

REDUPLICATION IN TIV

Georgina O. Maduagwu

Abstract

This study investigates the morphological process of reduplication in Tiv language. Is it inflectional or derivational in Tiv? Is it complete or partial or does Tiv operate both complete and partial reduplications? The work is based on data from Standard Tiv. Tiv is a Southern Bantoid Tivoid language of the Benue-Congo branch of the Niger-Congo phylum. Majority of its speakers are in Benue State, spreading across Taraba, Nassarawa and Plateau States of Nigeria. This study is done within the framework of descriptive linguistics for explanatory adequacy. It is revealed in this work that reduplication in Tiv is a derivational morphological process restricted to nouns and adjectives. The study further reveals that, unlike in some other languages of the world where both complete and partial reduplications occur (Ìgbò, for example), in Tiv only complete reduplication occurs. Adverbs and adjectives are derived through reduplication in Tiv. When adjectives are reduplicated, the derivands are adverbs. On the other hand, when nouns are reduplicated, the derivands are adjectives. The derivand is a product of complete repetition of the operand.

Word reduplication as a feature of language is not a universal one, though it is present in many languages of the world. This process can be inflectional or derivational. Even among languages that reduplicate, some reduplicate completely while some reduplicate partially. Some others also have both complete and partial reduplication. In this study, word reduplication in Tiv is investigated. Word formation as a morphological process cuts across languages. Each language employs different ways, such as coining, shuttling, reduplication etc. to form new words.

Reduplication

Reduplication as a process of word formation is a very common phenomenon in many African languages. However, it may not be common as a pure derivational process for adverbs and adjectives. Many languages use this process to form new words. It is a morphological process whereby a new word or another linguistic element is formed by repeating the shape of an already existing word or element in the lexicon.

Earlier works on reduplication include: Sapir (1921), Moravcsik (1978), Marantz (1982), Broselow and McCarthy (1983), Kiparsky (1986), Steriade (1987), Egbokhare (1990), Katamba (1993), Aaron (1997) and Maduagwu (2006), among others.

Sapir (1921:76) states that:

Nothing is more natural than the prevalence of reduplication; in other word, the repetition of all or part of the radical element. The process is generally employed, with self-evident symbolism, to indicate such concepts as distribution, plurality, repetition, customary activity, increase in size, added intensity, continuance.

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Sapir cites other examples of reduplication in English, including the following:

1. pooh-pooh
2. goody-goody
3. wishy-washy
4. sing-song
5. brain-drain

According to Sapir (1921), the recurring forms in such reduplications, as listed above, do not serve a grammatical or semantic function; neither do they serve any derivational or inflectional purpose. This claim is a contradiction of his earlier claim (in Sapir 1921:76) reproduced earlier. Actually, the recurring forms in examples (1) through (5) above serve the functions suggested in the long citation from Sapir (1921:76). In Tiv, just as in Ìgbò and many other African /Nigerian languages, the recurring forms actually serve grammatical and semantic functions.

To Moravcsik, (1992), reduplication serves certain functions. He cites examples from Papago (Papua New Guinea) where, according to him, the plural forms of nouns are formed through the process of reduplication. Thus, to form a plural noun, a copy of the first syllable of the singular noun is prefixed to the singular noun after lengthening its vowel. Nominal reduplication is thus used to signal plurality. This is a case of partial reduplication, shown below:

| | Singular | Plural |
|-----|-----------------|--------------------|
| 6a. | kuna ‘husband’ | kuukuna ‘husbands’ |
| b. | tini ‘mouth’ | tiitini ‘mouths’ |

Maduagwu (2006) points out that there are three types of reduplication in Ọ̀rọ̀gbahù dialect of Ìgbò. These are, full /CI-/CU-/verbal reduplication with prefixation, tota/complete VCV nominal reduplication and reduplication of ideophones. In Ọ̀rọ̀gbahù, also, according to Maduagwu (2006) reduplication has the different functions, though not exclusively, of signalling intensification, gerundive, emphasis, prefixation, distributive, nominalisation, augmentative, figurative and exaggerative meanings in Ọ̀rọ̀gbahù dialect in particular and in Ìgbò language in general.

All these illustrations/examples of reduplications in different languages are used to show that word reduplication as a feature of language is not a universal one, though it is present in many languages of the world. It is language-specific and Tiv is not an exception since the reduplication process in Tiv is a unique one.

Types of Word Reduplication

A distinction has been drawn in literatures between ‘partial’ reduplication and ‘complete’ reduplication. In partial reduplication, only part of the root form is reduplicated, while complete reduplication is when the whole of a form is repeated or copied. Oyebade (1992) says that total reduplication is when there is total copying of a root word without differences in tone or stress, while partial reduplication is when part of a base form is repeated. Yoruba has partial reduplication as in the following examples:

7 gbé → gb + í + gbé → gbígbé
 ‘carry’ Redupliation ‘act of carrying’

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8. bá → b + í + bá → bíbá
 ‘meet’ Reduplication ‘act of meeting’
9. tà → t+í+tà → títà
 ‘sell’ Reduplication ‘act of selling’

In some languages of the world, reduplication may be tense inflection as in Hausa, although Hausa reduplication can also be derivational. In other languages also (e.g. Greek, Latin, Gothic), reduplication is used as a means for inflection. For instance, according to Hadumod (2006:989), Goth haitan ‘to be called’ haitait ‘was called’. Yoruba reduplication on the other hand performs a derivational function just as in Tiv. “In Japanese however, reduplicated forms occur normally in everyday conversation” (Crystal 2010:94). Reduplicated words here are not derivatives. Something that may be expressed in English or Tiv by a single unreduplicated word can be reduplicated in Japanese. Crystal (2010:182) reproduced below demonstrates this:

10. Japanese: *Inu ga wanwan to naku*
11. English: The dog goes barking
Sentence (10 above can also be expressed in English as ‘the dog is barking’ example (11) and in Tiv as:
12. *iwa la ngi gbehen*
 Dog the is barking
 ‘The dog is barking’.

In Tiv, unlike in many languages, when reduplicated words occur, they are adjectives or adverbs and are derived from nouns and adjectives respectively. In Aronoff and Fudeman (2005:77), reduplication is seen as a process whereby ‘,, a substring from either the beginning or the end of a word is copied’. These authors also confirm that reduplication may be used by languages for inflection or derivation. They show that Ilokano, an Austronesian language uses partial reduplication for plural inflections. Tiv, a Niger Congo language of Bantu origin on the other hand uses complete reduplication as a derivational process. Indonesian on the other hand uses complete reduplication as an inflectional process. The following examples are taken from (Sneddon 1996:16) in Aronoff and Fudeman (2005:167):

- 13a. Kuda-kuda ‘horses’
 b. Rumah-rumah ‘houses’
 c. Singkatan-singkatan ‘abbreviations’
 d. Perubahan-perubahan ‘changes’

The ‘problem’ with the Indonesian reduplication illustrated above is that it is only obligatory where ‘... the number of noun is not clear from the context, otherwise, the unreduplicated form can be used to refer to singular or plural’, (Aronoff and Fudeman 2005:167). In another situation, an Indonesian speaker has the option of using the unreduplicated noun form to refer to a plural noun.

Adjective Reduplication in Tiv

| | Root word (Adj.) | New word (Adv.) | Gloss |
|------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 14a. | kposo | kposo kposo | 'differently/separately' |
| b. | fele | fele fele | 'quickly' |
| c. | íjen | íjen íjen | 'hungrily' |
| d. | kyàa | kyàa kyàa | 'closely/nearly' |
| e. | gbáng | gbáng gbáng | 'strongly/tightly' |
| f. | kìmbír | kìmbír kìmbír | 'repeatedly' |
| g. | poo | poo poo | 'to fill each to the brim' |
| h. | chwein | chwein chwein | 'very sweet/bitterly' |
| i. | wang | wang wang | 'clearly' |
| j. | akur | akur akur | 'differently but accordingly' |
| k. | kpùm | kpùm kpùm | 'fast asleep/completely forgotten' |
| l. | bem | bem bem | 'peacefully' |
| m. | higen | higen higen | 'right now' |
| n. | *doo | de doo | 'very good' |
| o. | *cii | cíca | 'all/entirely' |
| p. | chuku | chuku chuku | 'into small pieces' |
| q. | gbín | gbín gbín | 'fully' |
| r. | jime | jime jime | 'backward' |
| s. | áyem | áyem áyem | 'speedily' |
| t. | keng | keng keng | 'necessarily' |

In examples (14a) through (t) above, the words with asterisks, i.e (n) and (o) serve as counter examples.

Noun (nominal) Reduplication in Tiv

| | Root word (Noun) | New word (Adj.) | Gloss |
|------|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 15a. | vue | vue vue | 'powdery' |
| b. | ńkulem | ńkulem ńkulem | 'oily' |
| c. | ńgelem | ńgelem ńgelem | 'watery' |
| d. | atihi | atihi atihi | 'hips by hips' |
| e. | kon | kon kon | 'full of wood/wooden' |
| f. | akuhe | akuhe akuhe | 'full of bones/bony' |
| g. | toho | toho toho | 'full of grass' |

The process of reduplication in Tiv is a restricted one. It is restricted in the sense that only two classes of words are mostly reduplicated. Only nouns and adjectives can be reduplicated to derive adjectives and adverbs respectively, unlike the situation found in many languages. It means therefore, that given a noun or an adjective as a root word (morpheme), we can predict and derive an adjective or an adverb by reduplicating the root morpheme. Reduplication in Tiv is always complete as illustrated in examples (14a) to (14t) and (15a) to (15g) above.

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Counter Examples

Although instances of partial reduplication process such as *cí cá*, *dedoo* etc. do occur, their occurrences are very few and therefore ‘insubstantial’. The few cases of partial reduplication that occur can be accounted for. As Larry Hyman (2001) puts it, languages speak, and if we pay attention we can hear them speak. We can do this by visiting similar languages or other dialects of a particular language to pay attention and hear them speak. We can therefore account for the unusual occurrences when we turn to other dialects of Tiv. In a number of Tiv dialects such as Ukum, Nongov, Masev etc., these reduplicated forms can also be pronounced *cí cá* and *doodoo* respectively. Even in the Standard dialect, *cá cá* and *doodoo* both occur in stylistic instances. So diachronically, *cí cá* ← *cá cá*, and *dedoo* ← *doodoo* respectively. *Cí cá* came from *cá cá*, and *dedoo* came from *doodoo*. One problem we may face in the explanation for these counter examples is that the root form of *cí cá-entirely* is not *ca* but *cii*. So, it is very unusual for a root form *cii* to be reduplicated as *cí cá*, even in the other dialects of Tiv mentioned above apart from the Standard dialect. There are other forms as well, such as ‘*teghlee*’- ‘*slow*’ which is reduplicated as ‘*tegh tegh*’- ‘*slowly*’. These can be interpreted or products of some phonological idiosyncrasies in the derivational process.

Conclusion

The derivational morphological process of reduplication in Tiv is limited to nouns and adjectives. It is also predictable. Although as earlier discussed in this paper that given an adjective, an adverb can be predicted, this does not however mean that every noun or adjective can be reduplicated. This, in another sense means that there are very few ‘true’ adverbs and adjectives in Tiv since only few adjectives and nouns can be reduplicated. Limitation on the number of adjectives and nouns that can be reduplicated means limitation of ‘true’ adverbs and adjectives. The primary focus of this work is on adverbs and adjectives derivations through reduplication process.

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- Georgina O. Maduagwu**
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