

Fedor Rozhanskiy

Institute of Linguistics, Russian Academy of Sciences

handarey@yahoo.com

Typology of Derivational Reduplication in African Languages

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Derivation is one of the main functions of reduplication. An original word and a derived reduplicated word can belong either to one morphological class (for example, a verb can be derived from another verb), or to different classes (for example, a verb can be derived from a noun). This paper views derivational reduplication from a typological perspective. Our aim is to point out basic types of correlation between the morphological class of a reduplicated derivative and of the original word. The research is based on a number of African languages of different families. Each of the analyzed languages uses several derivational strategies, but usually only few of them are represented by a large set of examples.

One of the main results of the research is that we discovered two basic strategies in using reduplication as a derivational means. According to the first strategy, reduplicated lexemes of different morphological classes are derived from words of one morphological class (for example, reduplicated nouns and verbs are derived from verbs). Languages that apply this strategy could be called "source oriented". For example, Kisi (Atlantic), Fula (Atlantic), and Kabiye (Gur) belong to this type. According to the second strategy, the original non-reduplicated lexemes belong to different morphological classes, while the reduplicated derivatives belong mainly to one class (for example, reduplicated verbs are derived from verbs and nouns). Languages that apply this strategy could be called "target oriented". These are, for example, Bambara (Mande) and Songhay (Nilo-saharan). Naturally, a language can represent one of the two basic types to a different degree. Among the analyzed material a

rather pure "source oriented" type occurs more often than the "target oriented" type. This is a rather interesting phenomenon. Indeed, when a non-reduplicative derivational mechanism is applied (i.e. when a derivational affix is used), the affix rather determines the morphological class of the derivative, not of the original word. Thus, in our terminology affixation commonly belongs to the "target oriented" strategy of derivation, which is less typical for reduplication.

When a language represents one of the described types to a high degree, it is possible to define the morphological class that comprises the majority of reduplicated words (for the "target oriented" languages), or the original words, from which the reduplicated words are derived (for the "source oriented" languages). In most cases this morphological class is verbs. Thus, either a language has a set of reduplicated verbs derived from words of different morphological classes, or it has reduplicated nouns, verbs, etc. derived from non-reduplicated verbs.

The presentation will also deal with other regularities in the use of reduplication as a derivational mechanism.