

PROSODY OF TONE SANDHI IN VIETNAMESE REDUPLICATIONS

Nguyen, T.A. Thu

School of English, Media studies, and Art history

University of Queensland

St Lucia, QLD 4072, Australia

Email: thunguyen@uq.edu.au

Ingram, John

School of English, Media studies, and Art history

University of Queensland

St Lucia, QLD 4072, Australia

Email: j.ingram@uq.edu.au

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Abstract

In this paper we take advantage of the segmental control afforded by full and partial Vietnamese reduplications on a constant carrier phrase (see example 1a and b below) to obtain acoustic evidence of asymmetrical prominence relations (van der Hulst, 2005), that support a hypothesis that Vietnamese reduplications are phonetically right headed. Acoustic parameters including syllable duration (onset, nucleus and coda), vowel F0, F0 contour, vowel intensity, spectral tilt and vowel formant structure are analyzed to determine: (1) which syllable of the two (base or reduplicant) is more prominent and (2) how the tone sandhi forms differ from their full reduplicated counterparts. Our findings, from acoustic comparisons of base and reduplicant syllables, provide evidence that reduplications are phonetically (if not phonologically) right headed in Vietnamese. Further comparisons of full and partial reduplicant syllables in tone sandhi forms provide additional phonetic support for this analysis. Whether the latent level of word stress in Vietnamese detected in this study represents a post-lexical metrical effect or has a lexical component remains a question for further study.

1a. *Pha trà cho đậm đậm đi nhé* fully reduplicated

(Make/ tea/ so as to/ strong/strong/imperative particle: Make tea rather strong)

1b. *Pha trà cho đậm đậm đi nhé* partially reduplicated (tone sandhi)

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reduplicant base

Reference

Hulst, van der (2005). 'Exponents of accentual structure' Invited paper to the IAS Conference: Between Stress and Tone, Leiden, the Netherlands, June 2005.