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Reduplication In Khamniungan

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ABSTRACT

Khamniungan (Glottolog: [khia1236](#), ISO: kix) is one of the many under-documented languages spoken in Northeast India. It is spoken in the easternmost part of Nagaland and parts of neighbouring Sagaing Region, Myanmar. Linguistically, Khamniungan belongs to the Sino-Tibetan or Trans-Himalayan language family as part of the Patkaian or Northern Naga branch (Post & Burling 2015). Reduplication, the repetition of a lexical or morphological element, is a common feature in the language, serving multiple distinct functions. This includes echo formations, compound expressions, universal quantification, plural marking, durative or habitual marking, emphatic pronominal reduplication, and expressives, to name a few. This paper presents the different reduplicative strategies found in Khamniungan with examples from the standard Thang dialect.

KEYWORDS reduplication, Khamniungan, Tibeto-Burman

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Reduplication In Khamniungan[†]

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1 Introduction

Khamniungan (Glottolog: [khia1236](#),¹ ISO: kix) is one of the many under-documented languages spoken in Northeast India. It is spoken in the easternmost part of Nagaland and parts of neighbouring Sagaing Region, Myanmar. It is the most widely spoken language in Noklak District, Nagaland. “Khamniungan” is both the name of a tribe as well as the language, and the official spelling in India.² Linguistically, Khamniungan belongs to the Sino-Tibetan or Trans-Himalayan language family as part of the Patkaian or Northern Naga branch (Post & Burling 2015). The most closely related language varieties are Gongvangpounyiu and Lainong, while more distant relatives include Wancho and Konyak (Dam, in press). Like most Tibeto-Burman languages, Khamniungan is primarily a verb-final language following an SOV word order for basic declarative utterances.

Reduplication generally refers to the repetition of a lexical or morphological element, typically with some semantic modification. Reduplication may refer to the iteration of syllables or parts of syllables which constitute a single word/lexeme (Abbi 1990: 171). For instance, reduplication is found in common kinship terms like *mama* ‘mother’ in many of the world’s languages, but notably not occurring in Khamniungan. Other cases are verb stem reduplication to form new lexemes, such as *lep~lep* ‘sticky’ in Khamniungan or *kap~kap* as onomatopoeic for ‘crispy’ wherein *kap* it itself meaningless. This is due to fact that the part of the term being repeated is not an independent lexical item able to stand on its own, although there is no phonotactic restriction involved in that limitation. Many other *kap* terms are found in the language with other meanings. On the other hand, in many cases the stems being reduplicated do have a related meaning when on their own. For example, in Khamniungan, *lep* on its own does not carry the associated meaning of ‘sticky’ but rather ‘to paste’. Reduplication in this case changes the meaning in a way that will not always be predictable. It only acquires the changed meaning after it is being reduplicated. In such cases, the reduplicated form constitutes a distinct lexical item (Abbi 1990). This paper presents the different reduplicative strategies found in Khamniungan.

Lexical reduplication can be defined as one lexical item which is formed by two or more segmentally identical parts or words in which the repetition itself is meaningful. Lexical reduplication in Khamniungan can be constructed through three different processes involving either partial or full reduplication. These processes are (1) partial reduplication in echo formations, (2) reduplicative mirroring in compound words, (3) full reduplication, and (4)

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¹ Hammarström et al, 2025

² A reviewer has pointed out that variant spellings are occasionally found in use in Myanmar and in the literature. The ‘Khamniungan’ spelling is the official spelling for the tribe, and used consistently in India and among many of the Burmese Khamniungan communities. This paper will follow the official spellings for the tribe.

expressives. The processes behind these strategies in Khamniungan are discussed in their own sections below.

2 Types of Reduplication

Different types of reduplication are found in Khamniungan. This section investigates one of the different types, with examples.

2.1. Echo formations

Abbi (2018: 1) defines echo formations as “a partially repeated form of the base word where the reduplicator is a canonically copied form of the base with slight alternation.” Partial reduplication occurs in the creation of such echo formations. These involve the lexical stem followed by phonologically similar segments which rhyme in some way, although the notion of rhyming is also frequently language specific. It is a common feature of Mainland Southeast Asian languages (Williams 1991) as well as those of South Asia (Mohan 2008). Echo formations can occur as either the first or final syllable in the construction (Abbi 1985). Table 1 shows some examples of echo formations in Khamniungan.

stem	gloss	echo formation	gloss
<i>pausuŋ</i>	‘insects’	<i>pausuŋ-ausuŋ</i>	‘all kinds of insects’
<i>shaile</i>	‘business’	<i>shaile-oule</i>	‘all kinds of business’
<i>memei</i>	‘rich’	<i>memei-tsuomei</i>	‘rich and the like’
<i>kialau</i>	‘sickly’	<i>kialau-sulau</i>	‘sick and the like’

Table 1 – Echo formation in Khamniungan

Note that while the echo formation for ‘all kinds of insects’ has a rhymed first syllable, this is coincidental. The second *au* means ‘vine’, while *pau-suŋ* is already a compound of ‘snake’ and ‘worm’. The inclusion of ‘vine’ is poetic and used in relation to ‘snake’, but only coincidentally rhymes. Similarly the *ou* in *shaile-oule* ‘all kinds of business’ means ‘treasured thing’. That is to say, echo formations are not strictly phonologically motivated partial reduplication, but instead do have some sort of meaning behind the lexically specified pairs. Systematically, the primary reduplication is only found on the second syllable in Khamniungan. In such constructions, the echoed morpheme word has no meaning of its own, is lexically specified, and only takes on meaning when it is attached to the first part of the word. The compound *ausuŋ* ‘vine+worm’ is meaningless and does not occur elsewhere in the language except as a pairing word for *pausuŋ*.

The limitation on the location of the echo word in Khamniungan makes it distinct from other closely related Patkaian languages such as Tangsa-Nocte, where echo words or “euphonics” are lexically specified but can variably occur as either the first or second part of the compound, depending on the word. This is what Morey (2019: 38) calls “elaborate expressions” following their description in Haas (1964). Examples of echo formations occurring in sentences are shown in (1) and (2).

- (1) *tsuɔŋak sam pausuŋ-ausuŋ no apem he-an*
 rice plant insects-ECHO DET all eat-PST
 ‘Insects have eaten all the rice plants.’

In (1), the exact type of insects are not specified, but it’s to be understood that it is multiple

insects, thus a general problem rather than a particular infestation of one type.

- (2) *lum* *tshaile-oule* *hai* *ɲiukam* *nio-e*
 tomorrow business-ECHO people meeting exist-FUT
 ‘There will be a meeting for businesspeople tomorrow.’

In example (2), the intended meaning is that it’s a general meeting for businesspeople, such as a town hall or local chamber of commerce meeting.

2.2. Compound expressions

A similar construction is also found in Khamniungan wherein each of the two parts have independent meanings, but through combination take on an additional often distinct meaning. This is distinct from echo locations for which the non-stem component is semantically opaque and unable to stand on its own. A change in semantics occurs which is not always immediately clear through their combined meanings, although in some cases, the meaning is more transparent.

As an example, the stem *tsam-la* ‘house+construction’ can be free and have its own meaning even if it is not duplicated by *pi-la* ‘granary+construction’. In other cases, the component parts of the construction do not hint at the final meaning of the compounded form. Some examples of compounding in Khamniungan are given below in Table 2. The first item involves repetition of the semantic head, *p^ha* ‘hand’, while the second and third entries, house+build and hand+infirmity, involve repetition of the second morpheme, typically a verbal component in the larger noun phrase.

lexeme	gloss	lexeme	gloss	combined form	
<i>p^ha+p^hi</i>	‘hand+back’	<i>p^ha+moŋ</i>	‘hand+palm’	<i>p^hap^hi-p^hamoŋ</i>	‘bias, partiality’
<i>tsam+la</i>	‘house+construction’	<i>pi+la</i>	‘granary+construction’	<i>tsamla-pila</i>	‘house construction’
<i>p^ha+t^he</i>	‘hand+infirmity’	<i>hok+t^he</i>	‘leg+infirmity’	<i>p^hat^he-hokt^he</i>	‘general disability’
<i>fɪ+le</i>	‘food+seed’	<i>kian+le</i>	‘vegetable+seed’	<i>fɪle-kianle</i>	‘all kinds of crops’

Table 2 – Reduplication of Compounding in Khamniungan

In some cases, such as *kianle* relating to crops, the meaning of the component part is no longer semantically transparent to speakers and thus begins to resemble something similar to an echo location; while *kian* today means a soup or curry rather than ‘crops’, the semantic connection to crops as curry ingredients occurs in some lexemes such as ‘mustard seed’ is *kianjim* and ‘chayote’ is *aokian*. Examples of compound constructions as part of a sentence are shown in (3) and (4).

- (3) *p^hausupou* *hai-o?* *tsam-la-pi-la* *nai* *halou*
 neighbour people-ERG house-build-granary-build LOC help
 ‘The neighbour helped where construction was happening.’

- (4) *p^ha-t^he-hok-t^he* *hai* *au* *a-he-fiun* *son-kiu-e*
 hand-weak-leg-weak people DAT NOMZ-eat-drink distribute-give-FUT
 ‘Food will be distributed to disabled people.’

2.3. Full reduplication

The most common case of reduplication in Khamniungan occurs as full reduplication of simple lexemes, often themselves made up of monosyllabic morphemes. This can occur with nouns, verbs, adjectival modifiers, adverbials, and free pronouns. Khamniungan has a frequent occurrence of word reduplication. The function of this type of reduplication varies depending on part of speech, as well as due to some semantic specification. Referred to by Abbi (1990: 172f) as ‘complete word reduplication’, this covers constructions which consist of two identical iterated words. The following subsections provide examples of the different ways in which full reduplication occurs in Khamniungan.

2.3.1. Universal quantification and distributive reduplication

Nominal reduplication in Khamniungan most frequently functions as a form of universal quantification. Universal quantification involves the use of concepts such as ‘all’ or ‘every’ (Matthewson 2008). This can occur with monosyllabic or polysyllabic nouns. For example, ‘house’ *tsam* may become ‘every house’ when reduplicated as *tsam~tsam*. Alternatively, reduplication of nouns may instead mean one by one, a case of distributive reduplication. Thus, the example in (5) has two possible readings, distinguishable only by the context of the utterance.

- (5) *lam tsam~tsam k^{hu} ku sai-lou*
 PN house~house go ATTR visit-see
 ‘Lam visits house to house / every house.’

Thus (5) can mean either that Lam is going to an unspecified number of houses one by one, or that Lam is visiting every house. Note the attributive marker *ku* marking the manner of action for the main verb ‘visit’. This is discussed more in Section 2.3.3. Some common examples are given in Table 3.

stem	gloss	reduplicated form	gloss
<i>tsam</i>	‘house’	<i>tsam~tsam</i>	‘every house’ or ‘house by house’
<i>juk</i>	‘village’	<i>juk~juk</i>	‘every village’ or ‘village by village’
<i>nekoŋ</i>	‘bag’	<i>nekoŋ~nekoŋ</i>	‘every bag’ or ‘bag by bag’
<i>paitan</i>	‘box’	<i>paitan~paitan</i>	‘every box’ or ‘box by box’
<i>pun</i>	‘year’	<i>pun~pun</i>	‘every year’ or ‘year by year’

Table 3 – Reduplication of nouns in Khamniungan

As context plays a major role in distinguishing these two meanings, one can easily find examples where some ambiguity remains, as in (6).

- (6) *lam juk juk ai iu-e*
 PN village village LOC go-FUT
 ‘Lam will go (travel) to every village.’ or
 ‘Lam will travel village-to-village’

Other cases lack this type of ambiguity, as the verb may prevent alternative readings. In (7), the more likely interpretation is one of universal quantification.

- (7) *t^hemtsain paitan paitan nai nap-tai*
 biscuit box box LOC inside-EXIS
 ‘The biscuits are in every box.’

However, given the alternative meaning of ‘enter’ for *nap*, this too could be interpreted as a case of distributive reduplication rather than universal quantification. Thus, context is still necessary for the proper interpretation.

2.3.2. Plural marking

Another feature of reduplication with nominal stems is for explicit plural marking. Khamniungan does not have a grammatical plural. Instead, this is done with explicit use of number terms, or other group words such as *hai* ‘people’ or the use of plural pronominal forms. Examples of this type of reduplication are given in Table 4.

stem	gloss	reduplicated form	gloss
<i>melo</i>	‘boy’	<i>melo~melo</i>	‘boys’
<i>metshuo</i>	‘child’	<i>metshuo~metshuo</i>	‘children’
<i>tenkhaiu</i>	‘individual’	<i>tenkhaiu~tenkhaiu</i>	‘individuals’
<i>apai</i>	‘half’	<i>apai~apai</i>	‘halves’

Table 4 – Pluralising reduplication of nouns

These are distinct from the forms in Section 2.3.1, as these serve only as simple plural marking rather than distributive marking.

- (8) *liu ai melo~melo apem iu-e*
 jungle LOC boy~boy all go-FUT
 ‘All the boys will go to the jungle’

2.3.3. Manner adverbs

As in many Tibeto-Burman languages of the region, strictly speaking, adjectives are not a particularly salient word class. Rather, those lexemes which would be readily translated into English as adjectives are instead cases of verbal stems which have either been morphologically nominalised or are in some other way marked as presenting the manner of the main verb (DeLancey 2015: 42). Reduplication of such adjectival forms often serves the function of emphasis or the manner or adjectival meaning.

stem	gloss	reduplicated form	gloss
<i>fim</i>	‘wait’	<i>fim~fim</i>	‘while waiting’
<i>sat</i>	‘write’	<i>sat~sat</i>	‘while writing’
<i>nai</i>	‘laugh’	<i>nai~nai</i>	‘laughingly’
<i>they</i>	‘cook’	<i>they~they</i>	‘while cooking’
<i>kiap</i>	‘close’	<i>kiap~kiap</i>	‘closely’
<i>fap</i>	‘cry’	<i>fap~fap</i>	‘cryingly’

Table 5 – Verbal manner reduplication

Reduplicated forms in Table 5 are often followed by an attributive marker *ku*. This is a marker which indicates manner of action, such as *sai-ku sat* ‘sleepily wrote’. The functions of *ku* are too numerous to discuss here, but for the purposes of this paper it can be understood as an adverbial, as in example (9) below.

- (9) *a-t^hat-taiu* *apem* ***lon~lon*** *ku* *k^hu-n*
 NOMZ-plan-have all smooth~smooth ATTR go-PST
 ‘All the plans have gone smoothly.’

In some cases, reduplication can be understood to emphasise plurality even when the reduplicated stems are not nouns as in Table 5 above. However, this is not always the case. Manner verbs are easily identified due to the syntactical requirement of the language as being verb-final. When reflecting the manner of the main verb, reduplicated forms will be marked with the attributive marker *ku* as in (10-15).

- (10) *pai* ***suy~suy*** *ku* *sai-taiu-n*
 tree big~big ATTR grow-have-PST
 ‘The trees have grown to be very big’
- (11) *lam* *fem* ***he~he*** *ku* *khu*
 PN fruit eat~eat ATTR go
 ‘Lam ate the fruits and went.’
- (12) *lam* *f^hin* ***haŋ~haŋ*** *ku* *fi-n*
 PN song sing~sing ATTR come-PST
 ‘Lam came singing.’
- (13) *metshuo* *no* *apa* *niu* *ta* ***fap~fap*** *ku* *kum*
 child DET 3SG mother COMP cry~cry ATTR follow
 ‘The child followed his mother crying.’

The construction involving a reduplicated verb stem followed by attributive *ku* can either mark the manner in which the main verb has occurred, as in (10) and (11), or, when the reduplicated stem is itself the main verb, the construction marks the habitual or durative. This is the case in (14) and (15) where the main verbs from (11) and (12) have been dropped.

- (14) *lam* *fem* ***he~he*** *ku*
 PN fruit eat~eat ATTR
 ‘Lam regularly eats fruits
- (15) *lam* *f^hin* ***haŋ~haŋ*** *ku*
 PN song sing~sing ATTR
 ‘Lam regularly sings.’

In most cases these reduplicated stems will be straightforwardly derived from verbs, and the resulting constructions will likewise be semantically clear from the original meaning of the

stem. In some cases, the meaning will be less clear. Example (16) is one such case, where the reduplicated stem, glossed here as ‘now’, will take on the meaning of ‘often’ in this sentence.

- (16) *apa-ʔ kʰiam lou~lou ku ʃiu-ʃi*
 2SG-ERG water now~now ATTR drink-PROG
 ‘He drinks water often.’

The stem *lou* can also be glossed as ‘current’, and occurs in compound words such as *lounyi* ‘today’, from ‘current’+‘day’, but can also be glossed instead as ‘again’. In such cases, only the context of the utterance will make the distinction apparent.

In examples such as those the reduplicated form clearly marks the manner in which the main verb occurs. In these examples, the reduplicated stems are monosyllabic. However, this construction may also occur with disyllabic verb stems. Examples are given in Table 6. The reduplication of adverbs in Khamniungan is found on both monosyllabic and disyllabic words. However, adverbs as disyllabic words are common in this language. Examples are illustrated in Table 6. For these examples, reduplication marks a type of emphasis, as in (17).

stem	gloss	reduplicated form	gloss
<i>kumai</i>	‘faraway’	<i>kumai~kumai</i>	‘especially faraway’
<i>fethup</i>	‘gently’	<i>fetʰup~fetʰup</i>	‘particularly gently’
<i>jamlu</i>	‘slowly’	<i>jamlu~jamlu</i>	‘particularly slowly’

Table 6 – Intensifying reduplication of adverbs in Khamniungan

Example (17) shows the use of one of these disyllabic stems in a reduplicated construction. In this case, *ku* is not used in the construction and no habitual or progressive sense is intended.

- (17) *ŋəsoʔ kumai~kumai ki-an*
 3PL faraway~faraway live-PST
 ‘They live in faraway places.’

2.4. Stative verbs not marking manner

As shown already, reduplicated verb stems are common throughout the language, with many examples readily found. Table 7 presents some of these examples in which the reduplicated form is a stative verb, functioning adjectivally.

stem	gloss	reduplicated form	gloss
<i>suŋ</i>	‘big’	<i>suŋ~suŋ</i>	‘very big’
<i>mei</i>	‘good’	<i>mei~mei</i>	‘very good’
<i>ne</i>	‘rubbery’	<i>ne~ne</i>	‘very rubbery’
<i>lon</i>	‘smooth’	<i>lon~lon</i>	‘very smooth’

Table 7 – Full-word reduplication on stative verbal stems

Reduplication of adjectival modifiers is found in Khamniungan for lexemes regardless of the number of syllables. In some cases, the reduplicated forms will be prefixed by the nominaliser *a-*, as in Table 8.

stem	gloss	reduplicated form	gloss
<i>asam</i>	‘tasty’	<i>asam~asam</i>	‘tasty tasty’
<i>alam</i>	‘hot’	<i>alam~alam</i>	‘hot hot’
<i>afem</i>	‘ripe’	<i>afem~afem</i>	‘ripe ripe’

Table 8 – Reduplication of nominalized verbs in Khamniungan

Example (18) shows a reduplicated form in a sentence for which the nominaliser is present.

- (18) *nefen alam~alam a-tuo-lou*
 cloth hot~hot NOMZ-buy-take
 ‘Buy warm clothes.’

If the nominaliser is omitted from the forms in Table 8 or example (18), the sentence becomes infelicitous. These forms require the nominaliser in order to form part of the larger noun phrase. Without this, *nefen lam~lam* would not be able to function with the verb ‘buy’ but would instead mean something like ‘warm the clothes (in the sun)’.

2.4.1. Imperative reduplication

In addition to stative verbal reduplication, verb stems which might not otherwise function adjectivally are also able to be reduplicated. Verbs can be made imperative with the prefix *a-*, having the same phonological shape as the nominaliser *a-* but serving a different function and tonal effect. Reduplication of this then strengthens the severity of the command. Table 9 shows such cases, where the nominalised form in the first column represents a gerundive form of the verb, while the reduplicated construction instead carries the meaning of a stronger command.

stem	gloss	reduplicated form	gloss
<i>aham</i>	‘jump!’	<i>aham~aham</i>	‘jump!!’
<i>asat</i>	‘write!’	<i>asat~asat</i>	‘write!!’
<i>awe</i>	‘read!’	<i>awe~awe</i>	‘read!!’

Table 9 – Reduplication of imperative-marked verbs in Khamniungan

Such constructions can shift their meaning while retaining an imperative sense through the suffixation of the causative *i*, as in example (19). In this case, the construction is still indicating a command, but one which involves causing the children to undertake the action of the verb.

- (19) *metshuo hai au a-sat~a-sat-i*
 child people DAT IMP-write~IMP-write-CAUS
 ‘Have the children write.’

Additionally, certain disyllabic stems, such as *fakta*, ‘to be quick’, also undergo imperative reduplication as *fakta~fakta* as in (20).

- (20) *pai loi-ji fakta~fakta*
 tree feel-PROG quickly~quickly
 ‘The tree is falling. Be quick! (to move)’

2.4.2. Compound NP reduplication

Many adjectival modifiers in Khamniungan are formed through compounding of a noun. This is the case for many words for different emotions, where the semantic head will be *moŋ* ‘heart’ followed by a stative verb such as *soŋ* ‘be big’ to form an adjective such as *moŋ.soŋ* ‘brave’, literally ‘big heart’. ‘Angry’ will be *moŋ* ‘heart’ followed by *mat* ‘to blow’, and so on. Such compounds are not limited to emotion words. Additional examples of reduplicated compounds of this type are shown in Table 10.

stem	gloss	reduplicated form	gloss
<i>a-pia+mai</i> NOMZ-abundant+cost	‘expensive’	<i>apiamai~apiamai</i>	‘very expensive’
<i>a-leŋ+mei</i> NOMZ-appear+good	‘beautiful’	<i>aleŋmei~aleŋmei</i>	‘very beautiful’

Table 10 – Reduplication of adjectival compounds in Khamniungan

The forms in Table 10 require the nominaliser prefix *a-* in order to retain the correct meaning; ‘beautiful’ can be understood as being build upon nominalisation of ‘to appear’ as *a-leŋ* for ‘appearance’. Here the roots *pia* ‘abundant, many’ as in (21) and *leŋ* ‘appearance’ undergo compounding and then affixation. As with other adjectival forms, reduplication indicates an emphasis on the quality but does not alter the meaning in the same way as the compounds discussed in Section 3.

- (21) *tukan ai neŋe apiamai~apiamai alum taiu-n*
 shop LOC cloth expensive~expensive all have-PST
 ‘All the most expensive clothes are there in the shops’

2.4.3. Emphatic pronominal reduplication

Reduplication of free pronominal forms has an emphatic function in Khamniungan. However, reduplication of interrogative pronouns is restricted in this language. Examples are given in Table 11:

stem	gloss	reduplicated form	gloss
<i>ŋo</i>	1SG	<i>ŋo~ŋo fiŋfa</i>	‘myself’
<i>ni</i>	2SG	<i>ni~ni fiŋfa</i>	‘yourself’
<i>apa</i>	3SG	<i>apa~apa fiŋfa</i>	‘himself/herself’
<i>ŋəsʉ?</i>	3PL	<i>ŋəsʉ?~ŋəsʉ? fiŋfa</i>	‘them’
<i>ŋe</i>	1DU	<i>ŋe~ŋe fiŋfa</i>	‘we two ourselves’

Table 11 – Reduplication of personal pronouns in Khamniungan

Importantly, the reduplication of free pronouns requires *fiŋfa* to convey the reflexive meaning, as in examples 22-24. In each case, reduplication is optional. That is, removal of *fiŋfa* renders the sentences ungrammatical, but removal of reduplication does not.

- (22) *ŋo ŋo fɪfɪ kʰu-e*
 1SG 1SG self go-FUT
 ‘I will go by myself.’

This is similar to emphatic use of ‘myself’ in English, where its inclusion emphasises the person undertaking the action as doing it on their own without additional support.

- (23) *apa apa fɪfɪ kʰu-n*
 3SG 3SG self come-PST
 ‘He came by himself.’

- (24) *ŋəsʉ? ŋəsʉ? fɪfɪ fɪŋ-lou*
 3PL 3PL self choose-take
 ‘They select by themselves.’

Here, reduplication is not creating the reflexive sense, which is instead carried by *fɪfɪ*, but rather emphasises the speaker’s role. This functions similarly to English emphatic use of pronouns used in the free translations of the above examples.

2.5. Numeral reduplication

Numerals in Khamniungan are *tsak* ‘one’, *ɲime* ‘two’, *sume* ‘three’, *pule* ‘four’, *puŋu* ‘five’, *luk* ‘six’, *fɪŋat* ‘seven’, *puŋi* ‘eight’, *lukau* ‘nine’, *fɛ* ‘ten’. Certain cardinals in Khamniungan such as *tsak* ‘one’, *fɛ* ‘ten’, *ausam* ‘thirty’, *tsum-tsak* ‘hundred’, and *heŋ* ‘thousand’ can be reduplicated. However, reduplication of ordinals such as *aya* ‘first’, *mujam* ‘second’, or *samjam* ‘third’ cannot be reduplicated. The cardinal numerals in Khamniungan can be reduplicated without the affixes of the stem and is a complete reduplication. Cardinal numerals and their reduplications in Khamniungan are shown in Table 12.

stem	gloss	reduplicated form	gloss
<i>tsak</i>	‘one’	<i>tsak~tsak</i>	‘one each’
<i>fɛ</i>	‘ten’	<i>fɛ~fɛ</i>	‘ten each’
<i>khei</i>	‘twenty’	<i>khei~khei</i>	‘twenty twenty’
<i>aupuŋu</i>	‘fifty’	<i>aupuŋu~aupuŋu</i>	‘fifty each’
<i>tsumtsak</i>	‘one hundred’	<i>tsumtsak~tsumtsak</i>	‘one hundred each’
<i>heŋ</i>	‘thousand’	<i>heŋ~heŋ</i>	‘thousands’

Table 12 – Reduplication of numerals in Khamniungan

There is a distinct difference in meaning between reduplicated forms of basic numbers below a thousand, in which case they carry the meaning of “each” when reduplicated, as in 25. However, when ‘thousand’ *heŋ* is reduplicated, it cannot mean ‘one thousand each’, but instead only means ‘thousands’ as in (26).

- (25) *lam tsham tsak~tsak son-kiu*
 PN book one~one distribute-give
 ‘Lam distributes one book each.’

- (26) *sumai nai khaiunia hey~hey kam*
 party at people thousand~thousand gather
 ‘Thousands of people gathered at the party.’

2.6. Reduplication of colour terms

Colour terms formed through the nominalisation of stative verbs with the nominalising *a-* prefix exhibit the same reduplication pattern as other adjectival terms. Examples are shown in Table 13.

stem	gloss	reduplicated form	gloss
<i>athaiu</i>	‘white’	<i>athaiu~athaiu</i>	‘particularly white’
<i>anaʔ</i>	‘black’	<i>anaʔ~anaʔ</i>	‘particularly black’
<i>afeŋ</i>	‘red’	<i>afeŋ~afeŋ</i>	‘particularly red’

Table 13 – Reduplication of colour terms in Khamniungan

These terms function similarly to other adjectival constructions. In (27), the nominalised stem indicates a noun which we can understand as ‘the white thing’, and reduplication intensifies the plurality indicated by *apem* ‘all’.

- (27) *lam feŋtsaiu athaiu~athaiu apem taium*
 PN item white~white all have
 ‘Lam has all the white items.’

Here reduplication of ‘white’ indicates that it is all of the white ones, emphasising the use of *apem*. This is similar to the plurality of reduplicated forms discussed above in Section 2.3.2.

3 Expressives

Abbi (1990: 172) defines expressives as “instances of morphological reduplication where the minimally meaningfully and segmentally indivisible morphemes are constituted of iterated syllables”, wherein the stem and reduplicated morphemes “constitute a single morpheme which is also a lexeme”. These include onomatopoeic constructions, imitative constructions, cases of sound symbolism and also mimic words. Some of the expressives in Khamniungan are shown in Table 14.

reduplicated form	gloss	type
<i>ʃip~ʃip</i>	sound produce by chicks	onomotopoeia
<i>ʃik~ʃik</i>	sound produce by a mice	onomotopoeia
<i>taŋ~taŋ</i>	bullet sound	onomotopoeia
<i>lan~lan</i>	tingling	taste sense
<i>pha~pha</i>	itchy sense on mouth	taste sense
<i>ʃek~ʃek</i>	hot burning	taste sense
<i>lap~lap</i>	reflection from mirror	visual sense
<i>ʃiŋ~ʃiŋ</i>	shiny	visual sense
<i>lep~lep</i>	sticky	tactile sense
<i>lap~lap</i>	pokey	tactile sense
<i>ʃi~ʃi</i>	stinging	tactile sense

Table 14 – Auditory sense expressions

Khiamniungan also has the pattern of adjective modifiers previously described for Tangsa-Nocte (van Dam 2018), a related group of languages within Patkaian. This has been suggested as a possible areal feature in languages of Northeast India (van Dam & Muheim, in press). In this pattern of reduplication, a basic descriptive stem is followed by a reduplicated modifier, which is often but not always semantically opaque. Three examples relating to description of tastes or smells are shown in Table 15.

form	gloss
<i>he ʃek~ʃek</i>	sour, acrid (of smells)
<i>ku sak~sak</i>	bitter
<i>hem taŋ~taŋ</i>	scentless

Table 15 – Smell modifiers based on taste stems

In such cases, the reduplicated form modifies the stem as a sort of intensifier, although van Dam & Muheim (in press) caution against the word ‘intensifier’ to describe the pattern, since many of these affixed reduplications actually change the meaning in more ways than just intensification or emphasis. This is also the case in Khiamniungan, where lexically specified intensifiers may drastically change the meaning (Thaam & van Dam, forthcoming).

4 Conclusion

It can be concluded that Khiamniungan has a wide range of complete word reduplication in consideration with the nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, colours and numerals. It is also worth to note that the reduplications in this language are found to have enormous numbers of monosyllabic and disyllabic. However the trisyllabic word is very rarely found in this language. In addition, reduplication in Khiamniungan is complete or partial. The echo-word or compounding is found to have less common in this language unlike the word reduplication. It is interesting to note that expressive reduplication in Khiamniungan has all the five senses like many Tibeto-Burman languages.

Abbreviations

1SG	first person singular	DET	determiner
1DU	first person dual	EXIS	existential
2SG	second person singular	FUT	future
3SG	third person singular	LOC	locative
1PL	third person plural	NOMZ	nominalizer
ATTR	attributive	PN	proper noun
CAUS	causative	PROG	progressive
DAT	dative	PST	past

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