A comparison of reduplication in Limonese Creole and Akan

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Introduction

Limonese Creole (LC) is a second-generation English-based Creole descended from a Creole (JC). For several decades preceding and following the turn of the 20th century, the Afro-Caribbean population of Costa Rica grew to over 10,000 Afro-Caribbeans, mostly from Jamaica, who migrated to Limon and other coastal areas. After the completion of the railroad, more Jamaicans moved to work for the United Fruit Company (Bryce-Laporte, 1993; Herzfeld, 1993). When these Jamaicans came to Costa Rica, they not only brought their families but also much of their social infrastructure, including churches, schools, and social clubs in which English and JC were spoken. Over time, the Afro-Limonese maintained a mostly separate society. Thus, the loci and over time began to develop distinctively from JC. Herzfeld (1978:193) indicates that the Jamaican immigrants “came mostly from the mesolceral ranks of JC speech due to the fact that they were being hired by an American company and in positions that required literacy. In fact, there are a number of quite common forms of JC which occur only infrequently in normal LC discourse. Thus, the JC bas forms of the copula in LC basilectal speech. Also, some varieties of LC only rarely use a + verb to indicate progressive aspect (e.g., Si be goin). They more commonly use be + verb-in (Shi iz goin).”

Aspects of the historical development of LC can be traced back through languages of West Africa, including Akan, spoken primarily in Ghana and westernTogo. For example, the use and forms of reduplication in LC show a limited number of phenomena in varieties of Akan, including Asante-Twi, Fante, and Akuaj, all of the Kwa language group of the Niger-Congo family. It is not only in the use of reduplication that LC and Akan share features; in addition, they share the use of ideophones, as well as common lexical items (Winkler & Obeng, 2000).

Mufwene (1990, 1996), among others (e.g. Hall, 1966; Holm, 1988; Thomason, 1989), has posited that early Creole development was influenced at some level by languages spoken by its first speakers. In this chapter, we follow Mufwene’s Principle, which allows for contributions from both substrate and superstrate languages from the bioprogram:

Structural features have been predetermined to a large extent (but not exclusively) by the characteristics of the vernaculars spoken by the populations that founded the col linguistics of the creoles. Holm (1988:89) similarly accepts a broader vision of the influences on Creole deve:

"Studies of reduplication in Creoles and African languages reveal semantic categories to be subcategory to those in European languages, although there are indeed parallels in the influence of language universals."

1 For a more detailed account of the sociohistorical and historical background of the Afro-Limonese Creole see Herzfeld (1978). For other examples of differences between JC and LC see Herzfeld (1978).
The Akan influence in Jamaica is evident from its impact on JC. According to Le Page & Tabouret-Keller (1985:47), "the largest number of Akanisms recorded in DJE [Dictionary of Jamaican English] are from the Akan (Gold Coast) languages, especially from Twi and Ewe." Cassidy & Le Page, in fact, dedicate considerable discussion to the phonological and lexical similarities between Twi and JC in their introduction to DJE (1980).

Akan influence, however, was not limited to vocabulary. McWhorter (1997a:83) points out syntactic parallels between JC and West African languages, and Alleyne (1993) notes similarities in the phonology. Alleyne further notes that "it can be demonstrated that not just the pitch, intonation, and timbre, but entire functioning languages were carried to Jamaica, and can still be found there even now" (1993:171). Presumably, these traits were carried to Limon, Costa Rica with the massive immigration of JC speakers.

2 General structure of reduplication in LC and Akan

The use of reduplication in LC is not nearly as common as in the Akan-speaking areas of West Africa, neither in frequency nor in extensiveness of function. Reduplication in current varieties of LC is more restricted than in Akan and is generally limited to indicating intensification, iteration, or duration, pluralization and in a very limited way, derivation. In Akan, reduplication is a very productive process and is used quite commonly for a variety of functions including intensification of adjectives and adverbs, repetition or duration of an action, pluralization, shifting the morphological or syntactic category of a word, and changing the meaning of a word.

Additionally, reduplication in LC is limited in the string that may be reduplicated: the complete stem of the word must be repeated. In Akan, there are numerous reduplications in which only part of a stem is repeated:

3 Functions of reduplication in Limon Creole and Akan

3.1 Intensification

In LC, the employment of reduplication for intensification is quite common. It can be restricted to the reduplication of prenominal (2) and predicate adjectives (3) as well as to instances of reduplication for the modification of a sintactic item (4).

(2) Mi granimaada mariid to a blak-blak-blak man
1s grandmother married to a black-black-black man
"My grandmother was married"

(3) liemz trang-trang James strong-strong 'James is very strong'

(4) We yu vex-vex up so fa?
what 2s vex-vex up so for

In LC, reduplication can also be used to show the "limitedness" or "smallness" of an item discussed (Wright-Murray, 1974):

(5) wan-wan grien a kokô one-one grain of cocoa
'a few lsc'

All of this holds true for Akan as well. However, where in Akan the reduplication of a syntactic item modifies a plural noun, the adjective is both pluralized and reduplicated:

(6) nipa kse akse big (=important) / pl-person big-big

4 Examples in Twi are written in its standard orthography which includes the letters ç and ç of these two letters is not necessarily identical to that of the corresponding IPA symbols.

5 The lexical item potepot is also found in present-day varieties of Baule and Yoruba (Hol from Cassiday & Le Page (1980).

6 Velarization of medial stops is not uncommon in LC, JC, and Akan.

7 Because many LC speakers can easily range from bastielt to acroic, there will be cases where the orthography which reflect the mixture of forms used. Words that are distinctly seen appear in standard English orthography.
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The repetition of the adjective in the following Akan utterance has two functions: to indicate the plurality of the noun and to intensify the quality of the adjective:

(8) mmofra tuntum-tuntum-tuntum
    PL-child black-black-black 'very black children'

With predicate adjectives, reduplication in LC may be used to indicate the completive nature of the condition described:

(9) Di kyar mashap-mashap
    the car mash up-mash up 'The car is completely wrecked' (Wright-Murray, 1974)

In both LC and Akan, roots may be repeated more than once. Several factors affect the number of repetitions produced, for example, the level of intensity the speaker wishes to convey, the extent of quality being reduplicated, or the character of the quantity being discussed. There appears to be no limit on the number of times a stem may be repeated in either LC (10) or Akan (11):

(10) It was ogli-ogli-ogli. When da earth gwain to shiek
    3s was ugly-ugly-ugly when the earth going to shake
    aal yu sii is dis kaka-kaka-kaka-kakak!
    all 2s see is this IDRO (w4)
    'It was very ugly. When the earth was shaking you heard crack crack crack crack!'

(11) Me nana ba a we ace Obarima tunt-tunt-tunt-
    3s grandparent female marry-PAST man black-black-black
    'My grandmother was married to a very black man'

3.2 Pluralization

The morphological process of reduplicating nouns for pluralization occurs in both LC (12-14) and Akan (15, 16), though it is certainly more productive in Akan:

(12) Wata ipa faya-faya outsayd de
    what a heap-of fire-fire outside there
    'What a great number of fires there are outside'

(13) Go tek up dem ipa asehes-ases yu av tro ol about
    go take up 3p heap-of ashes-ashes 2s have thrown all about
    'Go and pick up the heaps of ashes you have thrown all over'

(14) Kodo-kodo mi an yu gwain a go de
    elbow-elbow 1s and 2s going to go there
    'Arm in arm you and I will go there together'

(15) akuadaa > nkwadaa > nkwadaa-akwadaa
    child > PL-child > PL-child-PL-child
    'child > children > many children'

(16) aboa > mmoawa > mmoawa-mmoawa
    germ > PL-germs > PL-germs-PL-germs
    'germ > germs > many germs'

3.3 Iteration and duration

Reduplication by verbs of both LC (17-20) and Akan (21-25) is used to signal either continuous, lengthy actions or actions repeated over and over:

(17) i tunt-tunt
    3s rain-rain 'It rains continuously' (Wright-Murray, 1974)

(18) Da rasta dem dodgin-dodgin-dodgin-dodgin out to da duor want to da:
    the rasta PL-dodging (w4) out to the door one to the
    wusa sii if dem kad pik op somting
    want see if 3p could pick up something 'The Rastas were continuously one after another, to see if they c

(19) Di ticia lak bii-bii
    the teacher like beat-beat
    'The teacher whips constantly'

(20) Yu avto jompin-jompin
    2s have to jumping-jumping
    'You have to

Note that in LC examples (18) and (20), the root of the reduplicated verb is the singular verb sing, but the plural subject mmofra requires a plural verb, so in (20), the singular verb fre requires a singular object abofra, whereas the plural verb fre-fre requires the plural object mmofra:

(21) esese wohuri-huri
    must 2s-jump-jump
    'You have to

In Akan, unlike in LC, reduplicated verbs inflect for person. Reduplication show agreement with plural subjects or objects. Thus, in (23), the singular singular verb nyin, but the plural subject mmofra requires a plural verb, so n

(22) Semerek:la na, esesee mehye-hye-hye-baye akesee nn
    if 1s-am-prog-go-there if-must 1s-pack-pack-pack bag-pl big there
    'If I am going down there, I

The following Akan example, analogous to LC (18), involves the reduplicative shift in meaning for a root adjective. "The semantic effect is to produce the at this type of reduplication are also found in LC, as in (26-28). Note that the root eat, and shiek 'to shake' occur in LC, whereas *joki, *nyami, and *shieki do not to meet the 2-syllable constraint as it is in JG:

(23) Abofra no anin / Maxfin no anin-nyin
    child the has-grown / PL-child the have-grow-grow
    'The child has grown / Ti

(24) Fre abofra no / Fre-fre maxfin no
    call child the / call-call PL-child the
    'Call the ch

(25) Na mpese-mpese foe no pue-pue nwaaw-nwaaw
    FOC Rasta-Rasta-PL the go-out-go-out slowly-slowly-slowly look-look
    st won nsa be ka bi a
    if dem kud pik op somting
    one after another to see if they c

3.4 Derivation

Kouwenberg & LaCharité (2001, this volume) describe a type of reduplication to be unrelated to substrate influence, which they term "X-like" reduplication the use of reduplication to cause a change in the class of a root noun or verb shift in meaning for a root adjective. "The semantic effect is to produce the at this type of reduplication are also found in LC, as in (26-28). Note that the root eat, and shiek 'to shake' occur in LC, whereas *joki, *nyami, and *shieki do not to meet the 2-syllable constraint as it is in JG:

(26) jogi-jogi / joki-joki man 'a man characterized by jokes, a clown' (Winkler 1998)
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(27) *im nyami-nyami* ‘He’s a glutton’ (Wright-Murray, 1974)

(28) *im shiiki-shiiki* ‘He’s very shaky’ (Wright-Murray, 1974)

Although other examples of the use of reduplication for the purpose of a shift in word class were not attested in the LC data, this is not an uncommon process in Akan, where the reduplication of nouns is most often used to facilitate a change in the word class, as in (29), where reduplication creates a denominial adjective.9

(29) *daa / nnuumma* ‘tree / woody’

3.5 Non-existent base forms

There are a number of examples of reduplications in LC for which the unreduplicated form of the root stem does not exist separate from the reduplicated form:

(29) *tukutuku* ‘small, but well built’ (Winkler, 1998; Portilla, 1995); ‘tuku

*mmumu* ‘dummy;’ ‘mu

*posoposo* ‘very old;’ ‘poso

*finkefinke* ‘very skinny;’ ‘finke

*diyadiyadi* ‘very dirty, untidy;’ *dpaga

Some of these are phonetically unaltered retentions from Akan. This is true of *tukutuku, mmumu,* and *posoposo* (30), although the meaning of *mmumu* in Akan is broader, encompassing ‘stupid, deaf, ugly looking, acting.’ Phonological change (consontant voicing) has altered one Akan reduplicated form: LC *diyadiyadi* seems to derive from Akan *kyakakyaka* ‘very untidy’. Simplex forms exist in Akan only for *tukutuku* and *posoposo: tuku* ‘big’ and *poso* ‘old.’

(30) *Menim nea entia a akuakora poso-poso yi rheue-rheue me saa

Is-NEG-know what why old-man old-old this prog-look-look is that way

‘I don’t know why this very old man is looking for me’

In the great majority of cases, reduplication in LC is the simple repetition of a freestanding root word; however, there are a number of examples for which the root exists in a phonetically different form:

(31) *I duonnua wai dis roko-roko man luk pan mi fa

Is don’t know why this rock-rock man look on 1s for

‘I don’t know why this very old man [with a rock face] is looking at me’

3.6 Sarcasm

LC appears to have a use of reduplication not identified in Akan—for derogatory expressions or sarcasm. However, this use was only attested once in the corpus: in (32), the expression *priti-priti* is used to denote that the boy being spoken of is only good for his looks and nothing else. The tonal pattern consists of a series of high tones with some key lowering in the second set:

(32) *Da yaut now, de e not goin an work nau in dowz stuar, de duon wan

the youth now 3P NEG going and work now in those store 3P don’t want

du priti-priti kouedem kom an eii dem workin intu no stuar

the pretty-pretty boy PL come and see 3P working inside no store

‘The youths now, they are not going to work in those stores, they don’t want the very pretty boys to come and see them working in any store’

3.7 Prosody in Limonese Creole and Akan reduplication

Prosodic features play a significant role in reduplication in both Akan and LC. Features found in the data include key lowering, downdrifting, and downstepping. In the reduplications with a series of syllables characterized by low tones, examples of key lowering are noted. Key lowering describes a drop in pitch of low tones that continues down to the bottom of the speech sample repeated for sufficient duration. It applies both to LC (33) and Akan (34). If unreduplicated forms have LL structure and the reduplicated forms have LI, due to the successive low tones, the pitch drop is so considerable that it reas speaker’s pitch range.

(33) *Der a mi blak man duon nuo nutin, nutin-nutin-nutin-nutin

of there have black man don’t know nothing nothing (x4) of

‘There are Black men who don’t know a

(34) *eifie ho ayee bása-bása-bása-bása

house therePERF-be untidy-untidy-untidy-untidy

‘The house

Downdrifting involves the lowering of the pitch of high tones that alternate v and Akan, because reduplicated forms repeat the tonal structure of the exception in some unusual cases, both high tone and low tone placement c examples (35) and (36), the tonal pattern for both *taakin-taakin-taakin-taaki... kasa* is H-L-H-L-H-L-H-L. The high tones fall in pitch throughout the reduplicated forms of the intervening low tones. In these examples, the second high is not the first high tone. Because of the preceding low tones, the descent in high tone is greater.

(35) *It’s jes revalastin taakin-taakin-taakin-taakin...

It’s just everlasting talking (x4)

(36) *Wun káa-káa-káa-káa a entassom

3p talk-talk-talk-talk which 3s-not-fall ear in ‘It’s just continuous ta

Downstepping involves a high tone whose pitch is lowered. Two k are identified: (a) automatic downstepping, in which the lowering of the h phonologically, since an overt low tone brings down the pitch of the follo (b) non-automatic downstepping, in which the pitch of successive h begin by low tones get lowered. In a downdrift situation, whenever there is a desc by a preceding low tone, the high tone whose pitch has been lowered is class downstepping. Examples follow for LC (37) and Akan (38):

(37) *Yque colora! De uno we yu av to wietin-wietin, cho!

[Spanish] that one which 2s have to waiting-waiting oh

‘How irritating! For that one you have

(38) *Ne se ye fitía-fita-fitía-fita

3s teethbe white-white-white-white

‘He

In these cases, the tonal pattern on the reduplication is H throughout. The pi tones are lower than those of the initial high tones. This cannot be termed the descent in pitch is slight and does not come close to the bottom of the speech. In LC, tone alone may be the distinctive feature between two reduplications with different meanings as illustrated here;

(39) *a gud- gud gön / a gud-gud gón

a good-good gun / a good-good gun

‘a real gun (i.e. not a toy) / a very good gun

9 Normal Akan phonological processes contribute to the dissimilarity between the root and the reduplication. The prefix /n/ is a plural marker; and causes the voiced stop /d/ of the root to assimilate into nasal /n/. In addition, in Akan reduplication, low -ATR vowels influenced by following +ATR vowels change to /e/. These processes combine to create the reduplicated form *nnumma* [PL-tree-PL-tree] ‘woody.’
4 Current trends in Limonese Creole and Akan usage

The productive use of reduplication in LC has been diminishing somewhat over the years, and it is clear that the full spectrum and structure of reduplications in JC were not fully maintained in LC. Nor are either JC or LC systems exact replicas of systems like Akan or other West African languages. Furthermore, as LC begins to borrow more and more from the acrolect because of renewed access to standard varieties of English, reduplicated forms are being replaced by SE forms by certain groups within the community. In the corpus collected by the second author (Winkler, 1998), it was noted that only 44% of the interviews and the candid recordings of the male informants, contained examples of reduplication; for the women, it was more than half (57%). It may be that because many men have traditionally worked outside of the community (on vacation cruise ships and in the USA), that access to other varieties of English has encouraged the use of standard manners of expressing what was once expressed by reduplication.

Age also plays a role in the decline of reduplication in LC and in fact, in the use of the language itself. Because LC speakers now live in a predominantly Spanish-speaking community, and because virtually all LC speakers also speak Spanish, intermarriage has increased. The children of these unions are less likely to speak LC though they tend to maintain a passive understanding of it. Because many of the community’s children are also receiving classes in English as a second language in the public schools, impact from the acrolect is likely to increase, accompanied by a decline in the use of reduplication.

Unlike in LC, there is no evidence to show that the use of reduplication in Akan is on the decline. Reduplication is a deep-rooted part of the language. Correct use of reduplication, especially in formal genres, like poetry, formal discourse, and proverbs, is considered good speech, accompanied by a reduction in the use of reduplication. It is clear that the full spectrum and structure of reduplications in JC were not fully maintained in LC. The productive use of reduplication in LC has been diminishing somewhat over the years, and it is clear that the full spectrum and structure of reduplications in JC were not fully maintained in LC. Nor are either JC or LC systems exact replicas of systems like Akan or other West African languages. Furthermore, as LC begins to borrow more and more from the acrolect because of renewed access to standard varieties of English, reduplicated forms are being replaced by SE forms by certain groups within the community. In the corpus collected by the second author (Winkler, 1998), it was noted that only 44% of the interviews and the candid recordings of the male informants, contained examples of reduplication; for the women, it was more than half (57%). It may be that because many men have traditionally worked outside of the community (on vacation cruise ships and in the USA), that access to other varieties of English has encouraged the use of standard manners of expressing what was once expressed by reduplication.

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5 Summary

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