

Reduplication in the Holophrastic Stage –
A Morpho-Phonological Process in Infant Malayalam

Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry (TOJQI)
Volume 12, Issue 10, October 2021: 5260-5266

**Reduplication in the Holophrastic Stage –
A Morpho-Phonological Process in Infant Malayalam**

T. Shafeek

Ph.D Research Scholar, Roll No: 1906060001, Department of Linguistics, Annamalai University,
Annamalai Nagar- 608 002, Cuddalore District, Tamilnadu
Email: t.shafee.t@gmail.com

Dr. R. Lalitha

Assistant Professor and Research Supervisor, , Department of Linguistics, Annamalai University,
Annamalai Nagar- 608 002, Cuddalore District, Tamilnadu

Abstract

This paper offers some evidence of full or partial reduplicating process in a Holophrastic Child's Malayalam. When observed Mappila infants in the holophrastic stage, it is found reduplicating is completely possible and reduplicated words are comprehensible for them. The objective is to analyse process of reduplicating in Malayalam of an infant in the Holophrastic stage based on the parent's diary entries . Partial or full reduplicating process is found as a stratagem of the child for its First Language Acquisition and Communication. Interestingly, the child in the holophrastic stage appears capable enough to form words through process of partial or full reduplications. The participant's sound pattern processing and morpho-phonological processing in the word formation is found no different from that of adult Malayalam Speakers.

Key words: holophrastic, acquisition, reduplication, infant Malayalam

Introduction

Of all stages of natural development of a language acquisition; cooing (from the birth- six weeks), babbling (6-9 months), holophrastic stage (9-18 months), two word stage (1.5 year- 2 years) and telegraphic stage (2-2--5year old) are significant for acquisition of any language. Based on study of entries on my child's language development, the child is found reduplicating words as vocabulary. The observed child multiples its words and tries to form new words through the process of full or partial reduplication. It is evident and common children in Holophrastic stage tend to reduplicate words for their needs. This is seen as a key strategy of the observed child who starts communicating Malayalam as First Language (MFL). The study is purely on the basis of "diary study" conducted by X parent on his own first child. Entries in diary were accurately and systematically recorded when the child started uttering one word initially and two words between 16 months year - old and 25 months year- old

Language Development of Children

Development of Language occurs in all children with normal brain function, regardless of race, culture or general intelligence. In other word, the capacity to acquire language is capacity of the human species as a whole (Akmajian, Richard, Ann, & Harish, 2011)

Children are seen to choose the easiest way or strategy to perform set tasks in their walk way of life. In their communicative system, the observed child in one word stage of first language acquisition is seen adopting a strategy- the reduplicated words- for communicating with its parents.

Reduplication- A process of duplication

If you analyze closely three morphemes of the word 'reduplication'; (1) *re* + (2) *duplicat(e)* + (3) *ion* you will immediately be able to infer the meaning of 'reduplication' ; something is like 'a process of copying or duplicating something again.'

Katamba (1993) defines reduplication as a process whereby an affix is realized by phonological material borrowed from the base. (Botha, 1988) views that "reduplication constitutes one of the simpler, more natural means of word formation."

The holophrastic stage

This is the third stage in the system of linguistic development after the stage of cooing and babbling. The Holophrastic stage is also known as one word stage. The normal period of this stage is likely to happen between 8 or 9 months and 18 months after birth of a child. We can notices our 9-18 month babies start uttering single word of either one syllable with CV or VC pattern or di-syllabic word which has CVCV. Very simple open class words or stems are normally produced during the holophrastic stage.

Malayalam – A Dravidian Language

One of three major South Dravidian languages and a language in 22 scheduled languages of Indian Constitution is Malayalam. It has been officially used in the South Indian state Kerala, Mahe' and Lakshadweep, two union territories of India. Malayalam language has 15 vowels and 36 consonants, and a few other symbols. Reduplication is one of key word formation processes for child and adult speakers of Malayalam. Like other south Dravidian language, Malayalam is rich in full and partial reduplication for process of word formation and speakers of Malayalam of all. I will analyse reduplication process in the infant Malayalam with reference to data collected on the basis of diary entries.

Single Word Stage of Malayalam Speakers

We happen to see most of children from the age 12 months to 18 or 19 months old children begin to produce many fully reduplicated one word. Sometimes, children of two year old in Malayalam are capable of forming news words. Some of words such as ' *mama* ', *vava papa*, *dhadha*, *popo*, (go now) *oththu* (where?) etc. can be heard among the Malayalam acquiring children before they turn 3 years old. Most of children in this one word developmental stage of its language do not feel complexity to use them. They usually feel free to every known and strange listeners while former communicate with latter. A process of complete reduplication, when analyzed the aforesaid words, is seen here. You probably can't name a single child who has never spoken or understood words like *mama*, *papa*

Reduplication in the Holophrastic Stage – A Morpho-Phonological Process in Infant Malayalam

etc. . These words are somehow well comprehended and stored in the child's cognitive system of language.

O' Grady, Archibald, and Katamba(1997) considers In forming holophrastic utterances, children seem to choose the most informative word that applies to the situation at hand. A child who wanted a sweet, for example, would say *sweet* rather than *want* since sweet is more informative in this situation.

Total reduplication – A stratagem in Holophrastic stage

When certain constructed words in a language exhibit the process of doubling of the exact phonetic or phonological segments, we call it as the process as a total/full/complete reduplication. For example in Malayalam, '*vegam vegam*' (at once- at once) is formed through full reduplication; doubled word without leaving any segment Unlike speakers of European languages and English, adult or children of South Asian and Dravidian languages, as a key strategy of word formation, resort significantly to the process of full or partial reduplication. Two major factors such as continuity and emphasis force speakers of South Asian languages to heavily depend on the morphological process-reduplication.

Background for the study

This study is on a single 2 year old female child speaking Malayalam as First language. Study is conducted on the basis of diary entries which have been entered in the diary only after observing child when the participant is natural and free from compulsion. The participant is the first child of an X parent. The paper presented here is of a linguistic developmental strategy of a 2 year -old female child in the process of acquisition Malayalam as a First Language [MFL] particularly in its natural environment.

The environment is rustic, informal and the child lives among Mappilas who prioritize Arabic than their native language, Malayalam. The X parent started observing the child kept when she was 8 months old. Continuous and various observations on the child's speech whenever possible have been made till it turned 2. The X parent has started jotting down early and novel utterances produced by the child in its natural environment. These were then recorded in diary since child's holophrastic stage and written in narrow description. The entries are then verified only made after playback of recordings . The entries of then 2 years old child's utterances are systematically structured, verified and analysed.date bearing. Also the diary consists of private notes and reports on casual interaction between the child and parents or guardians or relatives. This child is now in the telegraphic stage. It is to taken into your account the study has focused only on novel and frequent holophrastic words consisting two syllables. The child is much interested in forming two syllable words which are new to the researcher and has direct link to complete or partial reduplication

Data selected here for analysis and interpretations is purely fatherly and primary one and is being recorded systematically with help of mobile and transcription entries in the diary. The inserted authentic and first hand data shown in the Table 1 and Table 2 provide a cue on child's formation of new words in the holophrastic stage. Words in holophrastic stage are normally CVCV. This is too evident as we start analyzing data mentioned in this paper.

However, differences may be found in the case of other child's two word or telegraphic stage or even in holophrastic stage learning Malayalam or other Dravidian languages. This study may not be as

accurate as expected as the data is very limited to the researcher. Further studies on reduplication in acquisition of Malayalam are encouraged to validate statements presented in this study.

Phonological patterns of reduplicated words

According to Ferguson (1983) reduplication may be considered as a universal phenomenon in a child language development or as a adopted strategy by some children and not others. Moravesik (1978) considers that a child has tendency for language to use reduplication pattern for the expression of meaning that has something to do with quantity. Let us consider the following words used by the child.

Table 1.

.Fully reduplicated di-syllabic word				
Gloss	Transcription	CV pattern	Novel or Not	Intended meaning
i. yoyo	/jəʊ.'jəʊ /	CVCV	novel	shower
i. nnnunu	/nʊ'nu: /	CVCV	novel	small brother
ii. meemee	/'mi:mi /	CVCV	non novel	fish
iv. dhadha	/ðɑ:'ðɑ:/	CVCV	non novel	father
v. tata	/ta:t'ɑ: /	CVCV	non novel	goodbye
vi. mama	/'mɑ:.ma:/	CVCV	non novel	mother
vii. vava	/'vɑ:.va:/	CVCV	non novel	newborn baby
viii. khokho	/'kɔkɔ/	CVCV	non novel	chicken
ix. thatha	/θɑ:'θɑ/	CVCV	non novel	elder sister

Two syllabic words shown in Table 1.1 from (i) to (ix) are of full reduplication process. The only syllable pattern in all cases of words is doubling of C(consonant)V(vowel). Thus we have words of CVCV pattern. In the language system of child, CV reduplication of CV is either a common strategy

Reduplication in the Holophrastic Stage –
A Morpho-Phonological Process in Infant Malayalam

of language acquisition or a common type of word formation. Words from 1.1 (i) to (ii) have CVCV pattern. You have noticed they are novel or new ones. The semantic aspects of these may differ from other children acquiring Malayalam language. It is difficult to answer why the 2 year old -child still uses those words in its the first language acquisition.

Reduplication is a limitless resource for individual creativity and central linguistic meaning making strategy. It has been observed the child has been very frequent to use reduplicated word not only in its familiar or known environment but unknown places like parks, cafes, etc. There has been challenging task to trace when exactly the observed child start fully reduplicating process for the first time as shown in Table 1.1(i) to (ix).

Partially reduplicated words in the one word stage

It is not always the case of full reduplicated words that the child in Holophrastic is interested in. The child loves to choose other informative words which are derived through partial reduplication. The given Table 2. shows certain words that the child uttered and still uses to communicate with the parents or its relationship. Following data offer the evidence of partial reduplication. The phonological pattern is nearly similar. Hence I argue they are partial.

Table 2.

Partially reduplicated forms				
Gloss	Transcription	CV pattern	Novel or Not	Intended meaning
i. vavu	/va:.'vʊ /	CVCV	non novel	injury
ii. apapa	/'a:pa:pa: /	VCVCV	non novel	Father's brother
iii. vavau	/'va:.'vau /	CVCV	non novel	asleep
iv. mamoo	/'ma:.'mu:/	CVCV	non novel	food
v. ippappa	/i'pʌpa:/	VCVCV	non novel	grandfather
vi. <i>peepichi</i>	/pipitʃi/	CVCVCV	novel	insects
vii. <i>njamnjam</i>	/ɲdʌmdʒə/	CCVCCV	novel	food

Data presented in the Table 2 has words which are reciprocally familiar and are sometimes key words in system of the child's mother tongue, Malayalam. When observed words from (i) to (v) in Table 1. 2, we can notice changes in the reduplicated words. Here repeated segments are not fully but partially duplicated. In the cases of 1.2 (ii) *apapa* which has VCVCV. Only CV (*pa*) is fixed to form the word *ipapa* which has two same vowels , and two same consonant /p/ each but one different vowel that is initial /i/ . The word is thus formed through process of partial reduplication as we have deletion of initial vowel /i/ in *ippappa*. We also see a change in the vowel sounds of words is seen as in the cases of 1.2. (i) *vavu*,(iii) *vavau* and (iv) *mamoo*. In the case of 1.2.(i) *vavu*, the consonant /v/ is repeated while vowels are not selected by the child to form the word which is a process of partial reduplication. Similarly, in 1.2 (iv) *mamoo* which has four segments; two same consonants i.e. /m/ and two different vowel i.e. /a/ and /u/. In (vi), we can notice the vowel /i/ is used thrice and the consonant /p/ are used twice with a final different /tʃ/ is used only once in order to get the word *peepiche*. Thus the process of partial reduplication is evident.

It is to be mentioned that no comparison between the child's language and language of adult is relevant here as the latter's language does not at all have the same referential function or connotations as the child does or intend to signify in its mother language. The parent is unsure about the child's reception of partially reduplicated holophrastic words as shown from (1) to (v) in the Table 2. This seemingly to verify Chomsky's claim that a child is born with a Language Acquisition Device (LAD)- an innate knowledge of nature that leads to the structure of human Language. Chomsky (1977, p 98) also states " all children share the same innateness, all children share the same internal constraints which characterize narrowly the grammar they are going to construct."

Conclusion

Reduplication and the holophrastic stage are well inter-connected in the system of child language. For the acquisition of First Language (L1) as we have seen in the case of Malayalam, the child in the holophrastic phase has remarkably reduplicated many monosyllabic words. Significantly the child in the holophrastic stage, has used more fully reduplicated words than partially reduplicated words. The observed child has also developed the capacity to form di syllabic words through the process of complete reduplication. Thus, this study is able to verify the claim that is the grammars for the human language are too complex and abstract to be learned. The CV patterns of fully or partially reduplicated words provide the evidence of phonological tenants.

References

1. A.Fromkin, V. (2000). *Linguistics An introduction to Linguistic Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
2. Akmajian, A., Richard, F. A., Ann, K., & Harish, R. M. (2011). *Linguistic, An Introduction to Language and Communication: Language Acquisition in Children*. New Delhi: PHI Learning Private Limited.
3. Asher, R. E., & Kumari, T. C. (1997). *Malayalam*. East Sussex: Psychology Press.
4. Botha, R. P. (1988). Form and Meaning in Word Formation: A Study of African Reduplication. *International Journal of African Studies*, 4-11.
5. Chomsky, N. (1975). *Reflection on Language*. New York: Random House.

Reduplication in the Holophrastic Stage –
A Morpho-Phonological Process in Infant Malayalam

6. Collin, B., & Mees, I. M. (2003). *Practical Phonetics and Phonology*. London: Routledge.
7. Davenport, M., & Hannahs, S. J. (2005). *Introducing Phonetics & Phonology*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc.
8. Moravesik, E. (1978). Universal of Human Language: Word structure. *International Journal of Greenberge Education*, 297-334.
9. Ferguson, C. A. (1983). Reduplication in Child's Phonology. *Journal of Child Language*, 239-243.
10. Gundert, H. (1868). *Keralopatti: The Origin of Malabar*. Manglore: Basel Mission Press.
11. Ilias, M. H. (2007). Mappila Muslims and the Cultural Content of Trading Arab Diaspora on the Malabar Coast. *Asian Journal Social Science*, 434-456.
12. Joseph, J. K. (2017). 'Mappila': Identity and semantic narrowing. *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science*, 13.
13. Katamba, F. (1993). *Morphology, Modern Linguistic Series*. London: Palgrave Macmillan Ltd.
14. O' Grady, W., Archibald, J., & Katamba, F. (1997). *Contemporary Linguistics: An introduction- First Language Acquisiton*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
15. Steever, S. B. (2020). *The Dravidian Languages*. Oxford: Routledge Language Family Series.