# REDUPLICATION IN NIGERIAN ENGLISH

## ( A CASE STUDY OF USMANU DANFODIYO UNIVERSITY, SOKOTO)

### BY

### ABDULLAHI GARBA

### 1011110009

**BEING A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MODERN EUROPEAN LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS, FACULTY OF ARTS AND ISLAMIC STUDIES, USMANU DANFODIYO UNIVERSITY, SOKOTO IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF ARTS DEGREE IN ENGLISH (B.A ENGLISH)**

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# APPROVAL PAGE

This research work has been supervised and approved having met part of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Arts in English (B.A. English) in the Department of Modern European Languages and Linguistics, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto.


_____                    _____
Project supervisor                             Signature/Date
Malam Mika'il Ibrahim



_____                    _____
Head of Department                             Signature/Date
Dr. Muhammad Aminu Mode



_____                    _____
External Examiner                              Signature/Date

## DEDICATION

To students of Languages all over the world.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# TABLE OF  CONTENT

# CHAPTER  ONE

# CHAPTER   TWO

# CHPTER  THREE

# CHAPTER FOUR

# CHAPTER  FIVE

# ABSTRACT

This research  work is  concerned   with reduplication in Nigerian  English from the  speeches  and  utterances  of some  students  in  the  Department of Modern European Languages   and   Linguistics, Usmanu  Danfodiyo University, Sokoto. The  study  shows   that  reduplication  occurs  to signify contrastive   meaning, pluralism, emphasis  and  creation  of new words  with different   semantic  forms. Reduplication wastherefore further discovered  to be  one  of the  features  of  Nigerian  English.

**CHAPTER ONE**

## 1.0    INTRODUCTION

Reduplication is a morphological process in which the root of a word or a part of it is repeated. In many languages, reduplication is used in inflections to convey grammatical functions and in lexical derivations to create semantic functions . Kachru (1982) noted that the reduplication of items belongs to various word classes. For instance, some English words are often reduplicated or repeated consecutively, either for emphasis, pluralisation or to create new meanings. Bobda (1994) identified three categories of words which generally undergo the process of reduplication; numerals, intensifiers and quantifiers.

## 1.1    BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Reduplication is an important phenomenon in language studies. Its attributes have long been studied in terms of various formalist theories. However, there is a general consensus that the role of reduplication in English language has been widely ignored. Recent

corpus based studies have indicated that the usage of reduplication among English language speakers is more widespread than assumed to be and needs in-depth study (Nadarajan, 2007).

This research work is embarked upon because every time many Nigerians speak English language,one hears the reduplication of some words and this reduplication tends to change the meaning of their utterances.

## 1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research work seeks to provide answers to the following questions:

1. What is the place of reduplication in Nigerian English as a variety of English Language?
2. What functions does reduplication serve in Nigerian English?

## 1.3    OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study is to carry out an analysis of reduplication as an issue in the morphological process of Nigerian English. It is aimed also to identify the functions and contributions of reduplication in language development. Specifically the study hopes to achieve the following objectives:

1. Identify the characteristics of reduplication as a morphological process in Nigerian English.
2. Analyse how reduplication can create sematic form, emphasis and pluralisation in Nigerian English

## 1.4    SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It is hoped that this work will serve as a contribution to the morphological analysis of Nigerian English most especially from our daily use of reduplication on the course of our interactions. It is also hoped that this research work will trigger further studies in reduplication from different students and scholars of language and other related disciplines.

## 1.5    SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on reduplication as an issue or feature in the morphological process in terms of analyzing Nigerian English. The work is limited to utterances of students of the Department of Modern European Language and Linguistics(MELL) of  Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto.

## CHAPTER TWO

## 2.0    INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the overview of Nigerian English, reduplication and repetition, difference between reduplication and tautology, reduplication at the syntactical level, reduplication and triplication, full and partial reduplication as well as the functions of reduplication.

## 2.1    OVERVIEW OF NIGERIAN ENGLISH

Nigerian English (NE) is an aggregate of heterogeneous grammatical structures common to Nigerian usage, having varying pronunciation peculiarities as well as socially constrained usage of some lexical items (Akere, 1982). Odumuh (1981) for example, having indentified Nigerian English (NE) simply as one of the new varities of English language developing all over the world, proceeds to provide a theoretical basis to justify its existence – the development of variation studies. He then goes on to argue that the existence of a single super ordinate variety of English

Language (EL) presupposes that of other forms of English Language (EL) usage in the Nigerian speech community. This assertion answers, to a certain degree of the questions posed about as to whether Nigerian English (NE) is a homogenous entity. Odumuh goes further to give some features that distinguish Nigerian English (NE) from other forms of English Language (EL) in other parts of the world. These he categorizes into lexical, semantic, syntactic, phonological and morphological usages, at both the spoken and written levels. Using the theory of linguistic variation, he argues that in contact situations – as in the case of Nigeria – a variety or varieties are bound to emerge that differ from that of Britain (the English Language model for Nigeria). He also raises the issue of standardization and two other related issues; those of local acceptability and international intelligibility. Nigerian English (NE), he believes does satisfy these criteria to a great degree.

Furthermore, Akindele and Adegbite (1999) state that:

> The phenomenon known as the Nigerian
> English (NE) is that variety of English that has

developed in the Nigerian non-native English situation. This is as a result of colonial imposition of the language as well as the native culture on the country. The variety thus developed is not wholly native English type and not totally Nigerian. It is blend of the two situations.

Towards an acceptable definition of Nigerian English, Okoro (2004) as cited in Awonusi and Babalola (2004) opined that:

> Nigerian English (NE) is simply English Language the way Nigerians speak and write it. Nigerian English (NE) is made up, on the phonological level of the peculiar forms of pronunciation type of the Efik, the Hausa, the Igbo, the Urhobo, the Yoruba, the Shingini and the numerous other ethnic groups that make up Nigeria; on the semantic level of meaning broadening, narrowing, total shift, literal translation and the creation of peculiar idioms, on the lexical of coinages, loans, blends, compounding, acronyms; on the syntactic level of transfer of mother tongue (MT) structures , and so forth.

It is indisputable fact that there has been a very rapid spread of the English Language across the world in the last four centuries. During this period, researchers have been appalled by the rate of domestication of

English Language in different regions of the world. As a result, distinct varieties or Englishes or "Lects" have emerged with different people using English language to express themselves differently from others.

## 2.2    REDUPLICATION AND REPETITION

Holm (1988:88) defines reduplication as "… mechanism for forming new words. It involves the repetition of a word or part of a word resulting to a distinct   lexical item slightly different in meaning". Reduplication is a morphological process that substrates languages subject words borrowed from the lexifier language into Nigeria. It shows that Nigerian English Lexicon is not static but dynamic in nature. This dynamism is triggered mostly by substratum influence.

Nadarajan (2007) sees reduplication as a word formation process in which some parts of a base (segment, syllable, morpheme) is repeated either to the left or the right of the word or occasionally within the middle of the word. While reduplication is found in a wide range of languages and language groups, its level of linguistic productivity varies and it is

sometimes used interchangeably with repetition. Repetition is a term which is used to indicate sounds and concepts that are repeated in one form or the other to provide reinforcement and emotional emphasis.

On the other hand,Ghomeshi et al (2004) refers to repetition as child language, amongst its numerous definitions. It is widely used as a poetic device which occurs when a sound, syllable, word, phrase, line, stanza or metrical pattern is repeated to make it the basic unifying device. In describing the features of repetition, Lausberg (1998) proposes that it has both informative and reinforcing functions. However, Wang (2005) insist that both repetition and reduplication have been used interchangeably because they overlap at some points. This is evident in some languages (e.g. Malay language) where repetition is used interchangeably with reduplication. This is unlike the English Language where repetition is used to signify a more "expressive" tone or figurative speech which is also often but not exclusively ironic in meaning.

Example.

1. They were amazed at this big, big voice coming out of this tiny girl.

2. Mother has dipped her three fingers

   Three fingers of her left hand.

Persson (1974) insist that repetition in English Language can be distinguished at three linguistic level which are: -

a. Lexical level as in "oldold view";

b. Syntactic level as in "GodHe knows"; and

c. Semantic level as in "They deceived and hoodwinked us".

Wang (2005) insist that there are fundamental difference between reduplication and repetition and that reduplication exist at the lexical level while repetition exist at the syntactical level.

## 2.2 REDUPLICATION AND TRIPLICATION

Phonologically, reduplication is described as reduplicated segments (sequences of consonants/vowels) or reduplicated prosodic units (syllables

or moras). In addition to phonological description, reduplication of linguistic constituents (i.e. words, stems, roots). Thus, reduplication is interesting theoretically because it involves the interface between phonology and morphology. In reduplication, the base is a word (or part of the word) that is often copied. The reduplicated element is called the reduplicant, and most often repeated only once as in "you are a sick, sick man or you are really, really sick". However in some languages reduplication has been found to occur more than once, resulting in a tripled form and not doubled as in most reduplications such as in "she is sick, sick, sick and never she is sick, sick!". (Ghomeshi et al., 2004). Incidentally, this feature occurs only within specific categories (e.g. verbs) and positions (e.g. sentence – finally).

Triplication refers to a triple use of a morpheme and more pronounced in Micronesian languages like Makilese and South Asian Language such as Telegu, while another Micronesian Language Pingalapese has both reduplications and triplications (Moravesic, 1978).In

English Language, triplication is more of an exception, but it does exist. For example in tic tac toe, win, win, win and you – you – you.

## 2.4    REDUPLICATION AND TAUTOLOGY

As earlier said, Nadarajan(2007) defined reduplication as a word formation process in which some part of a base (segment, syllable, morpheme) is repeated either to the left or to the right of the word or occasionally within the middle of the word. On the other hand advanced learner's dictionary defined tautology as the unnecessary and usually unintentional use of two words of similar meaning to express one meaning.

Tautology can further be explained as the unnecessary repetition of words, phrases and clauses that have similar meanings in a sentence. Most Nigerian speakers of English Language do not put this into consideration when making statements or utterances. This may be as a result of their lack of adequate knowledge of the meanings of the lexical items in English Language (Odiri 2011).

One thing that is worthy of notice is that while reduplication is seen as a term that denotes compounding or repeated part of a word, on the other hand tautology refers to using two different words or phrases that mean the same thing or similar in meaning in a sentence or an utterance to explain or express an idea. The following expressions serve as examples of tautology:

1. Raise up your hand if you want to ask a question.

   (raise your hand if you want to ask a question).

2. The driver reversed back the car.

   (the driver reversed the car).

3. The lecturer is on sabbatical leave.

   (the lecturer is on sabbatical or leave)

4. When will you return back to the hospital

   (when will you return  to the hospital)

5. I went for a night vigil yesterday

   (I went for a vigil yesterday)

6. Do you have cold ice water

   (do you have cold or ice water)

## 2.5  FULL AND PARTIAL REDUPLICATION

Full reduplication involves the exact repetition of sound or word. In English Language this would involve putting together a sound or morpheme to bring forth an entirely new grammatical function or semantic feature while full reduplication would be used to provide emphasis e.g.

"Are you LEAVING – leaving now?

i.e. are you 'really' leaving (for good) or merely stepping out for a minute? (Ghomeshi et al., 2004).

On the other hand partial reduplication involves reduplicating of only a part of a word (e.g. chit – chat, flip – flap, clip – clap). It involves consonant ablaut or vowel alternation e.g. /i –æ/ as in rip – rap and /i – o/ as in ping – pong). There are three types of partial reduplication namely vowel alternation, onset alternation and rhyming words. The first being

situation in which the components of the reduplication exist with independent meanings but combine to form a different concept or meaning (e.g. ship – shape, tip – top). Other examples are chit – chat, criss – cross, see – saw etc.

With vowel alternation, the first syllable of the reduplicated form, the derivation of a form such as crisscross undergoes two stages such as syllable copy vowel ablaut. Here the initial syllable is fully reduplicated and linked to its CV slots (CVCV ==> CVCV.CVCV).

Onset alternation occurs when there is a consonant change such as in handy dandy, blow wow and mumbo jumbo. Often the root word would have a meaning while the reduplicant would lack any explicit meaning.

As for rhymes with diminutive suffixes, the English Language words tend to lack independent meanings but take on a new meaning when combined (e.g. wishy – washy hoity – toity). These words are often found in nursery rhymes and children's story books.

## 2.6 FUNCTIONS OF REDUPLICATION

The functions of reduplication can be considered to be both rhetorical as well as cohesive. Content can be reiterated in a paraphrase form or alternative lexical forms (near - synonyms) and meaning is specific to the context in which the form is created (Wang 2005).Both repetition and reduplication play significant roles in the negotiation of lexical meaning and can be categorized into four groups; repetition such as tartar, do do,old old, hot, hot, hot. Reiteration as in itsy -bitsy, nit wit. Referring expression as in here and there , this and that, when and where, draw and draw, please and please.

Reduplication happens to be an important features of English language because it enable a number of inflectional and derivational forms to be attached to its nouns and verbs. These help to change the meanings and functions in countless ways.

This degree of flexibility is highly helpful for speakers of English language in particular because it enables them to construct lexical chains of connected words running discourse . Here contents is reiterated in paraphrase forms or alternative lexical forms. This makes it possible for meaning to become fixed in content under the circumstances created by the speakers. The repeated words then take on specific roles in the negotiation of meaning among its speakers.

In a nutshell reduplication can be seen performing the following functions; to denote contrastive meaning, to create emphasis, to give room for new words and to create pluralism.

# CHAPTER THREE

# METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

## 3.0   INTRODUCTION

This   chapter  discusses  the methods  employed  and used  for  data collection   for  this  research  work. These   comprises  of sources  of data, methods  of data   collection  and analytical   procedure.

## 3.1   SOURCES  OF DATA

The  major  source  of data   for this  research  work  involves   the utterances  of some   students  of the  Department  of  Modern European Languages and Linguistics (MELL)  of the  Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto.

## 3.2   METHODS  OF DATA  COLLECTION

The researcher   in  most   cases wrote  the  utterances  on   paper immediately   it is  uttered  by the   students. This  is because the  method employed  is  not  like  a  structured  interview   that needs   recording.

Sometime the data were obtained during one on one conversation with colleagues in classrooms and in the hostels.

## 3.3    ANALYTICAL PROCEDURE

This research work is the issue of reduplication in Nigerian English as it affects the morphological, semantic, syntactic and phonological analysis of Nigerian English (NE). The study was carried out in such a way that it is strictly according to the arrangement of the research questions. The discussion is based on the findings drawn from the analysis of the data.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

## 4.0    INTRODUCTION

This   chapter   presents   and analyses   the data   for this   research work. It discusses how  reduplication functions  in contrastive   meaning , pluralism, emphatic   expression, in  creating  new  words  and discussion.

## 4.1    CONTRASTIVE  MEANING  IN REDUPLICATION

The common  link  within   all  reduplications  and  repetitions   is that it allows  its speakers  to say  something   new   by  replacing  the existing   information or statement .If a verb is reduplicated or  repeated  in a statement  or  utterance, mostly  the  first  statement  or utterance   will be in positive   form  while  the  other  goes  with   the  negative  form which   then serves  as  a reminder   to the  listener or  hearer  that he  has to overlook  a particular  thing.

It was    observed   that students, reduplicate words  to give   a contrastive  meaning  on what  is  exactly  expected.

Example:

a. See and no see (meaning to overlook)

b. Seeing and not seeing, (ignoring something intentionally, which is negative meaning).

c. Observing and not observing, (pretending to be unaware, obvious which is negative meaning).

In(a) above, the statement or utterance is merely meant as a passing commentary. At times you hear students saying: If I were you, I will see and not see. Meaning if I were in your shoes I will overlook the situation.

The utterance in (b) indicates that the second verb takes on a different form of the negative participle which can be either adjectival or adverbial which brings about a negative connotation. The utterance in (c) signifies that, this time around the speaker's intention is to chastize or admonish the listener or hearer for failing to notice intentionally, ignoring or pretending not to have noticed.

## 4.2    PLURALISM  IN REDUPLICATION

It   was   observed   that   many   students     of Modern European Language  and Linguistics  when  speaking  English   language  tend  to reduplicate  or repeat  a word  in order to change    its   form from singular to  plural  form. On  several   occasions   the   quantifiers   and  the numerals  are  reduplicated  to  indicate  or signify   a plural  form of the subject  of discussion.

Example

a) Those   small   small   boys   are   not supposed   to be   in the University.

b) I  sold   the  books  at ten  ten naira

c) She  needs  five  five  copies

d) Many  many  people  use  to come   here

e) He  came much  much  later   than  the  lecturer.

Examining    the utterances   or  statements   above   carefully, one would    notice     that the    quantifiers    and  the  numerals     are

reduplicatedand will easily deduce that the reduplicated or repeated parts are mainly signifying plurality.

The expression or statement in (a) above would have been "Those small boys are not supposed to be in the University." The (b) above should have been "I sold the books atten Naira each. The utterance in (c) should have been "Many people use to come here". And the expression in (e) should have been "He came much later than the lecturer

We should note that some statements here do not need to be reduplicated on any way before the plurality in it will show. But reduplication has became part of the features of Nigerian English and as such we have to encounter as we have seen.

## 4.3    EMPHATIC EXPRESSION  IN REDUPLICATION

Reduplication performs a functions of making emphasis in some languages, particularly Nigerianlanguages as such extended to English language. A word is reduplicated or repeated for emphasis. This

feature was found when students of modern European Languages and linguistics speak English language. The students were of the habit of reduplicating some phrases particularly the adverbials to indicate the degree or level at which an event or happening occurred. Example

a) Tell him to do it now now

b) The car is moving slowly slowly

c) The man is very very good when it comes to Pragmatics

d) She swept the class early early morning

e) He bought a big, a very big car

f) I will say the truth and nothing but the truth

g) Please and please I need your help

The above expressions carry words which are reduplicated. The reduplication is meant for emphasis. Most of the reduplicated or repeated phrases are adverbs and they are indicating the degree to which the actions take place . In utterances (a), it would have been "Tell him to do it now". But the phrase 'now' is reduplicated to

indicate that it is an order commanding that the action should be done now and not at any time later than the time the statement is been uttered.

Likewise in (e), the expression should have been "The man bought a big car", or "The man bought a very big car", "But the word "big" was reduplicated to explain how big the car is. And it is almost the case in the examples given.

## 4.4    REDUPLICATION  IN NEW  WORDS  CREATION

It is  gathered that new words  could be created or arrived at through  the process of reduplication. As  observed  from some students of Modern European Languages and Linguistics, on the course of reduplication  we can arrive at new words or concepts with different  semantic  form. One of the examples of such words is "sharp". It was observed  that the word sharp if reduplicated gives a new word with different meaning  from its original semantic form. It

was observed that many students  say 'sharp sharp' to mean quickly or smartly.

## 4.5  DISCUSSION

Having  gone  this  far  to  identify  reduplication  as   one of the morphological  processes   or  features   in  analyzing   Nigerian  English and also  knowing   the  functions  reduplication  performs  in   languages, in  this   case   Nigerian  English, it is pertinent  to  know that, there is  a general  consensus   that many   of  the   above processes   can  only  be formulated  for "regular  examples"  to some  extent. Carter  and McCarthy (1998)  in  the   formal   solutions  trying   to explain English   Language reduplication phenomenon  found that  it is  not always  deterministic  but more  likely  to be    probabilistic. They   viewed   that  deterministic solutions  have   often  been  found   to be  misleading  due   to the existence  of frequent  exceptions  in the  forms. While  at the   outset  it might  appear  as  though  Nigerian  languages  appear  to have   a more widespread  role  for  reduplication   and repetitions  in    their  daily

discourses, a corpus - based studies on reduplication and repetition in English language has revealed the situation to be otherwise. Wang(2005), highlighted that both reduplication and repetition are present not only in literary discourses, but exists functionally and pragmatically in all types of everyday English language usage. Infact, it is routinely employed in advertisements , newspapers, political slogans, textual headings etc.

# CHAPTER FIVE

# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

## 5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter concludes this project. It focuses on the summary of findings and conclusion.

## 5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This research work looked at reduplication as one of the morphological processes in analyzing Nigerian English as one of the varieties of English language. It covers the position of reduplication in a language. It also looked at the functions and effects reduplication performs in our day to day utterances. This research work also tried to sort out the differences between reduplication and repetition, reduplication and triplication among others. To this end, the following findings were made:

i)   That reduplication could change the semantic form of an utterance, statement or sentence

ii) That through reduplication the form of a phrase or sentence can be changed from singular to plural form.

iii) That emphasis can be reiterated in an utterance or statement by the use of reduplication

iv) That there could be contrast in meaning in utterances or sentences by using reduplication

v) That new words or concepts can be arrived at when reduplication is used.

## 5.3 CONCLUSION

The use of reduplication for expressive and aesthetic effect in English is more extensive than previously thought. Possible and new studies are constantly coming up with instances that show its usage to be more widespread than originally believed. As a form, reduplication is partly predictable and regular, corresponding to expected sound alternation patterns.

However, despite a number of studies on reduplication, there are still exceptions which need to be worked out for each language. In the words of Jacobson and Waugh (1987), it is not possible to predict that each pattern will undergo the same alternation for all languages and variations are not deterministic and the formulated rules should be modified based on different individual cases. Most of all, not all reduplications are meaningful or have pragmatic outcomes. The deterministic rules are incomplete and require further study, and the rising number of corpus-based studies on reduplication will definitely help develop greater awareness about the direction of reduplication in actual discourse. Until then, it is evident that reduplication is interesting word play which can serve to enrich any language.

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