋ (pure) əmaŋ (impure)               | >əsəŋəmaŋ               | ‘pure and impure’ |
| ərum (heavy) əyaŋ (light)               | >əruməyaŋ               | ‘weights’         |

- 1.2. əwok (receive) ək<sup>h</sup>um (respond) >əwokək<sup>h</sup>um ‘back answer’.
- Its form is ə-\_\_+ ə-\_\_; the slots can be filled by elements the meaning of which is not apparent from the independent element. ə- is prefix to the two elements to indicate the independent character of an action or state. The reduplicated forms thus have some negative connotation associated with it.

It is used:-

- i. in advising someone of a particular act:  
 əwokəkhum təubə phət-te  
 RED do-NZR good-NEG  
 ‘It is not good to back answer.’
- ii. in warning or prohibiting someone of a particular act:  
 əwokəkhum təu-gənu  
 RED do-PRHB  
 ‘Do not back answer.’
- iii. criticizing someone of a particular act:  
 əwokəkhum yamnə kənbəni  
 RED QTF strong-NZR COP  
 ‘One who is good at back answering.’

The same form can be drawn as in:-

|                                      |                |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| əcopərəŋ                             | > unquenchable |
| ənəməha                              | > lassitude    |
| əp <sup>h</sup> iŋəp <sup>h</sup> ai | > hastiness    |

2. ‘i-’  
 i-ma (mother) i-pa (father) >imaipa ‘parents’.
- The elements have an independent meaning and the reduplicated form provides a combinatory meaning. Its form is i-\_\_+ i-\_\_; the slot is filled by kinship terms and is analysed as follows:-

|        |           |         |         |
|--------|-----------|---------|---------|
| imaipa | mitnə     | u-bə    | lay ni  |
| RED    | eyes-INST | see-NZR | God COP |

‘Parents are a form of God that we see with our eyes.’

It is a very famous saying that parents are taken to be a form of god.

The same form can be drawn as in:-

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| ibuŋ (elder) ipwa (younger) | >ibuŋipwa used by females to brothers. |
| ice (elder) icəl (younger)  | > ice icəl used by males to sisters.   |

3. ‘m □’  
 3.1. mə-tik(capacity) mə-gun (quality) >mətikməgun ‘possession of esteemed quality’.

Each of the elements have an independent meaning. The elements in their cohesive form is an indicator of self-determination of an entity involved. Its form is *mə-\_\_\_+ mə-\_\_\_*; the slot is filled with abstract and self-determining quality (of persons or things) and can be analysed as in

|            |       |          |                  |
|------------|-------|----------|------------------|
| mətikməgun | yamnə | ləibə    | mi/pot-ni        |
| RED        | QTF   | have-NZR | person/thing COP |

‘Possession of esteemed quality (could be either by a person or of a thing.)’

The same form can be drawn as in:-

|              |                              |                          |                          |
|--------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| məmiŋ (name) | mət <sup>h</sup> a (address) | >məmiŋmət <sup>h</sup> a | ‘one’s name and address’ |
| məsək (face) | məmiŋ (name)                 | >məsəkməmiŋ              | ‘one’s identification’   |

3.2 məwoŋ (ways) mətəu (nature) >məwoŋmətəu ‘overall appearance’.

Each of the element gives an independent meaning in its cohesive form. Its form is *mə-\_\_\_+mə-\_\_\_*; the slots are filled with words that can occur cohesively with each of the first syllables. There exists a varied meaning according to the context in which it is used.

The following analysis can be drawn:-

i. It shows one’s approval or disapproval of a particular act as in (a) and (b) respectively.

|    |                             |            |     |          |
|----|-----------------------------|------------|-----|----------|
| a. | magi                        | məwoŋmətəu | du  | phəjə-y  |
|    | he-GEN                      | RED        | DET | nice-ASP |
|    | ‘His attitude is nice.’     |            |     |          |
| b. | magi                        | məwoŋmətəu | du  | phəjə-de |
|    | he-GEN                      | RED        | DET | nice-NEG |
|    | ‘His attitude is not nice.’ |            |     |          |

ii. It determines surety or doubtfulness of the nature of a person from the action involved as in (a) and (b) respectively.

|    |                                |            |     |    |          |
|----|--------------------------------|------------|-----|----|----------|
| a. | magi                           | məwoŋmətəu | du  | əy | khəŋ-ŋi  |
|    | he-GEN                         | RED        | DET | I  | know-ASP |
|    | ‘I know of his nature.’        |            |     |    |          |
| b. | magi                           | məwoŋmətəu | du  | əy | khəŋ-ŋi  |
|    | he-GEN                         | RED        | DET | I  | know-NEG |
|    | ‘I am doubtful of his nature.’ |            |     |    |          |

The same form can be drawn as in:-

The reduplicated form provides varied meaning-

mət<sup>h</sup>ək (up) mək<sup>h</sup>a (down) >mət<sup>h</sup>əkmək<sup>h</sup>a

- relative direction ‘up and down’
- wearing clothes ‘inside out’
- extreme hungeriness ‘butterflies in the stomach’
- when younger ones starts to dictate their elders

məniŋ (back) mək<sup>h</sup>a (down/lower) >məniŋmək<sup>h</sup>a

- back and down/lower
- freedom

mərak (breadth) məyũŋ(length) >mərakməyũŋ

- relative length and breadth
- shows proportion.

### III. REDUPLICATION OF SUFFIX

The reduplication here is one of rhyming reduplication. Here each element is formed by two syllables in which the second syllable of the first element is repeated in the reduplicated form.

1. ka-rən (unusual behaviours) tu-rən >karənturən ‘unusual behaviours’.

The first element alone conveys an independent meaning of the entity involved. The second element serves as an additive for intensifying the character of the first element. Its form is *A-\_\_\_+B-\_\_\_*; the slots are filled up with the same syllable.

It is used –

- while advising someone

- karənturən      təu-bə      p<sup>h</sup>ət-te  
 RED              do-NZR      good-NEG  
 ‘It is not good to misbehave.’
- ii. while warning someone  
 karənturən      təu-gənu  
 RED              do-PRHB  
 ‘Do not misbehave.’
- iii. in criticizing of someone’s act  
 karənturən      yamnə      təu-bə      mi ni  
 RED              QTF      do- NZR      person COP  
 ‘He or she is a person who misbehaves a lot.’

The same form can be drawn as in:-

cirol (whisper) parol      >cirolpaorol      ‘whispers’  
 natəi (inappropriate)putəi      >natəiputəi      ‘inappropriate’

2. niŋ-jijmaŋ-jij>niŋjijmaŋjij ‘reluctance in carrying out an activity’.

The two elements do not have an independent meaning but convey a cohesive idea in the reduplicated form. It is an indication of some behavioural tendency.

Its form is A-\_\_+B-\_\_; the slots are filled up with the same syllable. The particular act has a negative connotation involved.

The same form can be drawn as in:-

p<sup>h</sup>əireŋtureŋ      > haphazard/careless

3. mi (person)-maŋ(front) pu-maŋ>mimaŋpumaŋ ‘in front of people’.

The first element *mimaŋ* is a compound word conveying an independent meaning of the entity involved. Its underlying form is mi-GEN (gi) + suffix (mə-)-maŋ (front) >mimaŋ (in front of people). There is a genitive marker and a suffix in the underlying structure that do not surface in the compound word thus formed.

The second element serves as an additive for intensifying the character of the first element. The reduplicated form is A-\_\_+B-\_\_; ‘A’ is a noun form and the slots are filled up with the same syllable. The reduplicated form can be analysed as below:-

It is used:-

- i. while advising someone  
 mimaŋpumaŋ      k<sup>h</sup>əŋ-ŋu  
 RED              know-NZR  
 ‘You should know how to behave in public.’
- ii. while warning someone  
 mimaŋpumaŋ      k<sup>h</sup>əŋ-də-bə      təu-gənu  
 RED              know-NEG-NZR      do-PRHB  
 ‘Do not be unknowing as to how to behave in public.’
- iii. in criticizing of someone’s act  
 mimaŋpumaŋ      khəŋ-də-bə      mi ni  
 RED              know-NEG-NZR      person COP  
 ‘A person who does not know how to behave in public.’

4. mit (eyes)-yeŋ (look) na-yeŋ>mityeŋnayeŋ ‘manner of looking’.

The reduplicated form is A-\_\_+B-\_\_, where A is a noun form and the slots are filled up with the same syllable which is a verbal form.

The same form can be drawn as in:-

p<sup>h</sup>i (cloth)-jet (wear) sa-jet >p<sup>h</sup>ijetsajet ‘manner of dressing’

5. p<sup>h</sup>i (cloth)-jet(wear) lak-set >p<sup>h</sup>ijetlakset ‘manner of dressing’.

The reduplicated form is A-\_\_+B-\_\_; where ‘A’ is a noun form and ‘lak’ is the first syllable of the second element ‘B’, the slot is filled up with the same syllable which is a verbal form. The reduplicated words thus formed are implication of excessiveness in one’s manner leading others to feel a kind of awkwardness toward. The same form can be drawn as in-

|                       |                |               |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------------|
| səm (hair)-hat (comb) | lak-hat (comb) | >səmhatlakhat | ‘manner of hair-do’  |
| səm (hair)-bun (tie)  | lak-pun (tie)  | >səmbunlakpun | ‘mode of tying hair’ |
| cak (rice)-ca (eat)   | lak-ca (eat)   | >cakcalakca   | ‘mode of eating’     |

#### IV. REDUPLICATION OF VERBS

The element is composed of two syllables.

Here, the verb form that is the second syllable of the first element is reduplicated in the second element.

1. k<sup>h</sup>u-cət (go) lak-cət (go) >k<sup>h</sup>ucətlakcət ‘one’s manner/way of walking’.  
k<sup>h</sup>u- is prefix to the verb in the first element and lak- to the second. Its form is k<sup>h</sup>u-\_\_+lak-\_\_ ; the slot is filled up with the same verbal form .

The following analysis can be drawn:-

- i. The reduplicated form is a reflection of some degree of undesirable excessiveness of one’s action or behaviour.

|  |                       |  |
|--|-----------------------|--|
| k <sup>h</sup> ucətlakcət              | p <sup>h</sup> əjə-de |  |
| RED                                    | nice-NEG              |  |
| ‘One’s manner of walking is not nice.’ |                       |  |

- ii. khu-phə (good) lak-phə >khuphəlakphə ‘excessively good’.  
The reduplicated form is a reflection of some elevated degree of positive action or behaviour. Its form is khu-\_\_+lak-\_\_; the slot is filled with a verbal form and is analysed as

|   |     |     |
|---|-----|-----|
| khuphəlakphə  | əmə | ni  |
| RED   | EXC | COP |
| Exceptionally good in quality (of a person or thing). |     |     |

The same form can be drawn as in:-

|                               |         |  |
|-------------------------------|---------|--|
| k <sup>h</sup> u-həy(aptness) | lak-həy | >k <sup>h</sup> uhəylakhəy (exceptionally apt) |
|-------------------------------|---------|--|

2. ləu-t<sup>h</sup>okləu-sin >ləut<sup>h</sup>okləusin  
-t<sup>h</sup>ok~-dok is suffix to the verb in the first element and -sin ~ -jin to the second. Its form is \_\_t<sup>h</sup>ok (outward) + \_\_ sin (inward); the slot is filled with verbal form. The meaning of the reduplicated form changes according to the context in which it is used and creates an ambiguity in the meaning.

The following analysis can be drawn:-

- i. The reciprocity of an action is reflected.

|                          |                            |            |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|------------|
| layrik                   | ləut <sup>h</sup> okləusin | təu-nə-si  |
| book                     | RED                        | do-REC-SUG |
| ‘Let us exchange books.’ |                            |            |

- ii. Shows to and fro movement of a person or thing.

|  |            |                            |            |
|--|------------|----------------------------|------------|
| əŋaŋ du  | skuldəgi   | ləut <sup>h</sup> okləusin | təu-bi-yu  |
| child DET                                      | school ABL | RED                        | do-REQ-CMD |
| ‘Please pick up and drop the child to school.’ |            |                            |            |

The same form can be drawn as in:-

- |    |                          |
|----|--------------------------|
|    | put <sup>h</sup> okpusin |
|    | It indicates-            |
| a. | carry in and out         |
| b. | lend and borrow          |
|    |                          |
|    | həndokhəŋjin             |
|    | It indicates -           |
| a. | screw and unscrew        |

- b. repeat
- c. exchange

## V. CONCLUSION

An attempt has been made to study the constituent elements and examine the structural patterns of reduplication in Manipuri. All cases of reduplication are created by syntactic structures. It can be inferred from the present study that in some of the reduplicated words thus formed both the elements have an independent meaning and that the cohesion of the elements gives a supplementary meaning. In some of the forms, the first element can convey an independent meaning and the second serves as an additive, intensifying the character of the first element. Some of the forms are found to be context dependent and have varied meanings. This work is a modest exploration and would hopefully incite further studies of reduplication.

## VI. ABBREVIATIONS

|      |                   |
|------|-------------------|
| ASP  | Aspect            |
| COP  | Copula            |
| CMD  | Command           |
| DET  | Determiner        |
| EXC  | Exceptional       |
| GEN  | Genitive          |
| INST | Instrumental      |
| NEG  | Negative          |
| NZR  | Nominalizer       |
| PRHB | Prohibitive       |
| QTF  | Quantifier        |
| RED  | Reduplicated form |

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