

SOCIETY FOR PIDGIN AND CREOLE LINGUISTICS 2011

A Trace of Contact: Morphological reduplication in Bahamian Creole Helean McPhee

Reduplicated Adjectives and Adverbs

If the meaning of the input is X, then the reduplicated output is likely to mean “very X”.

1. In deyz gohn ay tel ya iz **plentiy-plentiy** tiyngz ta sey bowt. (Andros)

In days gone I tell you is plenty-plenty things to say ‘bout

In relation to the past, I tell you there is a great deal to talk about.

2. Hiy doz wohk **plentiy-plentiy**.

He does walk plenty-plenty

He walks a lot.

Test for Reduplicated Adjectives and Adverbs

Physical property adj.; adv. hahd --> hahd-hahd - very hard
 adj. sik --> sik-sik - very sick

Dimension adj. wayd --> wayd-wayd - very wide
 adj. fat --> fat-fat - very fat

Colour adj. blak --> blak-blak - very black; very dark in relation to
 complexion
 adj. rehd --> rehd-rehd - very red; deep red

Age adj. owl --> owl-owl - very old
 adj. yong --> yong-yong - very young

Value adj.; adv. nays --> nays-nays - very nice
 adj.; adv. bahd --> bahd-bahd - very bad

Human Propensity adj.; adv. styuwpid --> styuwpid-styuwpid - very stupid
 adj. hapiy --> hapiy-hapiy - very happy

Speed adj.; adv. fahs --> fahs-fahs - very fast
 adj.; adv. slow --> slow-slow - very slow

Distributive

3. Da res a da piypul gyadarin **won-won** kohtan. (Holm, 1982)

The rest of the people gathering one-one cotton

The rest of the people are {gathering/ harvesting} sparse cotton.

Won-won is Pan-creole (Holm, 1982).

Succession

4. Da prinsapul kohl dem in hiy ohfis **won-won**.

The principal call them in he office one-one

The principal called them into his office {one by one/ individually}.

5. **Won-won**, da prinsapul kohl dem in hiy ohfis.

One-one the principal call them in he office

One by one, the pricipal called them into his office.

6. *Won da prinsapul kohl dem in hiy ohfis.

7. *Da prinsapul kohl dem in hiy ohfis won.

Succession

8. Da animal dem gohn in da ahk **tuw-tuw**.

The animal them gone in the ark two-two

The animals went into the ark {two by two/in pairs}.

9. !! toytiyn-toytiyn

Intensification

10. Ay yuwsta **woyk-woyk**. (Andros)

I used to work-work

I used to work {very hard / a lot}.

11. Dat da fah in da bak. Ya **wohk-wohk**. (Crooked Island)

That COP far in the back. You walk-walk

That is far in the back. You (have to) walk a lot (to get there).

12a)*siy-siy

b)*tiyngk-tiyngk

c)*now-now

13. Shiyz a **chat-chat**.

She's a chat-chat

She is a very talkative person.

Continuation/ Repetition

T

14. Hiy biyn **tiyz-tiyz** miy.

He been tease-tease me

He {teased/ used to tease} me continually.

15. Hiy biyn tiyz miy.

He been tease me

He teased me.

M

16. Hiy ga **tiyz-tiyz** miy if ay duw dat.

He MOD tease-tease me if I do that

He will tease me continually if I do that.

17. Hiy ga tiyz miy if ay duw dat.

He MOD tease me if I do that

He will tease me if I do that.

A

18. Hiy doz **tiyz-tiyz** miy.

He ASP tease-tease me

He (habitually) teases me a lot.

19. Hiy doz tiyz miy.

He does tease me

He teases me (on occasion).

20a) *Hiy tiyzin-tiyzin miy.

b) *Hiy tiyz-tiyzin miy.

Lexically Determined Reduplications

21. It iyng iyziy ta **bak-bak** in diyz nara striyt.

It ain't easy to back-back in these narrow street

It is not easy to reverse on these narrow streets.

22. Da dohkta gatiy ekzamin iy **bang-bang**.

The doctor MOD examine he bang-bang

The doctor has to examine his penis.

23. Miyng wohng now **bon-bon**.

I ain't want no burn-burn

I do not want any burnt food.

24. Uwnliy won **chik-chik** savayv.
Only one chick-chick survive
Only one chick survived.

English
n. chick [+bird, +young, +small]

Bahamian Creole
n. chick [+bird, +young] ---> reduplication ---> n.chick-chick [+bird, +young, +small]

25. **Kos-kos** kyahng hoyt miy.
Curse-curse can't hurt me
Name-calling cannot hurt me.

26.* Kos kyahng hoyt miy.

27a) * Tiyz-tiyz kyahng hoyt miy.
b) * Pley-pley neva hoyt iniywon.

28. Dis iz a **pley-pley** sowin mashiyn. (Holm, 1982:157)
This is a play-play sewing machine
This is a toy sewing machine.

29. Dis sowin mashiyn **pley-pley**.
This sewing machine play-play
This sewing machine is {a toy/not real}.

30. Ay gat som swiyt **sip-sip** fa yuw.
I got some sweet sip-sip for you
I have some sweet gossip for you.

31. Iy **sok-sok** kuz iy sik.
She suck-suck 'cause she sick
She is gaunt because she is sick.

32. Hiyz a aylan mahn sow hiy now hah ta pley **tyuwn-tyuwn**.
He's a island man so he know how to play tune-tune
He is an island man so he knows how to play the concertina.

Final Comments

- Bahamian Creole uses total reduplication.
- Inflectional reduplications outnumber derivational ones.
- There is not a clear relationship between inflection and production.
- Reduplication serves a variety of semantic functions in Bahamian Creole, including distribution, intensification, diminution, continuation and repetition.
- Based on this Bahamian data, intensification is most common.
- Four major syntactic categories are affected by reduplication - nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs.