

Imperfectivity as a unifying feature of reduplication in Tagalog and Hiligaynon*

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A survey of functions of reduplication in various languages seems to reveal an emerging pattern with opportunities to speculate regarding language universals. In most of these surveys, broad similarities in the functions of reduplication and even many of the same apparent contradictions were seen. These likenesses have led to some interesting attempts to arrive at generalizations regarding the many functions of reduplication found in several languages, a search for some underlying mechanism to explain all the apparently divergent functions of reduplication.

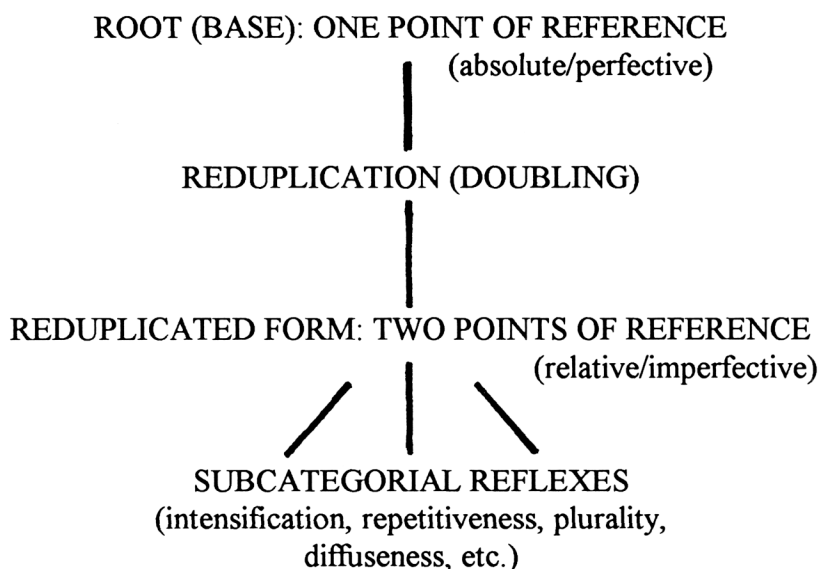
Based on her study of reduplication in Tagalog, Naylor (1986) identifies just such a mechanism. She proposes "that reduplication is a semantic system based on aspectual contrasts mediated by the iconicity of the duplicated form that is its morphological realization." (178). Viewing reduplication in this way, Naylor then identifies reduplication as a typological feature diagnostic of predominantly pragmatically based languages (Givon, 1979: 222-223).

In this paper, I will give an overview of Naylor's theory regarding the role of reduplication in aspectual distinctions within Tagalog based on her analysis of semantic and pragmatic functions of reduplication in that language. Next, I will compare reduplication in Tagalog to reduplication in the closely related Hiligaynon and point out an apparent problem in the fact that Hiligaynon does not use reduplication inflectionally, in the verbal aspect paradigm, as does Tagalog. Upon closer inspection, however, this distinction may not be significant because it arises from looking at these languages from a western point of view. When viewed from a more Austronesian vantage point, we see that the distinction between verbs and other parts of speech in many of these languages is blurred and

that aspect is a feature of many parts of speech. So the perceived discrepancy between Tagalog and Hiligaynon becomes a phenomenon that fortifies Naylor's theory.

In Naylor's model, the reduplicated word portrays a multipunctual perspective through iconicity. This multipunctuality mirrors aspectual imperfectivity. The doubling of the form that occurs in reduplication, and the resulting doubling of the point of reference, easily explains the most common meanings expressed by reduplication: repetition, emphasis, plurality. Less obvious is how such doubling can impart a subtractive or detractive meaning, or likeness of facsimile, as is often the case. Naylor explains these by pointing out that the kind of iconicity expressed in reduplication is relational, creating more than one point of reference. "Once we are able to assume a relative perspective, we can readily account for the fact that reduplication conveys both additive as well as subtractive meanings, comparative as well as other relative meanings." (182). This is represented schematically in Figure 1.

Figure 1
(Naylor)



This concept of aspectual imperfectivity was originally described by Comrie (1976). In his analysis, the perfective aspect views a situation from outside - looking at it in its whole, seeing the beginning, middle and end. On the other hand, the imperfective views a situation from within, looking at the internal temporal structure of a situation; looking backwards to the start and forwards to the end. Whereas the perfective can be viewed as a point or a blob on a line, the imperfective is characterized by some form of multipunctuality. The perfective represents the absolute, the imperfective the relative.

Tagalog is an excellent choice as a model of extensive reduplication. Blake (1917) writes, "Nowhere, perhaps, is this linguistic principle more productive than in the Philippine languages, and here it probably finds its highest development in Tagalog..." (425). Naylor, too, finds that unlike many other languages, reduplication is part of the "core grammar" of Tagalog, a regular and productive morphological process.

Closely related to Tagalog is Hiligaynon, a Bisayan language with some four million speakers. Both Tagalog and Hiligaynon are Austronesian languages and members of the Malayo-Polynesian sub-group (Bellwood, 1991). According to Llamzon's subgrouping of nine Philippine languages (1969), Hiligaynon is one of five that falls under the Tagalic subgroup. Since Hiligaynon and Tagalog are both Central Philippine languages, they are very closely related both areally and genetically. Yet, each language uses reduplication to a different extent. In Hiligaynon, reduplication is not as prevalent or productive a feature as it is in Tagalog, particularly as an inflectional device in the verbal aspect paradigm.

Naylor gives ten examples of the functions of reduplication in Tagalog. These are listed in Table 1 and include many of the more common functions of reduplication found in many other languages such as plurality, intensification, detractive/subtractive, facsimile, repetitiveness, and distributive.

Table 1

Functions Of Reduplication In Tagalog (Naylor)

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. verbal imperfectivity | 6. facsimile |
| 2. pluraliser | 7. detractive/subtractive |
| 3. plural plus randomness | 8. intensification |
| 4. moderative aspect | 9. repetitiveness |
| 5. moderative plus randomness | 10. distributive |

Another use of reduplication that Naylor describes is referred to as "moderative aspect," a function described by Schacter and Otones (1972) as expressing "activities performed perfunctorily, occasionally, at random, etc." (340). Perhaps one of the most significant functions of reduplication in Tagalog, thoroughly described by Naylor, is in the verbal aspect paradigm as a marker of imperfectivity. Though this particular function of reduplication in Tagalog is not shared by Hiligaynon, all of the others are used to varying degrees in both languages. In addition to the ten functions described by Naylor, one additional derivational function evident in both languages will be described here.

verbal aspect

Verbs in Tagalog are inflected for aspect. There are three aspects in addition to the infinitive. These are completed (past), contemplated (future), and incompleted (progressive). With a combination of prefix and reduplication, Tagalog inflects verbs as follows:

infinitive	<i>matulog</i> 'to sleep'
contemplated	<i>matutulog</i>
incompleted	<i>natutulog</i>
completed	<i>natulog</i> (Ramos, 1971)