

Multiple reduplication in Fungwa

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This work explores how the domain of a phonological process can be affected by the requirement for an onset. The data presented here is on a pattern of (multiple) partial reduplication in Fungwa (Kainji, Benue-Congo), an endangered language with about 1000 speakers in Niger state, Nigeria.

Background: Diminutive and Augmentative

Diminutives and augmentatives are respectively marked with root-vowel fronting and backing. In (1), the vowels [u, o, a] are respectively realised as [i e, ε] in the diminutive and vice versa in the augmentative.

1. Featural affixation: diminutives and augmentatives

STEM	STEM.DIM	STEM.AUG	
télà	télé	tólà	‘tailor
vúze	víze	vúzò	‘pawpaw’

Multiple Reduplication

The degree of diminutive (2-a) or augmentative (2-b) is marked by a partial reduplication. Structurally, the reduplicant is a CV syllable, where ‘C’ is a copy of the first consonant of the base and ‘V’ is either [i] or [u] depending the first root vowel. The vowel of the reduplicant bears a L tone which does not change regardless of the tone of the nominal base. This reduplication can be iterated multiple times. Furthermore, CV prefixes do undergo (multiple) reduplication (3). Since the CV prefixes are toneless, the tones of the prefix and its reduplicant bear the same tone as the initial root vowel. Unlike the CV prefixes, V prefixes do not undergo reduplication (4).

2. Multiple reduplication: Diminutive and augmentative

	a.	STEM.DIM	RED ¹ STEM.DIM	RED ² STEM.DIM	RED ³ STEM.DIM	
			‘very’	‘very ² ’	‘very ³ ’	
		télé	títélé	títítélé	títítítélé	‘small tailor’
		víze	vívíze	vívívíze	vívívívíze	‘small pawpaw’
	b.	STEM.AUG	RED ¹ STEM.AUG	RED ² STEM.AUG	RED ³ STEM.AUG	
			‘very’	‘very ² ’	‘very ³ ’	
		tólà	tùtólà	tùtùtólà	tùtùtùtólà	‘big tailor’
		vúzò	vùvúzò	vùvùvúzò	vùvùvùvúzò	‘big pawpaw’
	3.	CL22*-STEM.AUG		CL22*-STEM.DIM		
		tʃútʃú-gàtà	‘very ² big hearts’	tʃítʃí-gétè	‘very ² small hearts’	
		tʃútʃútʃú-gàtà	‘very ³ big hearts’	tʃítʃítʃí-gétè	‘very ³ small hearts’	
	4.	CL20-ROOT.AUG		CL20.ROOT-DIM		
		í-pàlà	‘big wind’	í-pélé	‘small wind’	
		*íí-pàlà	‘very big wind’	*íí-pélé	‘very small’	

The data above raise questions on (i) the domain of reduplication; (ii) the status of multiple reduplication; (iii) the syllable structure of the reduplicant; (iv) the vowel and tone of the reduplicant. A phonological/prosodic word (PWd) (Selkirk, 1996) is assumed as the domain of the reduplication and an onset condition in Fungwa. Since the multiple reduplication results from reduplicating an already reduplicated form, it is analysed as a recursive partial reduplication (Singh & Wee, 2002). The reduplicant being monosyllabic is considered a byproduct of a templatic requirement on the degree marker (McCarthy and Prince 1999). However, the onsetfulness of the reduplicant is considered the effect of the onset condition on the PWd. The V prefixes not undergoing reduplication like the CV prefixes is considered an effect of the onset condition. In this case, the V prefixes are misaligned with the PWd (Downing, 1998) as a result of the pressure from the onset condition. Considering the unmarked nature of high vowels and low tone crosslinguistically (Pulleyblank, 1988; Howe & Pulleyblank, 2004), the high vowel and low tone of the reduplicant result from a constraint ranking for TETU (cf. Alderete et al., 1999). Since there are few languages with multiple reduplication, the multiple reduplication in Fungwa augments the typology of languages with multiple reduplication (Singh & Wee, 2002; Rai, et al., 2005; Gates, 2017).

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