Reduplication in Amazonian languages

Organizers

Gale Goodwin Gómez
Professor, Department of Anthropology
Rhode Island College, Providence, R.I., U.S.A.
email: ggoodwin@ric.edu
phone: +1-401-456-9623, fax: +1-401-456-9736

Hein van der Voort
Researcher, Department of Linguistics
Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, Nijmegen, The Netherlands
email: hvoort@xs4all.nl
phone: +31-20-693-4541, fax: +31-24-361-1070

Introduction and rationale

Reduplication is a phenomenon that occurs in the majority of the world's languages. It is generally considered as a morphological process that involves repetition of words or parts of words as a derivational - and sometimes inflectional - strategy. In most languages it is a marginal phenomenon. In the Indo-European languages it is a rather limited phenomenon that occurs in expressions such as English *bye-bye, hush-hush, so-so, wishy-washy, riff-raff*, etc. In other languages there may be more elaborate patterns of reduplication, and it is attested with many different functions. The Austronesian languages are well-known for reduplication, such as Malay, where plural is indicated by reduplication, e.g. *anak* 'child' vs. *anak-anak* 'children', etc. Different types of reduplication may have different grammatical functions, as in Tagalog *sulat* 'write' vs. *su-sulat* 'will write' (FUTURE) vs. *mag-sulat-sulat* 'write intermittently' (DISTRIBUTIVE).

In the present decade there has been a renewed interest in reduplication among linguists. This has resulted in special conferences on reduplication (Graz 2002, 2007), many articles and several books (e.g. Kouwenberg ed. 2003, Hurch ed. 2005, Inkelas & Zoll 2005) in which descriptive, historical and theoretical issues have been raised and interesting reduplication phenomena from a diverse number of languages have been discussed. Amazonian languages, however, have been underrepresented in these developments. This situation is unfortunate both for the scientific study of the Amazonian languages and for general and typological linguistics. The few studies of reduplication in Amazonian languages, such as Bruno (2003), Dixon & Vogel (1996), Everett & Seki (1986), Goodwin Gómez (in prep.), Meira (2000), Rose (2005) and van der Voort (2003) both confirm universally attested patterns and show unusual phenomena that have not been recorded elsewhere or discussed in the general literature. Clearly, Amazonian languages have an important contribution to make to

the general study of linguistics, but a better and more detailed understanding of these languages is required.

Issues and aims

In this symposium, we would like to bring together scholars of Amazonian languages and specialists in reduplication in order to exchange information and insights and discuss their general implications. As general sources on reduplication, Moravcsik (1978), Robino (2005a,b) and the Graz Reduplication Project website (http://reduplication.uni-graz.at/) should be considered for basic characteristics of reduplication, specific examples, and current terminology. In order to focus our efforts as much as possible on comparable phenomena, we define reduplication in a relatively narrow but generally accepted way to be the repetition of morphemes or of parts of morphemes, by which a new morpheme with a new meaning is created. However, not all repetition is reduplication, since reduplication does not entail the repetition of semantic content. Rather, the meaning of a reduplicated form is different from that of its constituent parts. This essential part of the definition excludes mere repetition of words or phrases as in *very, very good*, repetition of synonyms as in *dazed and confused*, recursive application of morphemes as in *great-great-grandfather*, or argument agreement as in *Nós fala-mos português* 'We speak Portuguese'. This and other criteria for the distinction between repetition and reduplication are discussed extensively in Gil (2005).

From a formal point of view, two basic types of reduplication can be distinguished: full reduplication and partial reduplication. In full reduplication, and entire word, root or stem is repeated, as in Yanomae *noma* 'die', vs. *noma-noma a* 'death', *kroke* 'grey' vs. *kroke-kroke a* 'cloud', *wehe-* 'dry' vs. *wehe-wehe-ha* 'on dry land' (Goodwin Gómez in prep.). Partial reduplication is attested in several different formal types. Often, the unit of partial reduplication is the syllable, as in Emerillon *suʔu* 'to bite' vs. *susuʔu* 'to gnaw' (Rose 2005), or the mora, as in Movima *beń* 'flat, flexible' vs. *bebeńkwa* 'leather, hide' (Haude 2006). Partial reduplication can also involve multiple syllables, as in Baure *-averoč-* 'to go far' vs. *-averoveroč-* 'to go very far' (Danielsen 2007). Productive reduplication of bound morphemes has so far been attested only in Kwazá, as in *nuri-xa-re* 'are you full?' vs. *nuri-xa-xay-hỹ-re* 'were you full?' (van der Voort 2003). Depending on the language or linguistic subsystem in question, reduplicated syllables can be prefixed, suffixed or infixed.

From a functional point of view, many different types of reduplication have been attested. In many languages, reduplication is used to express notions like plural, distibutive, collective, case, size, completion, inchoative, progressive, transitive, reciprocal, nominalization and even such opposite notions as intensification and attenuation. Many languages have unproductive types of reduplication that apply only to an unpredictable subset of items from a word class, or of which no non-reduplicated forms exist. The latter is seen especially in onomatopoeic, or in other ways symbolic forms, as in Yanomae *tukutukumu* 'to beat (as a heart)', *kirakiramo* 'parrot', etc. (Goodwin Gómez in prep.).

A number of absolute or statistic universals have been formulated with respect to reduplication. Moravcsik (1978) has observed for example that languages with partial reduplication also have full reduplication. Thus far, no languages were attested that have only partial reduplication. She also stated that no reduplication patterns exist that are based on any other properties than phonological and phonotactic, such as syllable

number, consonantality-vowelhood, linear position. However, in Kwazá, which is an Amazonian language, reduplication based on morphological units is attested, and thus contradicts Moravcsik's generally accepted universal.

In the history of linguistics, the Amazonian languages have sometimes provided counterexamples to typological universals. In this manner, the increased participation of scholars of Amazonian languages in the general linguistic debate contributes significantly to the development of linguistic theory. Conversely, developments in theoretical, typological and historical linguistics contributes to a better understanding of the Amazonian languages and their history and relationships. Moreover, the raising of new general linguistic issues also requires further investigation of the Amazonian languages, which presupposes their documentation and which stimulates their preservation. The study of specific general issues across Amazonian languages may furthermore help to answer questions about the extent to which Amazonia represents a linguistic area, and to acknowledge the value of the linguistic heritage of the Amazon basin.

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