
REDUPLICATION IN ISEKIRI: AN INTERFACE BETWEEN VERBS AND PRONOUNS

By

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Abstract

The thrust of this paper is on an examination and analysis of the behavioural pattern of some Isekiri pronouns in the environment of verbs. An interface between verbs and pronouns in Isekiri results in the morphological process known as reduplication. Not all types of verbs and pronouns in Isekiri will be considered in this work. The focus will be on only those which interface to trigger the morphological process the writer intends to highlight in this paper. This will necessitate an explication of the key words such as verbs, pronouns and reduplication, and there after the use of copious illustrations to bring out the morphological process (reduplication) sought.

The primary focus of this paper is to examine and analyse the morphological process (reduplication) that results from the interface between verbs and pronouns in Isekiri. In this regard, the writer will first and foremost explicate some key words in the title and thereafter move on to exemplify how reduplication results from the interface between verbs and pronouns.

Verbs in Isekiri

In Isekiri, verbs are *asuliofo*, and have the following types:

- i. Asuliofo kpatakiri (main verbs)
- ii. Utiyenin asuliofo (auxiliary verbs);
- iii. Asuliofo – gbogofa (Transitive verbs)
- iv. Asuliofo - aregbogofa (Intransitive verbs).

As in English, verbs in Isekiri (*asuliofo*) constitute that part of speech which tells what somebody or something does, or what state somebody or something is in. The crucial role of giving meaning to sentences which verb plays make it the most important part of speech.

Pronouns in Isekiri

In Isekiri, pronouns are known as *Ojoruko*, and as in English they are noun (noun phrase) substitutes. They are noun equivalents referring to a previously named or understood persons or things.

Isekiri has the following types of pronouns:

- i. Ojoruko-onekawo (Personal pronouns);
- ii. Ojoruko-ebi (Relative pronouns);
- iii. Ojoruko - Ojijone (Reflexive pronouns);
- iv. Ojoruko – ubiro (interrogative pronouns);
- v. Ojoruko – uwewe (demonstrative pronouns);
- vi. Ojoruko – urunone (Possessive pronouns);
- vii. Ojoruko – arenuka (indefinite pronouns);
- viii. Ojoruko - akpen-use (Reciprocal pronouns).

Since the focus of the paper is not on the examination and analysis of verbs and pronouns per se, but on the morphological phenomenon that results from the interface between the two of them, the writer will not go beyond this skeletal information on them. What will be done next is to examine and analyse the interface between verbs and pronouns and how it results in reduplication.

However, before doing that it will be necessary to explicate what reduplication is.

Reduplication

Reduplication in linguistics is a morphological process in which the root or stem of a word (or part of it) or even the whole word is repeated exactly or with a slight change. It is used in inflections to convey grammatical functions, such as plurality, intensification, etc and in lexical derivation to create new words. It is often used when a speaker adopts a tone more “expressive” or figurative than ordinary speech and is also often, but not exclusively iconic in meaning.

Reduplication is found in a wide range of languages and language groups, though its level of linguistic productivity varies. Other terms that are occasionally used include cloning, doubling, duplication and tautonym.

Reduplication is often phonologically in one or two different ways:

1. Either as reduplication segments (sequences of consonants/vowels);
2. Or as reduplication prosodic units (syllables).

In addition to phonological description, reduplication often needs to be described morphologically as a reduplication of linguistic constituents (i.e. words, stems or roots). The base is the word (or part of the word that is to be copied). The

reduplicated element is called reduplicant, often abbreviated as **RED** or sometimes just **R**.

English has the following types of reduplication, ranging from informal expressive vocabulary (the first four shown below) to grammatically meaningful forms (the last one shown below).

- **Rhyming reduplication:** hokey-pokey, razzle-dazzle, super-duper, boogie-woogie, tennie-weenie, walkie-talkie, hoity-toity.
- **Exact Reduplication** (baby-talk-like); bye-bye, choo-choo, no-no, pee-pee, poo-poo.
- **Ablaut reduplication:** bric-a-brac, chit-chat, criss-cross, ding-dung, jibber-jabber, knick-knack, pitter-patter, splish-splash, zig-zag, flim-flam.
- **Shm-reduplication:** baby-shmaby, cancer-shmacer and fancy-schmancy. This process is a feature of American English from Yiddish, starting among the American Jews of New York City, then the New York dialect and then the whole country.
- **Comparative reduplication:** in the sentence “John’s apple looked redder and redder,” the reduplication of the comparative is becoming more true over time, meaning roughly “John’s apple looked progressively redder as the time went on.”

Although (as shown below) there is a wide range of words that are reduplicated in Isekiri, the focus is however on how verbs and pronouns interface in sentence in Isekiri to result in reduplication. Below are some examples of reduplication in Isekiri:

- | | |
|-------------|--------------------------------|
| - Sisa | “ Running/ Racing” |
| - Dede | “ all” |
| - Meji-meji | “ in twos” |
| - Bebere | “slant/slanted” |
| - Keke | “tight” |
| - Keke | “until” |
| - Leghe | “deceive” |
| - Lele | “follow” |
| - In-in | “no/answering in the negative” |

Reduplication in Isekiri: An Interface between Verbs And Pronouns.

We will use the following examples to illustrate how reduplication results from the interface between verbs and pronouns in sentences in Isekiri:

1. Maa son on
NEG roast it (Don’t roast it)
2. Mon on dede
Drink it all (Drink all of it)

3. Jolo Kan an
Properly nail it (Nail it properly)
4. Yaya a jubogho
Spread it around
5. Maa kpa a
NEG beat him/her (Don't beat him/her)
6. Mo ran aghan re uli ren
I send (past) them go home aspect
(I have sent them home)
7. O le e sode
He/she drive (past) him/ her out
He/she drove (past) him/ her out
8. Ragha a
Rinse it
9. Jolo o ni
Put it in order (arrange it properly)
10. Mo waa lele e
I will follow him/her

Notice that in each of the ten sentences above, two words are underlined. These two words are verbs and pronouns respectively. You will also notice that the last segments/syllables in all of the first underlined words (verbs) are repeated (duplicated) as pronouns. This is a clear case of the morphological process known as reduplication resulting from the interface between verbs and pronouns in Isekiri sentences.

To bring this out clearly, examples (1-10) above are shown below in another format. This time, instead of the full sentences, the verbs and the pronouns in each of the sentences will be isolated:

Verbs	pronouns
1. Son “roast”	on “it”
2. Mon “drink”	on “it”
3. Kan “nail”	an “it”
4. Yaya “spread”	a “it”
5. Kpa “beat”	a “him/her”
6. Ran “send”	aghan “them”
7. Le “drive”	e “him/her”
8. “Ragha “ rinse	a “it”
9. Jolo “ arrange”	o “it”
10. Lele “follow”	e “him/her”

Other examples are:

Verbs	pronouns
11. Gben “tear”	en “it”
12. Dun “heal”	un him/her
13. Re “slice”	e “it”
14. Rin “sink”	in “it”
15. Guo “pull/drag”	o “it”
16. Gua “drive”	a “it”
17. Den “fry”	en “it”
18. Yo “sift”	o “it”
19. Tin “push”	in “it”

Conclusion

Reduplication as a morphological process in linguistics is found in a wide range of languages and language groups, though its level of linguistic productivity varies. Isekiri is not an exception. There are wide range of words that are reduplicated in the language. Although some examples of these are given in this paper, the primary focus however is on the interface between verbs and pronouns and its outcome of reduplication. Through copious examples, this has been shown in this paper with sentences in Isekiri.

In as much as it cannot be said that the morphological process of reduplication has been fully and exhaustively covered in this paper, it is hoped that the materials presented here will add to the general pool of knowledge and may be of immense assistance to scholars, especially those who are interested in contrastive linguistics.

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