

## **Morphological Reduplication in Kipsigis Dialect in Kipkelion East Sub-Country, Kericho Country, Kenya**

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### **Abstract**

This paper examines reduplication processes in Kipsigis dialect. Reduplication is a common feature in most of the world's languages. However since languages belong to different families the morphological process occurs differently. Kipsigis, being a Nilo-Saharan language with its own features of a language, the current paper sought to investigate the nature of the repetition mechanism in Kipsigis language. This paper applies Morphological Doubling Theory by Inkelas and Zoll (2005, 2007). The study used common Kipsigis words particularly in the open categories of speech. The study focused on morphological reduplication. The study employed descriptive research design. A sample size of 50 participants was used as respondents in the study. Purposive sampling was used to identify the participants. The data was also collected through natural observation, interviews and focus group as the research instruments. The data was analyzed qualitatively. The study found that reduplication is a common feature in Kipsigis dialect. Kipsigis speakers use Kipsigis dialect for various reasons such as iconicity, emphasis, caution and intensification. Thus, this paper attempts to fill the gap in the existing body of knowledge on Kipsigis dialect. The study therefore, makes a contribution in Morphology, and syntax and is necessary for language planning.

**Key words: Reduplication, Kipsigis dialect, Morphological reduplication**

### **1. Introduction**

Reduplication (RED) is a common feature in most of the world's languages (Hurch, 2005). The term reduplication refers to a word-formation process in which all or part of a word is repeated to convey some form of meaning (Rubini, 2005). Reduplication falls into the wider scope of

phonology and morphology. In morphology RED is considered as a phenomenon in which the base, root, stem of a lexeme or a part of it is repeated completely or with a slight change to convey some form of meaning (Spencer and Zwicky, 2001). That is a new word is formed by doubling a morpheme (Stageberg, 1981). However, it may occur with other word formation processes.

The current paper investigated the phenomenon of RED in Kipsigis dialect. Kipsigis is a Nilo-Saharan dialect that is part of the Kenyan Kalenjin language. Kalenjin languages are spoken mainly in the Northern and Southern parts of the Rift Valley. Many scholars have attempted to classify Kalenjin into various dialects. Some scholars argue that Kalenjin has nine dialects, while others argue it has thirteen dialects. Towett (1975) classified Kalenjin languages into nine dialects namely; Nandi, Kipsigis, Keiyo, Tugen, Sabaot, Marakwet, Pokot, Ogiek and Sengwer. However, the classification that groups Kalenjin's into nine dialects has gained acceptance. These includes Nandi, Terik, Kipsigis, Marakwet, Keiyo, Pokot, Tugen, Sebei and Kony (Towett, 1979). These dialects are considered to be mutually intelligible (Chesania, 1991). However, Kipsigis and Nandi are highly intelligent (Kosgei, 2006:3). For the purpose of this paper; Towett's classification has been adopted. The larger number of Kipsigis lives in the counties of Kericho and Bomet. The Kipsigis dialect just like other Kalenjin dialect has been highly used in the local Vernacular Broadcasting Stations such as Kass FM, Change FM and Kitwek FM.

The paper is on RED as a morphological process. Halle (1973) notes that where the issue of word formation is concerned, there exist different expectations in a language beyond regular and general rules. Moreover, languages differ in the way they form words (Plagg, 2003). The aspect of RED in Kipsigis, therefore, may be unique to it as a language. Kipsigis, being a Nilo-Saharan language the process of RED may be different. The paper sought to investigate the nature of the repetition mechanism in Kipsigis language. In addition questions on how reduplicative morphemes are represented in Kipsigis language were also established. The current paper therefore was set to unearth how RED occurs in Kipsigis language.

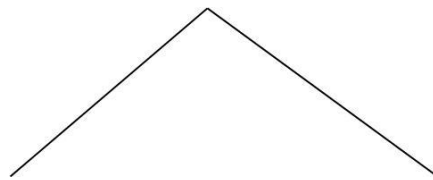
## **2. Morphological Doubling Theory (MDT)**

Morphological Doubling Theory (MDT) was propounded by Inkelas and Zoll (2005, 2007). According to Orgun (1996, 1999) MDT is a theory that is based on Sign-Based Morphology (SBM). SBM is a version of Construction Grammar that involves morphological constituents such as the words, stems and roots. SBM constructions are grammatical primitives that encode the semantic, syntactic, and phonological mappings between daughters and mothers. Inkelas and Zoll (2005, 2007) came up with the MDT theory with a purpose of improving the Base Reduplicant Correspondence Theory (BRCT) that initially addressed the issue of reduplication.

Inkelas and Zoll (2005) MDT is also built on earlier works by Singh (1982), Saperstein (1997) and Sherrard (2001).

In MDT, reduplication is seen as double or multiple occurrence of a morphological constituent meeting a morph semantic description. Thus, reduplication is seen to be more of semantic than phonological identity. Reduplication involves morphological constituents such as affixes, root, stem or word that agree in their semantic specification. MDT is a new approach to reduplication that abandons the phonological copying approach. MDT is the view that looks at reduplication as a process that involves semantic (rather than phonological) identity between two (potentially identical) daughters in a compounding construction where both daughters and the construction itself have their own co-phonologies (1) as demonstrated in figure 1 below:

Output: Mother (Meaning=some added meaning)



Daughter #1 (Meaning=that of daughter#2 :)

Daughter #2 (Meaning=that of #1)

#1 and #2 means the semantic value of a word which may be subject to special phonology

### Figure 1: Reduplication process

Source: Inkelas and Zoll (2005)

Figure 1 above shows that the two daughters (inputs) are required to be identical only semantically but not phonologically. The output is the reduplicated form of a word while the inputs are the morphological constituents.

Morphological reduplication is a morphological process that is as a result of double insertion of a morphological constituent such as an entire word or a sub constituent: stem, root, or even affix. In this case, RED is not the result of duplication/copying/correspondence in the phonology but of morphological constituents in the morphology. Morphological doubling focuses on

morphological constructions such as compounding and affixation required in the input. The theory focuses on morphosemantic. That is on morphological constituents such as the word, root, stem, affixes and phrases. Thus, the output of morphological doubling is purely morphosemantic rather than phonological. The current study applies the concept of morphological reduplication and morphological doubling in the identification of the types of RED that occur in the Kipsigis dialect. Moreover, the same concept is applied in the identification of functions of reduplication in Kipsigis dialect.

### **3. Research Methodology**

The design for the current study was descriptive research design. According to Creswell (1994) a descriptive research is a systematic subjective approach used to describe life experiences and give them meaning. Descriptive research is qualitative in nature. Thus, it describes human experiences and realities. This study was carried out in Kericho County, Londiani Sub County where we have Kipsigis native speakers. Londiani Sub County is virtually populated by Kipsigis speakers. In Londiani people use Kipsigis language in natural environment hence the conversations that were collected in this setting were heterogeneous to the entire Kipsigis dialect. The researchers used purposive sampling to identify Kipsigis native speakers (18-65years old) who provided at least 3 reduplicated words. This study was qualitative in nature therefore a sample size of 50 respondents (25 males and 25 females) was considered valid. According to Creswell (2012) one can have 20-30 sample size in a qualitative study while Bertaux (1981) suggests fifteen as the smallest acceptable sample. Ritchie, & Elam (2003) on the other hand suggest that qualitatively inclined samples should “lie under 50” (p. 84). The study used three data collection instruments namely, naturalistic observation, interviews and focus groups. The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Identify the types of reduplication in Kipsigis dialect, in Kipkelion East Sub County, Kericho County.
2. Determine the functions of reduplication in Kipsigis dialect, in Kipkelion East Sub County, Kericho County.

### **4. Results and Discussions**

#### **4.1 Types of reduplication in Kipsigis dialect**

Reduplication is considered as a word formation process in which some part of a base (a segment, syllable, morpheme) is repeated, either to the left, or to the right of the word or, occasionally, within the middle of the word. Reduplication is found in a wide range of languages

and language groups, however, in Kipsigis its level of linguistic productivity varies. Reduplication in this section is discussed in terms of full and partial reduplication.

#### 4.1.1 Full reduplication

Full reduplication is also called total reduplication. Full reduplication involves the exact repetition of a sound or word. In English this would involve putting together a sound or morpheme to bring forth an entirely new grammatical function or semantic feature or it would be used to provide emphasis. Therefore, full reduplication is considered as a morphological process where the reduplicant and the base are identical at the segmental level. It is also called full reduplication because the entire word is repeated. This type of reduplication is the most common in Kipsigis since most word classes undergo total reduplication. It is common with verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions and pronouns as shown below:

##### 4.1.1.1 Verbal reduplication

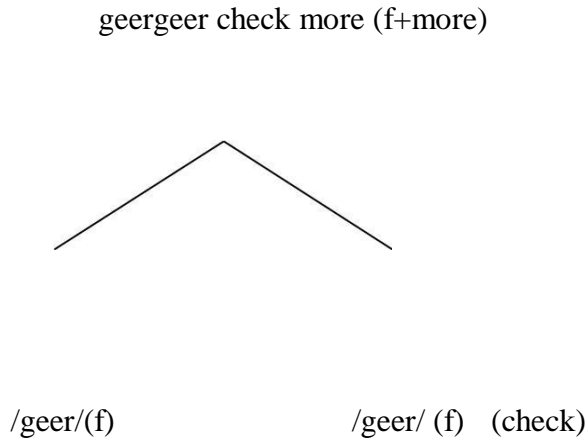
Verbal reduplication involves verbs. In Kipsigis language reduplication of verbs was complex and multifaceted. This was due to their phonological and morphological structure as well as for their meanings and functions. Verbal reduplication was used in Kipsigis languages to express intensification, repetition, habitualness, diminution, attributiveness, or aimlessness, and sometimes has a pejorative meaning as shown in the table 1 below:

**Table 1: Examples of verbal reduplication**

| <b>Kipsigis verb form</b> | <b>Reduplicated verb form</b>    |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Geer</b> (check)       | <b>Geergeer</b> (check the more) |
| <b>Sal</b> (paint)        | <b>Salsal</b> (paint, paint)     |
| <b>Meel</b> (lick)        | <b>Meelmeel</b> (lick lick)      |

The above examples shows fully reduplicated Kipsigis words. Morphological doubling dictates

that morphological constituents that are doubled are equal semantically as further illustrated in figure 2 below:



**4.1.1.2 Noun reduplication**

The data collected also reflected reduplication of nouns. Some nouns in this group consisted of repeated forms with single bases or root words. Many of this words were names of plants, animals, types of food and instruments as shown in table 2 below:-

**Table 2: Examples of noun reduplication**

| <b>Kipsigis reduplicated noun form</b> | <b>Meaning</b> |
|--|----------------|
| <b>Melmeldo</b>                        | Caterpillar    |
| <b>Ng’ung’unyek</b>                    | Soil           |
| <b>Tamirmiriet</b>                     | Spirit         |

Table 2 above shows a sample of reduplicated nouns in Kipsigis languages. *Melmeldo* is a reduplicated word that stands for caterpillar, *Ng’ung’unyek* on the other hand stands for soil, *tamirmiriet* on the other hand is a reduplicated form of noun that stands for spirit. The above data therefore shows that reduplicated noun forms stand for names of animals, abstract nouns and concrete nouns.

#### 4.1.1.3: Reduplication of adjectives

Reduplication of Adjectives explains intensity or degree of intensity and adjectives are also used to form adverbs as shown below:

**Table 3: Examples of adjective reduplication**

| <b>Kipsigis reduplicated adjective form</b> | <b>Meaning</b>           |
|---|--------------------------|
| <b>Ribrib</b>                               | Slopy                    |
| <b>Baibai</b>                               | Happy                    |
| <b>Ng'asng'as</b>                           | Can easily break or tear |

The above examples are fully reduplicated and are used to modify nouns in Kipsigis hence they are adjectives.

#### 4.1.1.4: Reduplication of adverbs

The data collected also reflected forms of adverbs that were fully reduplicated to show manner, place, time and purpose as shown in table 4 below:

**Table 4: Examples of adverb reduplication**

| <b>Kipsigis reduplicated adverb form</b> | <b>Meaning</b>   |
|--|------------------|
| <b>Mutiomutio</b>                        | Slowly by slowly |
| <b>Yuyu</b>                              | Exactly here     |
| <b>Yonyon</b>                            | Exactly there    |

The above data shows an example of adverb of manner *mutiomutio* (slowly by slowly) to show manner and *yuyu* and *yonyon* to show place.

#### 4.1.2. Partial reduplication

Partial reduplication involves reduplication of only a part of a word (e.g. chit-chat, flip- flop). Thus, this is a form of reduplication that involves the reduplication of only a part of a word. Several words are partially reduplicated in Kipsigis as shown in table 5 below:

**Table 5: Examples of partial reduplication**

| Kipsigis word            | Reduplicated kipsigis word            | Reduplicated part |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| kitwal (to jump)         | kitwaltwal (to jump about)            | Twal              |
| Acheng'e (I search)      | Acheng'cheng'i (to search everywhere) | Cheng'            |
| guurei ( she is calling) | guurguurei (she keeps calling )       | Guur              |

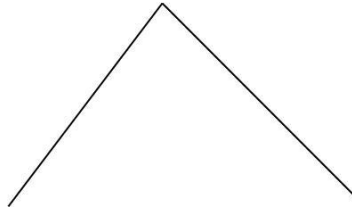
From the above examples the researchers found that the root words generated the reduplicant. In these examples some of the reduplicants are placed before the rootword. For instance, *guurei* (she is calling) after reduplication the word changes to *guurguurei* (she keeps calling) the reduplicant is the prefix *guur-* which comes before the rootword. At the same time the reduplicant can be placed after the root word. For instance, *kitwal*(to jump) when reduplicated

changes to *kitwaltwal* (to jump about) the reduplicant in this case is the suffix */twal* placed after the rootword.

The above examples show the semantic relationship of the inputs in the partial reduplication using MDT Theory as shown below;



**kitwaltwal** (f) (f+about)



*kitwal* (f)

*twal* (f) (jump)

Agglutinating languages have only suffixation, while non-agglutinating (isolating and inflecting) languages like English have both suffixation and prefixation. Partial reduplication is further shown in terms of prefixation and suffixation as shown below:

**4.1.2.1 Prefixal Reduplication**

Prefixal reduplication is also called initial reduplication (Spencer 1991: 150). This is a form of reduplication where the reduplicant is added before the root as a prefix. This type of reduplication is common with verbs in Kipsigis as shown below:

**Table 6: Examples of prefixal reduplication**

| Kipsigis word | Reduplicated kipsigis word | Reduplicated part |
|---------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| tub (bury)    | kikitub(it was buried)     | ki                |
| rat (tie)     | kikirat(it was tied)       | ki                |
| wis (turn)    | kikiwis (it was turned)    | ki                |

The prefixal reduplications in the examples above fall in the class of verbs. The prefixes in the Kipsigis verbs assume that the actions were done in the past as compared to the action done now. According to MDT, the semantic value of some verbs in Kipsigis, changes after reduplication to mean action being done in past.

#### 4.1.2.1 Suffixal reduplication

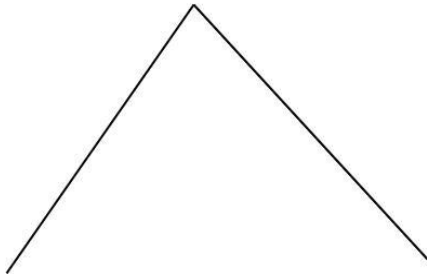
Suffixal reduplication is also called final reduplication. Here the reduplicant is added after the root word as a suffix. This too is also common in Kipsigis words. The following examples in table 7 below show suffixal reduplication:

**Table 7: Suffixal reduplication**

| Kipsigis word form    | Kipsigis suffixal reduplication        |
|-----------------------|--|
| Kebiit (to spray)     | kebiitbiit (to spray continuously))    |
| kebeel (to burn)      | kebeelbeel(to burn continuously)       |
| kesiis(to keep quiet) | kesiissiis(to keep quiet continuously) |
| kenyiim(to smile)     | kenyiimnyiim (to smile continuously)   |

From these examples we found out that, a part of root of the given word formed the reduplicant resulting into the reduplicated word. The roots for words on examples above are *biit, beel, siis* and *nyiim* respectively. These reduplicants or suffixes show the frequency form of the verbs given. According to MDT, the semantic value of the input can change after reduplication. In example above, the verbs in Kipsigis change when the word is reduplicated to show that the action takes place repeatedly or several times. According to MDT, the semantic value of a word changes after reduplication. In this case, verbs in Kipsigis acquire added information after reduplication.

**Kenyiimyim** (f) (f+ continuously)



**kenyiim**(fnyyim (f) (smile)

#### 4.2 Functions of reduplication in kipsigis

The data collected showed that reduplication in Kipsigis range over the standard morphological functions of derivation and inflection. The data collected showed that Morphological reduplication had a wide range of syntactic and semantic functions. Reduplication is often semantically iconic. It expresses meanings that are impressionistically related to its duplicative nature, like pluralization, emphasis, and frequency/repetition as shown below:

##### 4. 2.1 Reduplication for Iconicity

This entails the semantics of reduplication. Reduplication does perform a number of functions which can be called iconic that is plurality, distributiveness, intensity, and a variety of lexical aspects such as durative, frequentative, iterative etc. The first aspect of iconicity is plurality. Plurality is a canonically iconic meaning of noun reduplication while repetition and continuation are the canonical iconic meaning of verb reduplication.

Pluralization is a general function of reduplication in many languages. Reduplication of some Kipsigis words makes certain words to change from singular to plural form as shown in the following examples in table 8 below:

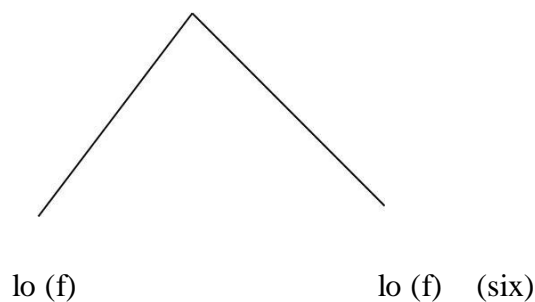
**Table 8: Pluralization as a form of iconicity**

| Root word               | Reduplicated word        |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>agenge</b> (one)     | agengeagenge (in ones)   |
| <b>lo</b> (six)         | lolo (in sixes)          |
| <b>taman</b> (ten)      | tamantaman(in tens)      |
| <b>bogol</b> (hundreds) | bogolbogol (in hundreds) |

It is good to note that in Kipsigis, pluralization as a general function of reduplication, mostly use numbers and items in groups. Reduplication of the root word leading to plurization follows the MDT view that, morphological doubling results in the double insertion of a constituent like *lo*

or subconstituent like *bogol* (suffix) which meet similar morphosemantic description. In this case the inputs share a similar meaning and the output share the meaning but gets some added information. The following example shows an illustration of MDT view on pluralization as shown below;

lolo (f) (f+ plurality)



Another form of canonical iconic meaning of reduplication is for intensification. Intensification is as a canonical iconic meaning of reduplication and it has properties of noun reduplication, some property of and in verb reduplication where the degree of an action is intensified as shown in some words in Kipsigis table 9 below:

**Table 9: Intensification as a form of iconization**

| Root word            | Reduplicated word                             |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>yu</b> (here)     | <b>yuyu</b> (right here and nowhere else)     |
| <b>chii</b> (person) | <b>chiichii</b> (this person not anyone else) |
| <b>yon</b> (there)   | <b>yonyon</b> (exactly there)                 |

From the above examples it was noted that the root words come from different classes of words. For instance, while *yu* is an adverb of place, *chii* is a noun. To add on, is the fact that when these words are reduplicated they put more emphasis on the semantic value of the root word.

The third form of iconicity is for frequency. In this case reduplication is used as form of frequency and duration. Reduplication of Kipsigis verbs results to several outcomes depending on different contexts in which they are used. Reduplication of Kipsigis verbs can be used to show the act of doing an action repeatedly or for a longer period of time as shown below:

**Table 10: Frequency as a form of iconicity**

| Verb               | Reduplicated form                  |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>wiis</b> (turn) | <b>wiiswiis</b> (turn repeatedly)  |
| <b>nab</b> (sew)   | <b>nabnab</b> (sew continuously)   |
| <b>nam</b> (touch) | <b>namnam</b> (touch repeatedly )  |
| <b>mel</b> (lick)  | <b>melmel</b> ( lick continuously) |

The verbs used in the examples follow the MDT view that, morphological doubling requires a double insertion of morphological constituents or subconstituents which have a similar semantic description.

#### 4.2.2: Reduplication for derivation of new words

Reduplication to transfer meaning or class happens when the rootword and the reduplicated word do not share a meaning after reduplication, at the same time it can happen when the rootword and the reduplicated word are not in the same class. Reduplication in this case results into formation of new words as shown in table 11 below:

**Table 11 : Reduplication for derivation of new words**

| Word                          | Reduplicated form                                  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>bai</b> –feed (verb)       | <b>baibai</b> -make someone happy(verb)            |
| <b>us</b> -torture (verb)     | <b>usus</b> -light (adjective)                     |
| <b>koot</b> –house (verb)     | <b>kootkoot</b> –to place some food on fire (verb) |
| <b>gaai</b> -a couple(noun)   | <b>gaigaai</b> -please (verb) /comfort(verb)       |
| <b>sai</b> -become dry (verb) | <b>saisai</b> –persuade (verb)                     |
| <b>saach</b> – seduce (verb)  | <b>saachsaach</b> – shake a fluid (verb)           |
| <b>kuut</b> –to blow (verb)   | <b>kuutkuut</b> – gather little by little (verb)   |
| <b>moi</b> – calf(noun)       | <b>moimoi</b> – handle with care (verb)            |

The examples above show that some rootwords do not share a similar class with the reduplicated word. For instance, while *us* is a verb the reduplicated form *usus* is an adjective and *moi - calf* (noun), *moimoi* – handle with care (verb).

#### 4.2.3 To caution

In Kipsigis, reduplication can also be used as a warning against danger, evil or anything else. It was found out that the reduplication of the following words bring out the urgency or immediacy of an action.

For example **manden**(get out) **mandenmanden** ( get out immediately) and **isteen** (take them) **isteenisteen** (take them away). The above examples show that in kipsigis reduplicated verbs are mostly used to caution someone.

#### 4.2.4 For estimating distance

Reduplication in Kipsigis can be used to estimate the distance in which an object moves. It is also used to show the proximity of an item to the other. It can also show the length of the estimated distance. The said estimated distance is always meant to be a short distance and mostly towards a certain direction that is agreed upon. The following are examples of reduplicated words showing estimated distances (**wui** let (go back) to **wui letlet** (move back a bit), **indee barak** (put it up) to **indee barakbarak** (put it further up) and **inaakten** (move away) to **inaakteninaakten** (move further away).

### 5.0 Conclusion

The study sought to examine morphological reduplication in Kipsigis dialect. The study concludes that reduplication is a common feature in Kipsigis dialect and it occurs in two ways full and partial. The study also found that reduplication plays an important role in Kipsigis dialect. The study, thus, concludes that reduplication is an important feature of Kipsigis dialect that play a role of iconicity and expressive function. The study also concludes that the unique features of Kipsigis dialect triggers the reduplication features in words. The process of affixation in Kipsigis language also plays an important role in word formation of Kipsigis semantic field of animals, food and places.

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