

LEXICAL REDUPLICATION ACROSS KIKONGO DIALECTAL VARIATION IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

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ABSTRACT

The examination of lexical reduplication across Kikongo dialectal variation reveals more similarities than differences. The slight difference is noticed with the Kikongo reduplicated lexicons with a connector. Kimanyanga variety opts for (na) while Kindibu and Kintandu connect with (ye). This serves for tribal identification. Another sociolinguistic difference concerns the reduplication of personal names in Kiyombe. This reduplication serves for tribal identification, too.

Keywords: *Dialects, variety, reduplication, tribal identification, connector, similarities, differences*

RESUME

Cette étude révèle que la reduplication lexicale dans les dialectes Kongo démontre plus des similitudes que des différences. La petite différence s'identifie dans des lexiques redupliqués avec du connectif (et). La variété Ndibu emploie le connectif (ye) tandis que le Kimanyanga préfère le connectif (na). Elle sert de l'identification tribale. Une autre différence sociolinguistique concerne la reduplication des noms personnels. Celle-ci est exclusivement courant en Kiyombe, elle distingue les Yombe des autres tribus Kongo.

Mots-clés : *Dialectes, Variété, reduplication, identification tribale, connectif, similitudes*

I. INTRODUCTION

Reduplication is observed in many languages including Bantu languages, but its level of linguistic productivity varies from one language to another (Marantz, 1982) and (Ghomeshi et al., 2004). The researcher was interested in disclosing the level of the lexical reduplication productivity across some dialects of Kikongo, namely Kindibu, Kintadu, Kimanyanga and Kiyombe.

The objectives of this study are, first, to look at the way lexical reduplication is applied across Kikongo dialectal variation in order to establish differences and similarities. Second, to uncover possible functions and sociolinguistic aspects related to the phenomenon in Kikongo dialectal variation.

The Kikongo spoken data were needed and they were obtained thanks to qualitative method. Both passive observation and interview techniques were implemented. Through passive observation, the researcher transcribed some excerpts of conversation with lexical reduplication heard in Kinshasa and Kongo Central. Ten of those excerpts of conversation have been retained for analysis. In Kongo central, the territory of Mbanza Ngungu, mainly the municipality of Kwilu-Ngongo served as the setting investigation. Twenty informants residing in the area were interviewed. The talk between the researcher and the informants turned are around disclosing whether the process of lexical reduplication was applied similarly or not. Another point focused was in, the unstructured interview, to depict any possible sociolinguistic aspects involved in the process.

II. ON REDUPLICATION

Reduplication is a word formation process across languages. It expresses a complex range of semantic and syntactic senses and functions (Inkelas and Zoll, 2005). Dineen (1990) mentions that reduplication is used with various purposes in English. Commonly, there are two types of reduplication, namely total and partial one. Total one contains the similar elements as for example fifty-fifty. The partial one not similar such as sing-song. There are two subtypes of partial reduplication, namely ablaut/vocalic reduplication and rhyming one. For examples zig zag is vocalic whereby the vowel in the two elements are distinct in rhyming the consonant is distinct such as in walkie-talkie.

Two conditions are required for reduplication, namely semantic relevance and productivity of the process. Inkelas (2014) claims that the outcome of copying the word base entails generating a new semantics of the root, thus causing change in the meaning of the reduplicated stem or adding new information along with the existing meaning of the basic word. The common semantic changes associated with reduplication include diminutivization, intensification, quantification and convey a sense of distribution or lack of control. Among the common syntactic changes are associated with reduplication is inflectional device mainly the repeated word in the context of quantification plays the role of the plural morpheme.

Alsamadani and Taibah (2019) add that Malay Palembang language has the following reduplication functions: plurality, variety, similarity and entirety. Plurality also refers to quantification is the most common function reduplication across languages (LaKoff and Johnson, 1980). Apart from those semantic functions, iterative is also common across languages. The reduplicated noun with the sense of iteration shows that the referent of the reduplicated has undergone the same situation multiple times.

Concerning the categories to which reduplication is applied across languages, both content and function words. The following table summarizes different functions of lexical reduplication mentioned by LaKoff and Johnson (1980).

Table 1: Functions of lexical reduplication

1.	Diminitivization
2.	iteration
3.	distribution
4.	Plurality/ quantification
5.	variety
6.	similarity
7.	entirety
8	intensification

The two subtypes of partial reduplication, namely ablaut/vocalic reduplication and rhyming may be also identified apart from the lexical reduplication which reduplicated fully. In the above table, eight functions of lexical reduplication are identified. Another concern of this study is look at these functions as the phenomenon of reduplication is language universal (Abbi Anuiti, 1991).

III. DISCUSSION OF THE DATA

Data drawn from the observation and interview were discussed. Ten excerpts of conversation were retained and the results of the interview were also included. The first excerpt of conversation to be discussed involves two senior citizens were talking along a path:

1. A: E, SI YIBUA

I almost fell down.

B: YAMBULA KUENDA NSUALU NSUALU

Do not walk very quickly

In the above excerpt the adjective (Nsualu) implying fast is reduplicated at by changing its nature. It behaves as an adverb. It expresses the intensification function too. Here is the list of some reduplicated adverbs heard in other excerpts of conversation.

Table 2: Reduplicated adjectives as intensified adverbs

Number	Adjectives	Reduplicated and behave as adverbs	Equivalents in English
1	Malembe (slow)	Malembe malembe	Very slowly
2	Ntinu (fast)	Ntinu ntinu	Very in hurry

Adjectives can also be reduplicated by maintaining the same nature adjective, but the meaning is altered by intensification of the adjective. Here is another sentence heard:

1.2 Ndio mwana bubanyibi mbongo, kumini ngangu ngangu.

As he was victim of theft, this child has become very intelligent.

The following list provides adjectives that are intensified with reduplication:

Table3: Reduplicated adjectives for intensification

	Adjectives	Reduplicated	Meaning
1.	Kiese (happy)	Kiese kiese	Very happy
2.	Nzunzu (courageous)	Nzunzu nzunzu	Very courageous
3	mbote (delicious)	mbote mbote	Very delicious
4	Mfunu (important)	Mfunu mfunu	Very important
5	Kiozi (cold)	Kiozi kiozi	Very cold

In Kikongo dialectal variation, a reduplicated adjective can play the two functions either remaining as adjective or adverb depending on the word order as mentioned below:

1.3 Ndio mwana mukuenda kena nsualu nsualu.

This child is walking very quickly.

1.4 Ndio mwana nsualu nsualu kena.

This child is very quick.

In 1.3, the reduplicated adjective serves as an adverb (very quickly) while in 1.4. the reduplicated adjective is adjective (very quick). Nsualu without reduplication can stand as adverb of manner as indicated in 1.5:

1.5 Ndio mwana mukuenda kena nsualu.

This child is walking quickly.

2. A: Nkia ntangu ngiza?

What time can i arrive?

B: Wiza mu nsuika nsuika

Come early morning.

The above excerpt illustrates the reduplication of a noun related to the period of a day. It was recorded at a bus stop in Mbanza ngungu. Nsuika is reduplicated in the above excerpt of conversation to express the idea related to

earliness. It implies an earlier time of morning. In Kikongo, nouns related to days are reduplicated to express different ideas as listed in the table below.

Table 3: Nouns related to the period of time/day reduplicated.

Number	Nouns	Reduplication	Ideas expressed
1	Mpimpa (night)	Mpimpa mpimpa	Late at night
2	Muini (sunny day)	Muini muini	the very day
3	Mbazi (tomorrow)	Mbazi mbazi	Very tomorrow (in the near future}
4	Lelo (today)	Lelo lelo	This very day
5	Zuzi (the day before yesterday)	Zuzi zuzi	In the very recent past

Observing the above table, the ideas of intensification are expressed in all of the nouns. The way the nouns related to the period of the days are reduplicated is corroborated with the reduplication identified in Nigeria English by Ogban Uwen (2022). In his data, he found that Nigerians use (morning morning) to mean early morning.

Something interesting, lelo lelo is exclusively reduplicated in Kintandu. Other varieties such Kindibu and Kimanyanga use the term (wunu kaka) for the equivalent of lele lelo.

3. A: Katuka.

Leave my table.

B: Mbe sumba ngizidi.

I have come to buy.

A: Nge muntu, tala taluzula.

You are looking at many articles without buying.

The above excerpt was transcribed in the market of Kwilu Ngongo. The speaker B was looking again again at the second hand clothes. The speaker A got angry and wanted her to leave the table where she displayed her clothes. In this excerpt, the verb (tala) is reduplicated in the sense that the second verb expresses the idea of the first one. It could have been reported as (tala tala), but Kikongo adds the suffixes (-ula, -ekesa). It looks as if it a vocalic reduplication identified above since the final vowel is similar to the base (Haiman, 1980 and LaKoff and Johnson, 1980). There are many verbs which are used similarly as indicated in the table below:

Table 4: Vocalic verbal reduplication

Number	Reduplicated verbs	English equivalents
1	Banda bandekesa	Hit and hit again
2	Landala ndekesa	Follow and follow again
3	Sola solula	Choose and choose again
4	Lamba lambulula	Cook and cook again
5	Tanga tangulula	Count and count again

Observing the above list, the first two verbs attach the affix) or (-ekesa) while the remaining three attach (-ulula). Both (-ekesa) and (-ulula) are used to reduplicate verbs while the meaning of the first one is also conveyed by the second one. This deserves a further investigation where a list of the concerned verbs may be sorted out.

However, there are other verbs which do not obey this principle. For example the verb to eat (dia) is not formed as (dia diakesa) but the same verb is reduplicated with the adverb (diaka), again, is post positioned to yied: dia dia diaka . The table 4 below illustrates five verbs:

Table 5: Reduplication of verbs with the adverb again

Number	Reduplicated verbs	English equivalents
1	Sala sala diaka	do and do again
2	Kanga kanga diaka	close and close again
3	Zibula zibula diaka	open and open again
4	Vova vova diaka	speak and speak again
5	Sukula sukula diaka	wash and wash again

What is common is that all the verbs reduplicated the ones taking the affixes (-ulula and -ekesa) and those taking (diaka) are action verbs. The example 3 shows the function of instant iteration or repetition where the referent does the action continuously. The continuous aspect is expressed by the suffixation or the Kikongo adverb (diaka), again. It is across the Kikongo dialectal variation.

4. A: Vundanga mpe.

Do not work continuously.

B: Kuma nki?

Why not?

A: Ngeye lumbu ye lumbu sala.

You work every day.

In the above excerpt, the noun lumbu is reduplicated with a connector (ye). What is interesting to mention is the meaning it provides. The meaning provided is the one of the distributive adjective (each, every). Lumbu is

reduplicated for distributive purpose. The following table provides an illustration.

Table 6: Reduplication with distribution

Number	reduplicated verbs	English equivalents
1	Muntu ye muntu	Each one of us
2	Suku ye suku	Every room
3	Nti ye nti	Every tree
4	Mvu ye mvu	Every year
5	Kanda ye kanda	Every nation

In kimanyanga, the connector (ye) is replaced by (ka) to express the same function. For example, the utterances below:

4.1 Lumbu ka lumbu tusambilanga.

We pray every day.

4.2 Nsuika ka nsuika ,ukwendanga kubititi.

Every morning, you go to the farm.

Generally, the connectors (ye) and (ka) are optional in all the dialects of Kikongo. You can hear in Kimanyanga or Kindibu:

Muntu muntu ye kiandi salu.

Each has a job.

The connector (Ye) or (Na) can also be used in the context of reciprocal pronouns as example:

4.3 Bamanyanga bakuelananga bawu na bawu.

People from Nyanga get married each other.

In 4.3 the pronoun (bawu) is reduplicated to serve as reciprocal pronouns. In this context, the connectors (ye) and (na) are not optional.

5. A: Ka lulandi ko.

Do not talk to him.

B: E kuma nki?

Why not?

A: Kivovi kivovi kena

He speaks without taking care of his own speech.

In the above excerpt, the noun kivovi kivovi is reduplicated. In Kikongo, it is very often to observe the reduplication of a verbal form ending in -I preceded

by the prefix Ki-. It is reduplicated to express the idea that the referent does carelessly. The following table provides five examples:

Table 7: Reduplication with a careless action of the verb

Number	Reduplicated verbs	English equivalents
1	Kiyendi kiyendi	Careless person who moves like a blind person
2	Kivani kivani	A person who gives to anyone
3	Kisadi kisadi	A do it yourselfer
4	Kibudi kibudi	A careless player
5	Kisumbi kisumbi	Spontaneous buyer

This type of reduplication is applied across the dialectal variation. Here are five more verbs and the reduplicated forms listed below.

1. Ku tula (to place) Kitudi- Kitudi
2. Ku nua (to drink) Kinue - Kinue
3. Ku soneka(to write) Kisoneki-kisoneki
4. Ku zola (to love) Kizodi-kizodi
5. Ku dia (to eat) Kidie-kidie

In the above five examples, all the verbs express an idea done carelessly. The examples discussed here express the idea of intensification with the negative idea of carelessness.

6. A: Bue bizi luaka?
How come they arrived?

B: Badiete mvula mvula

They came under the rain.

In the example above, the noun mvula is reduplicated. It shows a challenge on the side of the speaker.

Table 7: Reduplication showing a challenge on the side of the speaker

Number	Reduplicated nouns	English equivalents
1	Muini muini	Under the sun
2	Malu malu	On foot
3	Nzila nzila	Along the road
4	Miongo miongo	By crossing different mountains
5	Mfinda mfinda	By crossing the bush

In the above five examples the prepositions have been avoided to show the challenge that the referent who managed to achieve an action. It is a type of intensification.

7. A: Tulueki mama.

We have arrived, mum.

B: Vingila, kuviti kota ko, nsende nsende zina koko.

Wait, there are thorns here.

The reduplicated noun *nsende nsende* expresses the meaning of large quantity. It is nothing but quantification function of the reduplication in Kikongo dialectal. Plurality also refers to quantification is said to be the most common function reduplication across languages (Haiman, 1980 and LaKoff and Johnson, 1980). Many instances of quantification have been identified in Kikongo dialectal variation, five of them are listed below:

Table 7: Reduplication expressing a large quantity

Number	Reduplicated nouns	English equivalents
1	Ntebe ntebe	clayish
2	Maza maza	watery
3	Miongo miongo	montaneous
4	Nseke nseke	rocky
5	Visi visi	Many bones/ eskeloton

8. A: Baka dio tadi.

Take that stone

B: Nkia tadi?

Which one?

A: Fitaditadi va mbel'aku.

A small stone which is near you.

The noun *tadi* is reduplicated in the above excerpt. It is used with the affix (fi) as it used to express the idea of diminutiveness. In Kikongo, while expressing, dimunitiveness, the noun is reduplicated with the affix (bi) or (fi). Novata (2000) identified the prefix (ki-) for dimunitiveness in Kiswahili, too. The following table provides other examples in Kikongo dialectal variation:

Table 8: Reduplication expressing an idea of diminutiveness

Number	Reduplicated nouns	English equivalents
1	Fimuntu muntu	A small person
2	Fimbua mbua	A kid of bitch
3	Finzila nzila	A small path
4	Fimesa mesa	A small table
5	Fikutu kutu	A small purse

It is interesting to notice the total reduplication has become more complex with the affix (fi or bi). Ki is also used for animals for example a small dog, will be (kimbua mbua). The affix (be) is used with mass noun as for example (bimungwa mungwa), a small quantity of salt. This reduplication is used across the Kikongo dialectal variation.

9. A: Nkumbu andi Mabilia Mabilia.

My name is Mabilia Mabilia

B: Mono kalusevi ko.

I am Kalusevi ko.

In the above excerpt, a personal name is reduplicated. It was interesting to disclose that it is exclusively used in Kiyombe, a variety of Kikongo. Many Kiyombe personal names are duplicated to convey the meaning of a parent's name sake. It is generally, the father's personal name given to his son. The following table gives an illustration:

Table 8: Reduplication of personal names in Kiyombe

Number	Duplicated adverbs	English equivalents
1	Muaka Muaka	A son of a certain Muaka
2	Mbwangi Mbwangi	A son of a certain Mbwangi
3	Mbenza Mbenza	A son of a certain Mbenza
4	Nzungu Nzungu	A son of a certain Nzungu
5	Khonde Khonde	A son of a certain Khonde

It is interesting to notice that this reduplication is solely practiced this way in Kiyombe. In Kindibu, Kimanyanga and Kintandu, the name of the father comes last. It can designate both sons and daughters, but it is not reduplicated.

Table 9: Personal names denoting parents in Kindibu, Kimanyanga and Kintandu

Number	Personal names	English equivalents
1	Mambweni Kisungu	A son or daughter of a certain Kisungu
2	Kamutondo Kambidika	A son or daughter of a certain Kambidika
3	Mpemba Luwutisa	A son or daughter of a certain Luwutisa
4	Zola Minlangu	A son or daughter of a certain Minlangu
5	Nzumba Luzolo	A son or daughter of a certain Luzolo

Names of tribes or ethnic groups can also be reduplicated with the meaning of exclusiveness. It is used with the connector (ye) for both Kindibu and Kintandu while in Kimanyanga and Kiyombe the connector (na) is used instead. Here is a list of five examples.

Table 10: Tribal and ethnic names reduplicated

Number	Reduplicated names	English equivalents
1	Manyanga ye manyanga	Only Manyanga
2	Ndibu ye ndibu	Only Ndibu
3	Bayombe ye bayombe	Only yombe
4	Bantandu ye bantandu	Only Bantandu
5	Bangala ye bangala	Only Bangala

Moreover, the function of exclusiveness is also applied to other words. For examples the following sentences.

1. Minlongi ye minlongi Only teachers
2. Manzimusina ye manzimusina Only late
3. Sambila ye sambila Only praying
4. Bamvuama ye bamvuama Only rich people
5. Supu ye supu Only soups

This function can be confused with the quantification, but the contexts make them different. For examples:

1. Kanda diawu diafuluka ye minlongi ye minlongi.
There are only teachers in their family.
2. Mu kati kua kanda diawu kuena ye minlongi ye minlongi.
In their family, there are many teachers.

In (1), the function of exclusiveness is fulfilled while in (2) it is a question of quantification.

10. A: E ku lukala tutukidi.

B: Tata diodio, I nganga katula katula.

In the above excerpt, the word katula is reduplicated. It is used to intensify the ability of the referent. It is interesting to uncover this type of intensification in Kikongo dialectal variation.

Table 8: Reduplication of the verbs with adjectival value

Number	Reduplicated verb	English equivalents
1	Mona mona	Who can predict
2	Bikula bikula	Who can unveil
3	Niakisa niakisa	Who can heal
4	Kutula kutula	Who delivers
5	Bangula bangula	Who reveals deeply

The reduplicated verbs have an adjectival value. This function is used across Kikongo dialectal variation.

CONCLUSION

This study examined ten excerpts of conversation heard in Kinshasa and Kongo Central. The stress was put on the Kongo community residing in the province of Kongo Central. The results have revealed that reduplication is productive across Kikongo dialectal variation. The Kongo community, mainly Manyanga, Ndibu, Ntandu and Yombe use more similarly lexical reduplication with all the functions detailed in the table 1.

Apart from the eight functions detailed in the literature of reduplication, some functions have been disclosed. The first one is the one of personal identification. This reduplication is used in Kiyombe to designate the two reduplicated as the son and the father. As the example mentioned in the study: Mbwangi mbwangi a personal reduplicated name refers to a Mbwangi who is the son of another Mbwangi, the latter is his father. This reduplication is clue bearing as serves for tribal identification. The second one concerns exclusiveness function. This reduplication connects the two lexicons with either the connector (ye) for Ndibu and Ntandu or with (na) for Manyanga. The Kongo community uses different types of intensification as mentioned:

1. expressing the idea of earliness or lateness such as the examples mentioned in the study: (nsuika nsuika) and (mpimpa mpimpa)
2. expressing the negative idea of carelessness such as the example mentioned in the study (Kiyendi kiyendi)
3. showing a challenge of the referent as mentioned in the study (mfuta mfuta)
4. expressing the ability of the referent as mentioned in the study: (bikula bikula)

Another type of iteration disclosed is instant iteration as it can be termed. The referent is doing the action continuously. The example drawn from the study: (Lamba lambulua) which implies cook and cook again.

Besides, there are nouns that are exclusively reduplicated in one variety not in the other one. The example mentioned is (lelo lelo) which implies the very day. This reduplication serves also as clue bearing in for Tandu.

This study has proven that the reduplication is language universal. It is productive in many bantu languages such as Kikongo. A further investigation extending to other varieties is needed.

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