

REDUPLICATION IN SWAHILI

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1. Introduction

The aim of this article is to deal with reduplication in Swahili. In phase I, we pay attention to the process of reduplication as such, i.e., we try to define this phenomenon and we determine the scope of our study. The core of phase II is constituted by the examination of formal properties of reduplication in Swahili. Phase III contains the investigation of the phenomenon in question from the functional perspective. In the next phase, we concentrate on the so-called "pseudo-reduplication" since we are convinced that this feature of Swahili morphology is quite important in relation to reduplication. The last phase is devoted to the analysis of a set of concrete examples from a work of fiction which illustrates the issues discussed in previous phases.

Although this study is intended to be an intralanguage one, we do not restrain ourselves from occasional interlanguage comparisons since it is our belief that any contrastive comparison can contribute to a better understanding of the phenomenon concerned. The synchronic point of view is applied throughout the whole study.

2. Reduplication as a Language Phenomenon

2.1. General Characterization

"A common morphological process in some languages involves reduplication, which marks a grammatical or semantic contrast by repeating all or part of the base to which it applies." (O'Grady, Archibald 2000:131)

Therefore, it is possible to distinguish between partial reduplication (involving a segment or a syllable) and complete reduplication (involving a morpheme). In addition to that, multiple reduplication may occur, allowing three identical elements next to one another.

In concrete terms:

partial reduplication:	<i>-tetemea</i>	'tremble'
complete reduplication:	<i>-sebusebu</i>	'refuse'
multiple reduplication:	<i>fofofo</i>	'completely', 'absolutely' (restricted usage)

In the present study, we would like to focus on complete reduplication since multiple reduplication is rather rare in Swahili and, when we paraphrase Schadeberg (1984:4), partial reduplication is not productive in this language.

Generally, reduplication concerns a great variety of parts of speech. In Swahili, mainly nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs are affected. However, no attempt is made in this study to cover this aspect since, as will be shown later, these categories may be overlapping.

2.2. Reduplication Contrasted with Iteration

In this section, we would like to point out the crucial difference between reduplication and iteration, two separate processes that tend to be considered as one phenomenon, under the umbrella term of reduplication sometimes (Ashton 1966:316).

In our view, reduplication is fully grammaticalized, i.e., it serves either morpho-syntactic purposes (such as expressing concepts which would be formed by means of other morphological and syntactic devices) or reduplication plays a role in the word-formation, i.e., at the level of lexicology. In contrast, iteration is not grammaticalized and is not productive as regards the lexicon.

From the functional point of view, iteration is entirely emphatic. And, as far as formal properties are concerned, it differs from reduplication as well. While the boundary between the elements repeated in reduplication is either formally invisible (as in Swahili) or is marked by some kind of punctuation (e.g. the hyphen in English), the boundary between iterated items is always marked by a space (additional punctuation may occur as well). Sometimes, other lexical units are inserted, their semantic load being minimal in that case.

Concretely (viz. the partial formal correspondence in English):

2.2.1. Iteration without any functional element

<i>Haraka haraka haina baraka.</i>	lit.: 'Hurry, hurry has no blessing.' (cf. 'Make haste slowly.')
<i>Wakaenda wakaenda msitu na nyika.</i> (Ashton 1966:317)	'They went on and on through forest and grassland.'
<i>moja moja</i>	'one by one'

2.2.2. Iteration with functional elements

<i>uso kwa uso</i>	'face to face'
<i>kadha wa kadha</i>	'an uncertain number', 'rather a lot'
<i>Haba na haba hujaza kibaba.</i>	'Little and little fills the measure.'

3. Reduplication in Swahili

3.1. Formal Properties

As pointed out before, there are several types of reduplication, based on the kind and number of elements which are repeated, i.e., reduplicated.

However, in a number of languages, the reduplication of a particular segment/ syllable/ morpheme may be accompanied by other changes, such as ablaut (the alternation of root vowels):

English: mish-mash, shilly-shally
 flip-flop, tick-tock

Another change co-occurring with reduplication may be the rhyme (the difference of initial consonants does not play such a significant role as different vowels above):

3.1.1.2. Other vowels in non-Bantu verbs

-zulu 'be dizzy', 'be confused in mind' *zulizuli* 'dizziness', 'confusion'

3.1.2. Reduplication derived from a verb which loses its final vowel and the preceding consonant

-kumbuka 'call to mind', 'remember' *kumbukumbu* 'mention', 'remembrance'

-chekecha 'sift' *chekecheke* 'a sieve'

3.1.3. Reduplication derived from verbs with extensions

-tia 'put'; 'use'; 'cause', etc. *tilatila* 'mixed up' (of different kinds)
(polysemous verb)

-toa 'show'; 'give'; 'arrange', *tolatola* 'selected'
etc. (polysemous verb)

3.1.4. Existence versus non-existence of derived simple forms

-chokoa 'pick at', 'poke' *chokochoko* 'discord', 'trouble' **choko*

-pinda 'bend', 'twist' *pindupindu* 'cholera', 'convulsions' *pindu* 'turning', 'tumbling'

3.1.5. Modification by means of prefixes**3.1.5.1. Adverbial prefix ki-**

-dogo 'small' *-dogodogo* 'very small' *kidogodogo* 'just a little bit'

juu 'high' *juujuu* 'high up' *kijuujuu* 'upwards'

wima 'uprightness', 'be erect' *kiwimawima* 'upright', 'in an erect position'

3.1.5.2. Diminutive prefix ki-

<i>taka</i> 'dirt', 'filth'	<i>takataka</i> 'trifle', 'anything of little value'	<i>kitakataka</i> 'a particle of dust', 'a speck of dirt', 'a very small worthless thing'
<i>bato / batobato</i> 'colored spots', 'stripes' (of an animal)	<i>kibatobato</i> 'little spots', 'stripes'	

3.1.5.3. Noun class prefixes (according to our research, the ki-/vi- and u-/n- classes outnumber others)

ki-/vi- class:

<i>-pinda</i> 'bend', 'twist'	<i>pindupindu</i> 'cholera', 'convulsions'	<i>kipindupindu</i> 'violent seizure', 'epidemic'
<i>-zungua</i> 'cause to go round', 'turn round'	<i>kizunguzungu</i> 'giddiness', 'whirl'	
<i>-tefu</i> 'soft'	<i>kitefu / kitefutefu</i> 'anything soft or smooth'; 'sobbing'	
<i>-ficha</i> 'hide', 'conceal'	<i>ficho</i> 'hiding-place', 'concealment'	<i>kificho</i> 'act of hiding'
<i>kifichoficho</i> – as in: <i>mambo ya kifichoficho</i> 'intriguings'		

m-/wa- class:

<i>mfichifichi</i> 'one who habitually conceals', 'secretive, sly person' (extension of the above)		
<i>-chora</i> 'carve', 'engrave'	<i>-chorachora</i> 'scribble', 'write illegibly'	<i>mchorachora</i> 'scribbler'

m-/mi- class:

mchorochoro 'scribbling', 'scrawling' (extension of the above)

n- class:

-tamu 'sweet' *tamutamu* 'sweets', 'confectionery'

u-/n- class:

-vuguvugu 'tepid', *uvuguvugu* 'tepidity', 'lukewarmness'
'lukewarm'

-chepechepe 'soaked', 'wet' *uchepechepe* 'moisture', 'wetness'

goigoi 'lazy person' *ugoigoi* 'laziness'

-fura 'swell with anger, *furufuru* 'perplexity', 'disorder' *ufurufuru* 'anger', 'ire'
rage'

-lamba 'lick' *-lambilambi* 'soft, possible to lick' *ulambilambi* 'something that
can be licked'

moto 'warmth' *umotomoto* 'heat', 'passion'

3.2. Functional Properties

We would like to argue that the fact that languages make use of reduplication as a means of word-formation is not purely formal, i.e., as a sole way of extending the language vocabulary, but that there are certain functions attributable to this form of word-formation. In support of this argument, we would like to point out the fact that not all languages employ this kind of word-formation. Logically, if there were not any functional restrictions (besides those ensuing from the capabilities of human cognitive structures and the restrictions complying with the efficiency of communication), it would be possible to use reduplication *ad absurdum* (if not *ad hoc* (that is when we preserve the semantic affiliation)), e.g. there is no obvious reason why the following

sequence does not represent actual lexical items: *taka* 'dirt', *takataka* 'trifles, scraps', **takatakataka* 'garbage can', **takatakatakataka* 'dump', etc.

In other words, in addition to the semantic connectedness, there is always a certain function exerted by reduplicated forms. Therefore, let us try to illustrate the various functions exerted by reduplication in Swahili in the following section:

3.2.1. Intensification

<i>-chapua</i> 'speed up'	<i>chapuchapu</i> 'quick!', 'hurry up!'
<i>-hoji</i> 'request'; 'examine'	<i>-hojihoji</i> 'cross-question thoroughly'
<i>-dogo</i> 'small', 'little'	<i>-dogodogo</i> 'very small', 'very little'
<i>-mbali</i> 'far', 'far off', 'apart'	<i>-mbalimbali</i> 'distinct', 'separate', 'opposite'
<i>tepe</i> 'many'	<i>tepetepe</i> 'very many'
<i>vile</i> 'thus'	<i>vilevile</i> 'just the same', 'equally'
<i>kando</i> 'by the side', 'on the edge'	<i>kandokando</i> 'on the very edge'

3.2.2. Modification of meaning (often connected with the change of the kind of part of speech)

<i>bia</i> 'cooperation', 'partnership'	<i>-biabia</i> 'be dilligent', 'active'
<i>moto</i> 'warmth'	<i>umotomoto</i> 'heat', 'passion'
<i>-cheza</i> 'play', 'play a game'	<i>-chezacheza</i> 'make fun', 'enjoy oneself'
<i>-chokoa</i> 'pick at', 'poke'	<i>-chokochoko</i> 'discord', 'trouble', 'annoyance'
<i>-chora</i> 'carve', 'engrave'	<i>-chorachora</i> 'scribble', 'write illegibly'
<i>-geua</i> 'change', 'alter'	<i>-geugeu</i> 'changeable', 'whimsical'

-pole 'mild', 'gentle' *polepole* 'a soothing expression, expressing sorrow'

3.2.3. Transfer of meaning (based on similarity)

jivu 'ashes' *-jivujivu* 'grey', 'ash-like'

bata 'a kind of duck' *-batabata* 'waddle'

bui 'a large spider',
'tarantula' *buibui* 'a black garment worn by some women when they go out'

3.2.4. Continuous action

-gota 'knock', 'tap' *-gotagota* 'drum on an instrument (ceaselessly)'

-cheka 'laugh' *-chekacheka* 'keep laughing'

3.2.5. Repeated action

kuja 'come' *kujakuja* 'come often'

-imba 'sing' *-imbaimba* 'sing frequently'

Sometimes, two (or more) categories can be combined, as in:

-sulika 'feel dizzy' *-sulisuli* 'dizziness', 'vertigo'

-zungua 'cause to go round', *kizunguzungu* 'giddiness', 'whirl'
'turn round'

(modification of meaning + intensification)

-vinya 'tremble' *kivinyovinyo* 'anything quivering'; 'confusion of mind', 'hesitancy'

-geua 'change', 'alter' *-geugeu* 'changeable', 'whimsical' *kigeugeu* 'wayward thing/
person'; 'chameleon'

(modification + intensification + transfer of meaning)

4. Remark on Swahili "Pseudo-Reduplication"

In this section, we would like to pinpoint an additional phenomenon pertinent to reduplication in Swahili, namely the fact that there is a great number of words which consist of reduplicated syllables (one or more of them). However, as the title of this section indicates, there is no reduplication present in these cases, i.e., these lexical items represent a single morpheme (and, therefore, neither expressions containing half the elements nor an underlying form exist).

As a consequence of this fact, it is almost impossible to establish a certain pattern which would clarify the nature of the lexical items concerned. For instance, the following sample of words does not exhibit any connection (semantic or formal) with other words, i.e., words which might be considered as the original forms (more explicitly: in regard of '*felefele*' - 'an inferior kind of millet', there is no '*fele*' meaning 'a regular kind of millet', etc.). In addition to that, this word sample as such does not constitute a semantic or functional set either:

bisibisi 'screwdriver'

-chacha 'ferment'

-tata 'tangle', 'complicate', 'confuse'

fudifudi 'face downwards'

Nevertheless, it is possible to detect a few semantic fields the lexical items of which seem to be denoted by means of "pseudo-reduplicated" forms quite frequently:

4.1. Semantic Fields

4.1.2. Zoology

golegole 'a kind of bird' (*Phoeniculus purpureus*)

guruguru 'a kind of lizard' (*Gerrhosaurus major*)

hondohondo 'a kind of hornbill' (*Buceros cristatus*)

dikidiki 'a kind of antelope' (*Madoqua Kirki*)

- hudhud* 'a kind of hoopoe' (*Upupa epops*)
kumbikumbi 'a kind of ant'
nzigunzigu 'a kind of butterfly'
dudu 'large insect'

4.1.2. Botany

- kiyuyu* 'a kind of shrub' (*Synadenium carinatum*)
konokono 'a kind of shrub' (*Annona squamosa*)
mlimbolimbo 'a kind of plant' (*Euphorbia cuneata*)
mtongotongo 'a kind of plant' (*Euphorbia abyssinica*)
mtipitipi 'a kind of plant' (*Abrus precatorius*)
mpilipili 'a kind of pepper plant' (*Capsicum annum*)
chikichiki 'the fruit of the palm-oil tree'
felefele 'an inferior kind of millet'

4.1.3. Human Beings / Body, etc.

- bubu* 'dumb person'
njorinjori 'a very tall man'
kaka 'brother'
baba 'father'
lengelenge 'blister'
yavyavyu 'lungs'
kisalisali 'gonorrhoea'

Additionally, there seems to be a consistent pattern as regards the connotative meaning. The lexical items described above tend to be expressive or to have negative connotations (or both):

4.2. Connotative Meaning

4.2.1. Expressivity

<i>goigoi</i>	'lazy, idle person'
<i>hekaheka</i>	'confusion, much noise'
<i>kiherehere</i>	'palpitation, confused movement'
<i>-ganzaganza</i>	'hesitate', 'speak in a hesitating, lazy manner'
<i>-yugayuga</i>	'reel', 'stagger'
<i>-lengalenga</i>	'be tearful', 'be near to crying'
<i>-gaagaa</i>	'roll from side to side', 'turn restlessly'
<i>kakakaka</i>	'in a hurry', 'in a rush'
<i>halahala</i>	'immediately!', 'at once!'

4.2.2. Negativity

<i>vuruguvurugu</i>	'confusion', 'chaos'
<i>wasiwasi</i>	'doubt', 'perplexity'
<i>-tabangatabanga</i>	'spoil', 'adulterate'
<i>-varangavaranga</i>	'interrupt rudely'
<i>-vungavunga</i>	'crumple'
<i>-wayawaya</i>	'stagger', 'totter'
<i>-zongazonga</i>	'puzzle', 'confuse'

-sebusebu 'refuse (but wanting at the same time)'

5. Concrete Analyses

The objective of this section is to exemplify the issues discussed above. Hitherto, all the relevant issues have been elucidated and demonstrated by means of examples without a context, i.e., separate lexical items. In this section, we would like to examine a number of concrete examples from Swahili narratives.

As far as the texts are concerned, it has to be noted that, in terms of the English versions, we selected linguistic translations (the author says in the preface: "I have tried ... to make the translations as literal as possible" (Streere 1870:v)) instead of "artistic" ones on the basis of the fact that our research is linguistically-oriented (otherwise, it would be impossible to separate the linguistic aspect of compensations from that "artistic", i.e., we would not be able to distinguish and disregard compensations that do not ensue from the language structure itself).

We have detected the following examples of reduplication in the text concerned (we try to show the impact on the translation to English since this phenomenon is missing in this language; the fact that the source material is rather outdated should not influence our subject in any way):

akauthi watu vilevile (Steere 1870:440) 'and (he) harrassed people in the same way'
(*'vile'* - 'so, thus'; the translation is carried out by means of an explicit paraphrase)

na mwaka huu vilevile (Steere 1870:232) 'and this year just the same'
(the original and the translation correspond to each other in terms of intensity)

katikati aweke tupa (Steere 1870:442) 'in the middle let be put files'
(we find this translation /that of '*katikati*'/ appropriate since 'middle, center' is either '*kati*' or '*katikati*' and it is our belief that it does not make too much sense to intensify the 'middle' (by means of 'very', for example) since being in the middle is the absolute quality (there is always only one point that can be denoted as the middle point/ center))

tumpige kwa mishare kulekule juu 'let us shoot him with arrows there, up above'
(Steere 1870:448)

('kule' meaning 'there', 'juu' 'up/ above' -- there is a certain dislocation - compensation in place, in translation studies terms - of the intensification since the aspect expressed by 'juu' is doubled and not that reduplicated; in our view, 'right there, above' would be a more exact translation)

kwani usiniambie kulekule (Steere 1870:1) 'because of your not telling me there on the spot'
(an appropriate compensation)

akafa palepale (Steere 1870:450) 'and there he died'
(*'pale'* is the counterpart of 'there', the intensification is compensated by fronting in English; similarly, in the next example)

akaondoka waziri wake Sultani palepale, 'and the sultan's vizir there arose in the audience'
katika baraza (Steere 1870:300)

akaona pandepande ya ndoo 'and (he) looked on all sides of the pail'
(Steere 1870:430)

(*'pande'* corresponds to 'side', therefore, English is more explicit (the comprehensive notion of the English 'all' includes the Swahili partial notion of 'side by side by side ...'))

akapanda jamii ya mbogamboga 'and he planted all kinds of vegetables'
(Steere 1870:198)

(cf. above, although 'all' is not meant literally here and, moreover, 'all' does not quantify 'vegetables' in question but rather the preceding determiner)

akaazima kanzu mbovumbovu 'and borrowed a ragged old kanzu'
(Steere 1870:298)

(*'-bovu'* means 'bad', 'rotten', 'decomposed', 'unsound', etc.; this time, a collocation of two adjectives (with the same status) is preferred to a collocation using an adjective ('bad', 'rotten', 'ragged') with another intensifying one (such as 'very', 'extremely') which we deem appropriate)

akatafutatafuta nyumbani mwa babaye 'and she searched about in her father and mother's
na mamaye (Steere 1870:394) house'

(the intensity/ continuous aspect is lost, an adequate translation would be 'thoroughly'/ 'for a long time')

akiamka akizungukazunguka chini ya 'when it awoke it wandered about under the tree'
mti ule (Steere 1870:66)

(again, the translation is weaker than the original, viz. above)

And, then, there are several "pseudo-reduplicated" forms, as we used to call them in the previous discussion. For instance:

makoikoi (Steere 1870:280) 'the evil spirits'

hatta ukadaghadagha nafsi yako 'and to put yourself all into confusion'
 (Steere 1870:58)

('daghadagha' meaning 'be uncertain, in confusion', *-dagha)

aliruka na kigelegele na hoihoi '(she) jumped with screams and cries of joy'
 (Steere 1870:108)

(the word 'kigelegele' is captured by means of two separate nouns - in order to retain the intensity ('hoihoi' corresponds to 'joy'))

ukawayawaya (Steere 1870:212) '(he) swayed down'

(but, personally, we suppose that there is a mistake in terms of the semantics: '-wayawaya' means 'sway down' but in this context, we would find the other meaning more plausible - that of 'be heavy with fruit', 'be bearing abundantly')

And, last but not least, an exceptional solution in terms of translating occurred in the following case:

tazama mtama, ule wa felefele 'look out the mtama, that felefele sort'

(Steere 1870:116)

(the author decided to transfer the original word '*felefele*' in terms of our focus, and to indicate it is extraneous in the target language; however, this fact has nothing to do with the linguistic structure of the word itself but rather with pragmatics)

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we would like to summarize the main aspects of our research. Our aim in writing this article was to present an overview of reduplication in Swahili.

This task was carried out in several phases. After a preliminary section introducing the scope of our study, we started with a brief discussion on reduplication as a language phenomenon. In connection with this subject, we tried to differentiate between reduplication and iteration (which was not the area of interest in this work although there are some similarities).

Then we went on to consider general problems pertaining to reduplication in Swahili. First, we discussed the formal properties, such as the number and kind of elements reduplicated. Then we moved on to a more minute analysis of reduplicated Swahili forms from the formal perspective. The core of this section was constituted by the illustration of specific formal properties, such as the loss of post-root speech sounds, and a modification by means of assigning a particular noun class.

In the next subsection, we had a look at the functional characteristics of reduplication in Swahili. We established several categories, ranging from the intensification, modification and transfer of meaning to the expression of continuous and repeated action. We provided not only the theoretical classification but also appropriate exemplification.

Additionally, we pointed out another phenomenon which we labelled as "pseudo-reduplication" since the forms employed are not reduplicated although they seem so (i.e., there are certain elements repeated but the forms *per se* do not have any non-reduplicated counterparts (from the synchronic point of view, at least)).

After having delivered a morphological description of this phenomenon, we turned to the matter of finding out a certain pattern which would characterize the lexical items concerned. We were

not able to account for all the cases but, nevertheless, we provided a sketch of the type of both denotations and connotations involved.

We closed our research with a contrastive analysis based on Swahili texts translated to English. We offered concrete evidence in support of our prior discussions and employed the technique of translation studies in order to clarify the issues, especially the impact when the particular phenomenon in the source language is not present in the other, target, language (with the same function; to the same extent, etc.).

As far as the contribution of this article is concerned, we would like to believe that the study presented not only helped to summarize the main aspects of reduplication in Swahili but also that it might extend the knowledge of the phenomenon in question "*kidogodogo*".

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