

# 3 Vietnamese verbal reduplication

---

SOPHANA SRICHAMPA

## 1 Introduction

Reduplication is a morphological process in which all or part of a syllable is repeated. It can be regarded as a general process of affixation in which the entire base word or some part of it is affixed to itself to form one or a series of new words. These new words usually have the same syntactic classification as the base; their predicatable meanings are related to but deviate from the meaning of the base. Reduplication is widely found among the languages of East and Southeast Asia, such as Mandarin (Li & Thompson 1981), Cantonese (Bauer & Benedict 1997), Thai (Laksaneeyanawin 1982) and Vietnamese.<sup>1</sup> In this paper I describe the major patterns of reduplication that are associated with Vietnamese verbs (including stative verbs).

Previous studies on Vietnamese reduplication have generally described the possible reduplicated classes but they did not pinpoint any specific class of the language. Due to the fact that the verb occupies the major position in the structure of the language, I will describe its behaviour with respect to its reduplication. Vietnamese verbal reduplication expresses a range of meanings, including consecutive, emphatic, repetitive, augmentative and diminutive meanings. In this study Vietnamese reduplication has been divided into two types according to the form of the original morpheme, namely, full reduplication and partial reduplication.

## 2 Vietnamese syllable and phonology

Since the Vietnamese syllable is both a phonological and morphological unit of analysis, the structure of the syllable is a matter of relevance to the study of reduplication. The structure of the Vietnamese syllable can be represented in the following formula:

$$\begin{array}{c} T \\ (C_1) (w) + V + (C_2) \end{array}$$

---

<sup>1</sup> For the Vietnamese data I use the following sources: Hoàng Văn Hành (1994); Nhan Ngô Thanh (1984) and Thompson (1967).

The syllable begins with the onset or initial consonant  $C_1$  which is an optional element. The remainder of the syllable is the final or rhyme which comprises the obligatory main vowel  $V$  and tone  $T$ . The rhyme may be optionally preceded by the medial labial glide /w/ and closed by an optional final consonant  $C_2$ .

The following four tables list the phonemes of the northern or Hanoi variety of Vietnamese that may occur in the various slots of the syllable: Table 1 lists the initial consonants; Table 2 lists the final consonants; Table 3 lists the vowels; and Table 4 lists the tones. The sound segments have been transcribed in IPA (in bold) and the corresponding Vietnamese orthography (in italics). The Vietnamese names of the six Vietnamese tones and the phonetic descriptions of their tone contours are included in Table 4.

In all the examples of Vietnamese reduplication listed and discussed below, the Vietnamese orthographic forms are given first and are then followed by the corresponding phonemic transcription. In the phonemically transcribed material the raised numbers 1 to 6 at the end of the syllable indicate the tone categories of the syllables and these numbers correspond to the numbered tones listed in Table 4.

**Table 1:** Vietnamese initial consonant phonemes (**bold**) and corresponding orthographic symbols (*italics*)

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stops			<b>t t</b> <i>th th</i>	<b>c</b> <i>ch tr</i>	<b>k c</b> <i>k</i>	
Implosives	<b>ɓ</b> <i>b</i>		<b>ɗ</b> <i>ɗ</i>			
Fricatives		<b>v</b> <i>v f ph</i>	<b>z r d s s x</b>		<b>ɣ</b> <i>g gh</i> <b>x</b> <i>kh</i>	<b>h</b> <i>h</i>
Nasals	<b>m</b> <i>m</i>		<b>n</b> <i>n</i>	<b>ɲ</b> <i>nh</i>	<b>ŋ</b> <i>ng ngh</i>	
Approximants	<b>w</b> <i>w</i>		<b>l</b> <i>l</i>	<b>j</b> <i>r</i>		

**Table 2:** Vietnamese final consonant phonemes (**bold**) and corresponding orthographic symbols (*italics*)

	Bilabial	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar
Stops	<b>p</b> <i>p</i>	<b>t</b> <i>t</i>	<b>c</b> <i>ch</i>	<b>k</b> <i>c</i>
Nasals	<b>m</b> <i>m</i>	<b>n</b> <i>n</i>	<b>ɲ</b> <i>nh</i>	<b>ŋ</b> <i>ng</i>
Approximants	<b>w</b> <i>u o</i>		<b>j</b> <i>i y</i>	

**Table 3:** Vietnamese vowel phonemes (**bold**) and corresponding orthographic symbols (*italics*).

	Front	Back	Diphthongs
High	<b>i</b> <i>i</i>	<b>ɯ</b> <i>ɯ</i> <b>u</b> <i>u</i>	<i>iə (ia, lê-) uə (ɯa, ɯə-) uə (ua, uô-)</i>
Higher mid	<b>e</b> <i>ê</i>	<b>ə</b> <i>ə</i> <b>o</b> <i>ô</i>	
Lower mid	<b>ɛ</b> <i>e</i>	<b>ʌ</b> <i>â</i> <b>ɔ</b> <i>o</i>	
Low	<b>a</b> <i>ă</i>	<b>a:</b> <i>a</i>	

**Table 4:** Names of Vietnamese tones and phonetic descriptions of their tone contours

Vietnamese tone name	Phonetic description of tone contour
1. <i>ngang</i>	Mid-high level
2. <i>huyền</i>	Low falling
3. <i>hỏi</i>	Mid falling-rising
4. <i>ngã</i>	Mid to high rising with glottal stop
5. <i>sắc</i>	Mid-high rising
6. <i>nặng</i>	Low falling with glottal stop

### 3 Full reduplication

The entire phonological form of a stem is repeated in the reduplicated affix. We may recognise two types of full reduplication: monosyllabic and polysyllabic.

#### 3.1 Monosyllabic full reduplication

The entire syllable is repeated in full. Many reduplications express repetitive or diminutive meanings as indicated in the following examples.

##### 3.1.1 Repetitive meanings

- (1) *gằm* /ɣam<sup>2</sup>/ 'wear a sullen look' => *gằm gằm* /ɣam ɣam/
- (2) *bùng* /buŋ<sup>2</sup>/ 'flare up' => *bùng bùng* /buŋ<sup>2</sup> buŋ<sup>2</sup>/
- (3) *khum* /xum<sup>1</sup>/ 'bend, bow' => *khum khum* /xum<sup>1</sup> xum<sup>1</sup>/
- (4) *mờ* /mə<sup>2</sup>/ 'grow dim, dull' => *mờ mờ* /mə<sup>1</sup> mə<sup>1</sup>/
- (5) *nghiêng* /ŋiəŋ<sup>1</sup>/ 'be inclined (to)' => *nghiêng nghiêng* /ŋiəŋ<sup>1</sup> ŋiəŋ<sup>1</sup>/
- (6) *nhông* /ŋoŋ<sup>1</sup>/ 'wander, roam' => *nhông nhông* /ŋoŋ<sup>1</sup> ŋoŋ<sup>1</sup>/
- (7) *ọc* /ɔk<sup>6</sup>/ 'spurt, flow' => *ọc ọc* /ɔk<sup>6</sup> ɔk<sup>6</sup>/
- (8) *rành* /za:ŋ<sup>2</sup>/ 'know well' => *rành rành* /za:ŋ<sup>2</sup> za:ŋ<sup>2</sup>/

##### 3.1.2 Diminutive meanings

- (9) *quèn* /kwən<sup>2</sup>/ 'indifferent'  
=> *quèn quèn* /kwən<sup>2</sup> kwən<sup>2</sup>/ 'rather indifferent, somewhat poor'
- (10) *rợn* /zən<sup>6</sup>/ 'shiver with fear'  
=> *rợn rợn* /zən<sup>6</sup> zən<sup>6</sup>/ 'to shiver slightly with fear'

#### 3.2 Disyllabic full reduplication

This type of reduplication also mainly expresses repetition. Reduplication of the two-syllable word takes the form AABB as follows:

- (11) *biếng nhác* /biəŋŋ ɲa:k<sup>5</sup>/ ‘lazy, idle’  
=> *biếng biếng nhác nhác* /biəŋŋ<sup>5</sup> biəŋŋ<sup>5</sup> ɲa:k<sup>5</sup> ɲa:k<sup>5</sup>/
- (12) *đi lại* / ‘to come’  
=> *đi đi lại lại* /đi<sup>1</sup> đi<sup>1</sup> lai<sup>6</sup> lai<sup>6</sup>/ ‘to walk back and forth’
- (13) *hăm hở* /ham<sup>1</sup> hə<sup>3</sup>/ ‘be zealous and enthusiastic’  
=> *hăm hăm hở hở* /ham<sup>1</sup> ham<sup>1</sup> hə<sup>3</sup> hə<sup>3</sup>/
- (14) *lầm lì* /lɒm<sup>2</sup> li<sup>2</sup>/ ‘be taciturn, say little’  
=> *lầm lầm lì lì* /lɒm<sup>2</sup> lɒm<sup>2</sup> li<sup>2</sup> li<sup>2</sup>/

#### 4 Partial reduplication

This type of reduplication takes two forms: (1) reduplication of the initial consonant as in *ho he* /hə<sup>1</sup> hɛ<sup>1</sup>/ ‘act against’ and (2) reduplication of the rhyme as in *bjn rjn* /bin<sup>6</sup> zin<sup>6</sup>/ ‘be loath to part with’. In the disyllabic form the tone changes on both the first and the second syllables from low falling tone to mid rising tone, as in:

- (15) *bần thần* /bɒn<sup>2</sup> thɒn<sup>2</sup>/ ‘haggard, worried’  
=> *bần **thần** bần thần* /bɒn<sup>3</sup> thɒn<sup>3</sup> bɒn<sup>2</sup> thɒn<sup>2</sup>/

##### 4.1 Monosyllabic partial reduplication

There are various possibilities of monosyllabic partial reduplication relating to the syllable structure — six patterns can be grouped into three subtypes: (i) to (iii) rhyming (same vowel, same final and sometimes same tone); (iv) chiming (same initial, but different vowel, final, or tone); and (v) rhyming and chiming (with different tone). The reduplication may either precede or follow the stem.

###### a. Rhyming

###### i. Reduplication of rhyme with loss of initial consonant.

The initial consonant of the stem is lost and the rhyme is reduplicated as in:

- (16) *ăn **năn*** /an<sup>1</sup> nan<sup>1</sup>/ ‘show repentance’  
(17) *áy **náy*** /a<sup>5</sup> ɲa<sup>5</sup>/ ‘uneasy’

The reduplicated syllable comes first and the original stem comes second. This type occurs with relatively few verbs.

###### ii. Change of initial consonant

The initial consonant in the reduplicated form is different from that of the stem (in bold) as in:

- (18) *rún* /zun<sup>3</sup>/ ‘be flabby, be faint’  
=> *bún **rún*** /bun<sup>3</sup> zun<sup>3</sup>/ ‘flagging, flaccid’

- (19) *nhăn* /ɲan<sup>2</sup>/ ‘eat with one’s front teeth’  
 => *căn nhăn* /kan<sup>2</sup> ɲan<sup>2</sup>/ ‘grumble, grunt’

The reduplicated syllable can occur in either the first or second position as in:

- | FIRST  | SECOND   |
|--|--|
| (20) <i>bủn rủn</i> /bun <sup>3</sup> zun <sup>3</sup> /<br>‘flagging, flaccid’          | (21) <i>chóáng váng</i> /cwa:ŋ <sup>5</sup> va:ŋ <sup>5</sup> /<br>‘dizzy, dazed, giddy’       |
| (22) <i>căn nhăn</i> /kan <sup>2</sup> ɲan <sup>2</sup> /<br>‘grumble, grunt repeatedly’ | (23) <i>chóí vớí</i> /cəj <sup>5</sup> vəj <sup>5</sup> /<br>‘reach up one’s hands repeatedly’ |

This type only occurs with some verbs.

### iii. Change of initial consonant and tone

The initial consonant and the tone are different from that of the stem (transcribed in bold). In reduplication of open syllables the *ngang* tone occurs with *huyền* tone and the *huyền* tone occurs with the *sắc* tone as indicated in the following examples.

- (24) *chơi bời* /cəj<sup>1</sup> bəj<sup>2</sup>/ ‘be a playboy, lead a gay life’  
 (25) *biu điu* /biu<sup>2</sup> ziw<sup>5</sup>/ ‘wrapped up in’  
 (26) *bù khú* /bu<sup>2</sup> xu<sup>5</sup>/ ‘have heart-to-heart talk, talk together’

In reduplication of closed syllables the *nặng* tone occurs with the *sắc* tone and the *ngang* tone occurs with the *hỏi* tone as in the following examples:

- (27) *sạch bách* /sa:c<sup>6</sup> ba:c/ ‘very clean’  
 (28) *hưng hửng* /huŋ<sup>1</sup> huŋ<sup>3</sup>/ ‘be struck with disappointment’

The rhyme of either the first or second syllable may be reduplicated and the initial is different as follows:

- | FIRST   | SECOND   |
|---|--|
| (29) <i>biu điu</i> /biw <sup>1</sup> ziw <sup>5</sup> /<br>‘wrapped up in’ | (30) <i>bù khú</i> /bu <sup>2</sup> xu <sup>5</sup> /<br>‘have heart-to-heart talk, talk together’ |
| (31) <i>căn đăn</i> /kan <sup>1</sup> zan <sup>6</sup> /<br>‘recommend’     | (32) <i>chơi bời</i> /cəj <sup>1</sup> bəj <sup>2</sup> /<br>‘be friends, indulge in play’         |

This type only occurs with some verbs.

## b. Chiming

### iv. (1) Reduplication of initial consonant and change of rhyme

The vowel in the reduplicated form is different from that of the stem (transcribed in bold) as follows:

- (33) *ngu* /ŋu<sup>1</sup>/ ‘stupid, dull’  
 => *ngu ngơ* /ŋu<sup>1</sup> ŋə<sup>1</sup>/ ‘naively silly’ (back vowels)  
 (34) *chúm* /cum<sup>5</sup>/ ‘purse, round (lips)’  
 => *chúm chím* /cum<sup>5</sup> cim<sup>5</sup>/ ‘slightly protruding’ (high vowels)

- (35) *đu* /đu<sup>1</sup>/ 'swing'  
=> **đu** *đu*a /đu<sup>1</sup> đwə<sup>1</sup>/ 'swing' (high vowels)
- (36) *móp* /mɔp<sup>5</sup>/ 'sunken'  
=> **móp** *mép* /mɔp<sup>5</sup> mɛp<sup>5</sup>/ 'badly dented' (mid vowels)

The reduplicated syllable occurs in either the first or second position as follows:

- | FIRST  | SECOND  |
|--|---|
| (37) <i>bi</i> <b>bô</b> /bi <sup>1</sup> bo <sup>1</sup> /<br>'lisp (baby)' | (38) <b>bet</b> <i>bát</i> /bet <sup>5</sup> bat <sup>5</sup> /<br>'dog-tired, exhausted' |
| (39) <i>thuế</i> <b>thỏa</b> /thwe <sup>3</sup> thwa:3/<br>'to be satisfied' | (40) <b>chúm</b> <i>chím</i> /cum <sup>5</sup> cim <sup>5</sup> /<br>'open slightly'      |

This type occurs with some verbs.

#### iv. (2) Change of rhyme and tone

The vowel and tone are different from that of the stem (transcribed in bold) as in the following examples.

- (41) **cãi** *cọ* /kaj<sup>4</sup> kɔ<sup>6</sup>/ 'have an argument with'
- (42) **che** *chở* /ce<sup>1</sup> cə<sup>3</sup>/ 'give cover to protect'
- (43) **cò** *cử* /kɔ<sup>2</sup> ku<sup>3</sup>/ 'wheeze'

The reduplicated syllable occurs only in the first position. This type of reduplication seems to occur with relatively few verbs.

The tone and the final consonant are different from that of the stem (in bold), as in:

- | FIRST   | SECOND   |
|---|--|
| (44) <i>còm</i> <b>cộ</b> p /kom <sup>2</sup> kop <sup>6</sup> /<br>'unwieldly'   | (45) <b>bàn</b> <i>bạc</i> /ba:n <sup>2</sup> ba:k <sup>6</sup> /<br>'discuss' |
| (46) <i>hoang</i> <b>hoác</b> /hwa:ŋ <sup>1</sup> hw:k <sup>5</sup> / 'open wide' |  |

The reduplicated syllable can occur either in the first or second position but mainly occurs in the first position. This type of reduplication occurs with many verbs. The reduplicated words of this type are typically onomatopoeic expressions, while others are diminutive terms.

#### c. Rhyming and chiming

#### v. Change of tone

In the reduplicated form, which can either precede or follow the stem, the tone is different from that of the stem (transcribed in bold).

The reduplicated form occurs in the first position as in:

- (47) *liệu* /liəw<sup>6</sup>/ 'use the suitable thing'  
=> *liệu* **liệu** /liəw<sup>2</sup> liəw<sup>6</sup>/ (repetitive meaning)

The prefix tone is *huyền* instead of *nặng*.

- (48) *khó* /xɔ<sup>5</sup>/ 'hard, difficult'  
=> *kho khó* /xɔ<sup>1</sup> xɔ<sup>5</sup>/ (repetitive meaning)  
The prefix tone is *ngang* instead of *sắc*.
- (49) *deo* /zɛw<sup>3</sup>/ 'flexible, malleable'  
=> *deo dẻo* /zɛw<sup>1</sup> zɛw<sup>3</sup>/ 'rather flexible, rather malleable'  
The prefix tone is *ngang* instead of *hỏi*.

The reduplicated form occurs in the second position as in:

- (50) *khít* /xít<sup>5</sup>/ 'fit well' => *khít khít* /xit<sup>5</sup> xit<sup>6</sup>/ 'close-fitting'  
The tone of the suffix is *nặng* instead of *sắc*.
- (51) *ngờ* /ŋə<sup>2</sup>/ 'doubt, suspect' => *ngờ ngờ* /ŋə<sup>2</sup> ŋə<sup>6</sup>/ (repetitive meaning)  
The tone of the suffix is *nặng* instead of *huyền*.
- (52) *bừ* /bu<sup>5</sup>/ 'cloyed, satiated' => *bừ bừ* /bu<sup>5</sup> bu<sup>6</sup>/ (emphatic meaning)  
The suffix tone is changed from *sắc* to *nặng*.

In my data the four tones *ngang*, *huyền*, *sắc* and *ngã* occur with stems. Table 5 below presents the summary of the changes of the tones in the reduplicated forms:

**Table 5:** Changes of tones in reduplicated forms

1. <i>ngang</i> tone	=>	<i>sắc, hỏi, ngã, nặng</i> tones / # _____
	=>	<i>hỏi, ngã</i> tones / _____ final nasal
	=>	<i>sắc</i> tone / _____ final stop and nasal
2. <i>huyền</i> tone	=>	<i>nặng</i> / # _____
	=>	<i>ngã, nặng</i> tones / final nasal
3. <i>sắc</i> tone	=>	<i>huyền</i> tone / # _____
	=>	<i>huyền</i> tone / _____ final nasal
4. <i>ngã</i> tone	=>	<i>huyền</i> tone / # _____

The reduplicated syllable occurs in either the first or second position but reduplication in the first position is more frequent. This is also the most frequent type of verbal reduplication. Many such reduplicated words convey a diminutive meaning.

## 4.2 Disyllabic partial reduplication

Where the verb stem has two syllables, there are three subtypes of partial reduplication. In two of these types the resulting reduplicated form has four syllables and generally follows the ABAB and ABCD patterns, with some differences parallel to those found in monosyllabic reduplication, as in rhyming and chiming, in one or both of the reduplicated syllables. In type (iii), the resulting form has three syllables in the ABB pattern; for this type the partially reduplicated middle syllable is different from the basic B syllable stem. The ABB reduplication type is relatively infrequent.

Of the various types below, the basic stem comes second in most types; the modified reduplicated form precedes in four-syllable types in the ABAB and ABCD patterns, and the modified reduplicated form also precedes in both three-syllable types in the ABB pattern.

a. ABAB modified reduplications

i. Change of rhyme and tone

All four syllables share the same initial consonant but the rhyme of the second syllable changes to vowel /a:/ and its tone changes to *ngang*.

- (53) *bấp bênh* /bap<sup>5</sup> beŋ<sup>1</sup>/ ‘unsettle, staggering’  
=> *bấp **ba** bấp bênh* /bap<sup>5</sup> ba:<sup>1</sup> bap<sup>5</sup> beŋ<sup>1</sup>/ (augmentative meaning)
- (54) *chấp chới* /cap<sup>5</sup> cəj<sup>5</sup>/ ‘fly with a rolling motion’  
=> *chấp **cha** chấp chới* /cap<sup>5</sup> ca:<sup>1</sup> cap<sup>5</sup> cəj<sup>5</sup>/ (consecutive meaning)
- (55) *hồn hên* /hon<sup>3</sup> heŋ<sup>3</sup>/ ‘panting’  
=> *hồn **ha** hồn hên* /hon<sup>3</sup> ha:<sup>1</sup> hon<sup>3</sup> heŋ<sup>3</sup>/ ‘to pant heavily’

The tone of the Ba syllable (B syllable with a vowel) is determined by the tone of the second syllable. When the B syllable has the *ngang*, *sắc* or *hỏi* tone, this syllable carries the *ngang* tone. This is the most frequent type of ABAB reduplication and the meaning is augmentative. The Bà (B syllable with à vowel) type in (ii) is less frequent.

The second syllable has the same initial as the second syllable plus the vowel /a/ with *huyền* tone (transcribed in bold).

- (56) *hì hục* /hi<sup>2</sup> huk<sup>6</sup>/ ‘be absorbed in’  
=> *hì **hà** hì hục* /hi<sup>2</sup> ha:<sup>2</sup> hi<sup>2</sup> huk<sup>6</sup>/ ‘be completely engrossed in one’s work’
- (57) *khập khiễng* /xap<sup>6</sup> xiəŋ<sup>4</sup>/ ‘limping’  
=> *khập **khà** khập khiễng* /xap<sup>6</sup> xa:<sup>2</sup> xap<sup>6</sup> xiəŋ<sup>5</sup>/ (augmentative meaning)
- (58) *lảm cằm* /lam<sup>3</sup> kəm<sup>3</sup>/ ‘forgetful, in one’s dotage’  
=> *lảm **cà** lảm cằm* /lam<sup>3</sup> ka:<sup>2</sup> lam<sup>3</sup> kəm<sup>3</sup>/ (augmentative meaning)
- (59) *gập ghềnh* /ɣap<sup>6</sup> ɣeŋ<sup>2</sup>/ ‘rough, bumpy’  
=> *gập **gà** gập ghềnh* /ɣap<sup>6</sup> ɣa:<sup>2</sup> ɣap<sup>6</sup> ɣeŋ<sup>2</sup>/ ‘very rough’

The above examples include those where the B syllable has *ngã*, *huyền*, *hỏi*, or *nặng* tones. We may note that where the B syllable carries the *hỏi* tone, both type (i) and type (ii) can occur.

The vowel and the final consonant of the last syllable of the reduplicated form (transcribed in bold) are different from those of the second syllable of the stem as in:

- (60) *bộc tuệch* /bok<sup>6</sup> twec<sup>6</sup>/ ‘ingenious’  
=> *bộc tuệch bóc **toạc*** /bok<sup>5</sup> twec<sup>5</sup> bok<sup>5</sup> twa:k<sup>5</sup>/ ‘very ingenious’
- (61) *tâm bậy* /tam<sup>2</sup> bəj<sup>6</sup>/ ‘perverse, wrong’  
=> *tâm bậy tâm **bạ*** /tam<sup>2</sup> bəj<sup>6</sup> tam<sup>6</sup> ba:<sup>6</sup>/ ‘absolutely wrong’

The vowel and tone of the second syllable (transcribed in bold) are different from those of the stem as in:

- (62) *hốt hải* /hət<sup>5</sup> haj<sup>3</sup>/ ‘panic’  
=> *hốt **hơ** hốt hải* /hət<sup>5</sup> hə<sup>1</sup> hət<sup>5</sup> haj<sup>3</sup>/ ‘panicky’

The first two syllables (transcribed in bold) carry a different tone from that of the stem as in:

- (63) *bần thần* /bʌn<sup>2</sup> thʌn<sup>2</sup>/ ‘haggard, worried’  
=> ***bần thần*** *bần thần* /bʌn<sup>3</sup> thʌn<sup>3</sup> bʌn<sup>2</sup> thʌn<sup>2</sup>/ (repetitive meaning)
- (64) *bồi hồi* /boj<sup>2</sup> hoj<sup>2</sup>/ ‘fret, be fretty’  
=> ***bồi hồi*** *bồi hồi* /boj<sup>3</sup> hoj<sup>3</sup> boj<sup>2</sup> hoj<sup>2</sup>/ ‘to fret intensely’

The tone and final consonant of the second syllable (transcribed in bold) are different from those of the stem as in:

- (65) *bắt nét* /bat<sup>5</sup> net<sup>5</sup>/ ‘break in by strictly finding fault with’  
=> ***bắt ne*** *bắt nét* /bat<sup>3</sup> nɛ<sup>3</sup> bat<sup>2</sup> net<sup>2</sup>/ (augmentative meaning)
- (66) *tí toét* /ti<sup>5</sup> twet<sup>5</sup>/ ‘grin and speak continually’  
=> ***tí toe*** *tí toét* /ti<sup>5</sup> twe<sup>1</sup> ti<sup>5</sup> twet<sup>5</sup>/ (emphatic meaning)

## b. ABCD reduplication

### ii. Change of rhyme

The vowels of both syllables of the reduplicated form (transcribed in bold) are different from those of the stem as in:

- (67) *bông lông* /boŋ<sup>1</sup> loŋ<sup>1</sup>/ ‘aimless’  
=> *bông lông* ***bang lang*** /boŋ<sup>1</sup> loŋ<sup>1</sup> ba:ŋ<sup>1</sup> la:ŋ<sup>1</sup>/ ‘absolutely aimless’

This type and the following type (iv) are the least frequent types of reduplication for disyllabic verbs.

## c. ABB reduplication

### iii. Change of rhyme and/or tone of the second syllable

In this type of reduplication the final consonant of the rhyme may change from a stop to the homorganic nasal as in example (68), or the tone may change from 6 to 3 as in example (69):

- (68) *im thít* /im<sup>1</sup> thit<sup>5</sup>/ ‘be completely silent’  
=> *im* ***thin thít*** /im<sup>1</sup> thin<sup>1</sup> thit<sup>5</sup>/ ‘to keep as silent as a grave’
- (69) *khắm lặm* /xam<sup>5</sup> lam<sup>6</sup>/ ‘intolerably offensive’  
=> *khắm* ***lắm lặm*** /xam<sup>5</sup> lam<sup>3</sup> lam<sup>6</sup>/ (augmentative meaning)

## 5 Summary

There are two types of reduplication in Vietnamese: full reduplication and partial reduplication. Full reduplication can occur with both monosyllabic and disyllabic words for which there is exact reduplication of the syllable. The disyllabic full reduplication follows the AABB pattern. Partial reduplication can occur with both monosyllabic and disyllabic words. Monosyllabic partial reduplication has the following six sub-types:

- a. Rhyming (same vowel, same final and sometimes same tone)
  - i. Reduplication of rhyme with loss of consonant
  - ii. Change of initial consonant
  - iii. Change of initial consonant and tone
- b. Chiming (same initial, but different vowel, final, or tone)
  - iv. Reduplication of initial consonant and change of rhyme
- c. Rhyming and chiming (with different tone)
  - v. Change of tone

The disyllabic partial reduplication has the following three sub-types:

- a. ABAB reduplication
  - i. Change of rhyme and tone
    - Replace the vowel and tone of the second syllable with /a/.
    - Replace the vowel and tone of the second syllable with /à/.
    - Change the vowel in the third and fourth syllables.
    - Change the vowel and final of the fourth syllable.
    - Change the vowel and tone of the second syllable.
    - Change the tone of first and second syllables from *huyền* to *hỏi* tone.
- b. ABCD reduplication
  - ii. Change of rhyme
- c. ABB reduplication
  - iii. Change of rhyme and tone of the second syllable

As we have observed from the examples presented in this paper, Vietnamese reduplication conveys augmentative, repetitive, consecutive, and emphatic meanings. Chiming reduplication has an onomatopoeic function of imitating sounds in the natural world. Some patterns of Vietnamese reduplication resemble those that are found in other East and Southeast Asian languages, such as Mandarin, Cantonese, and Thai.

## References

- Bauer, Robert S. and Paul K. Benedict, 1997, *Modern Cantonese phonology*. Trends in Linguistics Studies and Monographs 102. Hong Kong student edition. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Hoàng Văn Hành, 1994, *Từ điển từ láy tiếng Việt* (Dictionary of reduplicated Vietnamese words). Hà Nội: Nhà xuất bản Giáo dục.
- Laksaneeyanawin, S., 1982, 'kham sám ?ùtca:ranawilâ:t: ?ì:k ηe: nùη khǒ:η rabòp siəη lɛ? rabòp khwa:m mǎ:j naj phaisǎ: thaj' (Reduplication: phonology and semantic systems in Thai]. *Journal of Fine Arts*. Vol.1:11-34. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University.
- Li, Charles N. and Sandra A. Thompson, 1981, *Mandarin Chinese: a functional reference grammar*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.

Nhan Ngô Thanh, 1984, The syllabeme and patterns of word formation in Vietnamese. PhD dissertation, New York University. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms International.

Thompson, Laurence C., 1967, *A Vietnamese grammar*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press.



## II

### *Language classification*

