

## STRUCTURES AND FUNCTIONS OF REDUPLICATES IN ENGLISH AND EDUMỌGA DIALECT OF IDỌMA

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### ARTICLE INFO ABSTRACT

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Morphological reduplicates are a feature of most languages. As a word formation process, they enrich the word stock of languages and spice up conversations. Available empirical evidence has shown that the reduplicates of English and Idoma have been studied separately, though not from a comparative viewpoint. This study looked at reduplicates in English and Edumoga dialect of Idoma with the aim of identifying reduplicative forms and their grammatical classes, describing the structures of the identified reduplicates in the two languages, and explaining the functions of reduplicates in the languages. The data consists of reduplicates taken from English and Edumoga dialect. Samples of English reduplicates were obtained from English language text books and other secondary materials. The researcher used the participatory observation method to collect data from different speakers at age-group meetings, drinking joints, markets, public works, as well as in interpersonal conversations in the studied areas. The data were analysed and discussed using onomasiological theory of morphological processes. The results showed different structural patterns of reduplicates in the two languages, with those of Edumoga dialect showing more complex forms and pointed out that in terms of process of formation, structures and functions, reduplicates in the two languages are different from each other. It also revealed that though many of the reduplicates studied function as individual parts of speech, some reduplicates in Edumoga are sentences.

**Keywords:** Structure, function, English, Edumoga, reduplicates

## Introduction

Languages are known to be different from one another. The differences are often made manifest at the phonological, morphological, and syntactic levels of analysis. Although philological linguistics has hypothesised possible historical relationships between many of the world's languages and their "great-grand-fathers" (Yule, 1997), a close study of some languages, especially those outside Europe, suggests otherwise. Thus, the alphabetic system of, say Hausa, the use of the letters to produce sounds, the morphotactics of the language, and the system for combining words to form groups in it, is unlike any other; the language is characterised by its uniqueness which makes it different from other languages.

In the awareness of the variations between languages, early descriptive linguists, rather than seeing one language in terms of another placed emphasis on the study of the structures of individual languages. According to Yule (1997), the concern of descriptive linguistics is the description of regular structures of languages as they are used. The description of language structures has proved to be beneficial in many ways. Crystal (1985, p. 89) stresses that linguists will improve their understanding of phenomena only if they use descriptive framework "to compare two bits of language", so that it can be possible for them to state whether or not they show the same structural principles. It is in a comparative description of this kind that one language is seen as different from another. In other words, descriptive analysis of languages gives a language an identity so that it is seen as independent and standing alone from others.

Languages need to be studied and described under as many headings as possible for many obvious reasons. It is easier to preserve a well described language than those lacking in description. Another advantage of studying languages is the ease with which two or more languages can be understood as unique and different from one another. This is the preoccupation of contrastive analysis whereby similarities and differences between the languages are pointed out and used to predict easily learnable language topics in the classroom.

As Yule (1997) explained, English originated from the Germanic family of languages. He listed the languages as Angles, Saxon and Jutes and said they were spoken by a group of tribes from northern Europe who invaded and conquered the British Isles in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. According to him, the term "Anglo-Saxon" used in reference to the British was derived from the first two tribes. The word "Angles" later began to be pronounced as "Englisc" for the language and "Engle-Land" for their new home. Yule mentioned the Vikings, another northern tribe, as also contributing to the present form of English; they invaded the Island and settled down from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> century. The last group, as described by Yule, was the Norman French who fought and defeated Britain at the battle of Hastings. Thus, English was given its present form from the languages of the invaders. Presently, English is spoken as native language in much of Britain as well as in the United States of America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. There are also several other millions of speakers of English outside these places.

Okpe and Ochefu (2000) inform that Idoma language belongs to the Kwa sub-group of the larger Niger-Congo language family. It is spoken in Benue south of Nigeria and consists of Northern, Central, Western and Southern Idoma. The dialects areas, in their account, are Northern, which is made up of Agatu and Ochekwu; Central, made up of Adoka, Oglëwu, Onyagëdë, Otukpo and Ugboju; Western, made up of Edumoga, Ichama. Okpokwu(?), Otukpa and Owukpa; and Southern, made up of Agila, Igumale, Ijigbam and Ulayi (Okpeh & Ochefu, 2000). Okpeh and Ochefu mention other speakers of the language are those in dispersion, such as Afu, Alago. Akwëya, Etulo, Igede, Yatchë and Yalla. Edumoga is one of the homeland dialects. It is spoken by the people of Inglë, Okpailë, Ai-Onakpata, Ugbokolo, Ai-Abba and Ekeh clans.

As outlined above, there are merits in doing a comparative study of languages as the relevance of this cannot be over-emphasized in language teaching and learning. English and Idoma are not proximate languages. Nevertheless, the two languages are in a contact situation. Students from Idoma extraction study English as a second language at various levels of education. Thus, a study of this kind is needed to scale up their understanding of aspects of the two languages, as well as provoke more research on other Nigerian languages. It is against this background that this article studies reduplicates in English and Edumoga dialect of Idoma, with a view to identifying the reduplicates and their grammatical forms in the languages, and describing them in terms of their structural patterns and functions.

Word formation is a key aspect in language study. Although there are sufficient studies on English reduplicates, this is not the case with Idoma. Existing linguistic literature do not show any elaborate research on reduplicative processes in Idoma language. Based on the researchers' knowledge, only a few aspects of the morphology of standard Idoma language have been considered. It is against this background that this paper is doing a comparative study of the structures and functions of reduplication in English and Edumoga dialect of Idoma, with the specific objectives to:

- (i) identify reduplicative forms and their grammatical classes in English and Edumoga dialect of Idoma;
- (ii) describe the structures of the identified reduplicates in the two languages; and,
- (iii) explain the functions of reduplicates in English and Idoma languages.

### **Review of Related Literature**

Contrasting language structure and language function have been featuring in linguistics across the world. Martinet (1962) associates structure more with contemporary descriptive linguists and notes that the term points to a coherence of the components, especially the aloofness of the whole from all the rest. Language structures, according to Rutherford-Quach et al. (2015) are the forms or those things that hold language together, such as phonology, morphology, syntax and vocabulary. According to Martinet (1962), function means the uses to which languages are put (though he notes that this has little appeal in linguistics since its ideas implicate contacts with the world at large). He explains further that function supplies the linguist with a scale of values that will stubbornly resist any attempt on the part of the theorist to make facts submit to the requirements of a method. Hence, Rutherford-Quach et al (2015) explain function as the active use of language for a specific purpose such as expressing ideas, communicating with others, showing understanding of content in an academic or professional setting, and so forth. Structure and function, as used in this paper, pertain only to those of Edumoga dialect of Idoma.

Words of languages are derived from various morphological processes. In English, some of the processes for forming words are affixation, borrowing, blending, coinage, backformation, acronym, shortening, conversion, compounding and acronym. Not much is known about the process of forming words in Idoma. However, intonation and borrowing appear well-known in the language. Reduplication, another word formation process, is also a feature of most languages. Millwards and Hayes (2011) trace the origin of reduplicates to borrowing from some other languages, citing the Portuguese “dodo”, the Spanish “ququ”, and French “haha” as good instantiations. According to them, even English “mama”, and “papa” were borrowed from French in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. On the other hand, Cook (2010) locates the origin of reduplication to “babytalks”. Reduplicates, whatever their origin, appear to have identical structural outlooks.

Generally speaking, reduplications have two distinct forms separated by a hyphen in which there is a premise and a reduplicate. Quirk and Greenbaum (1973) describe reduplicates as

compounds consisting of two different elements. According to them, “they are compounds having two or more elements which are either identical or only slightly different”, noting also that the difference between the two elements may be in the initial consonant. Eyisi (2005, p. 127) conceives reduplication as “English words that are formed by repeating the base word or by repeating the first element of the base word with a different sound pattern, or the second element repeated with a different sound pattern”, as in *walkie-talkie*, or in the medial vowel such as *criss-cross*. Reduplication as used in this paper refers to those found in the English language and Edumoga dialect of Idoma.

The concept of dialect is as controversial as other linguistic terms. This controversy lies mainly in whether or not it forms a synonym with variety. To some, dialect is a debased form of a language. Burdiarsa (2015) defines it as non-standard use of a language or a variety of a particular language which is spoken by a group of speakers that is signalled by systematic markers such as syntactical, phonological and grammatical markers. In other perspectives, however, what is known as Standard language is as well a dialect, and so a term for all noticeable forms in a language (Montgomery, 1995).

Reduplicative forms as a morphological process, in particular, have been studied extensively in a number of Nigerian languages. For example, Mbah (2010) carried out a study on the activities of tone in noun reduplication in Igbo and observes that, when some nouns are reduplicated, some inherent tones of the noun change. She notes also that, of all the five tonal structures of nouns studied, four of them have tonal changes. He concludes that by promotion and demotion of Input-Output (IO) and Base Reduplicant (BR) constraints, a certain type of reduplication is achieved. Promotion of IO constraints yields partial tonal reduplication. On the other hand, if the BR constraints are promoted, full tonal reduplication is the outcome.

Maduagu (2012) investigated the morphological process of reduplication in Tiv language. Her work is based on data from Standard Tiv. The study was carried out within the framework of descriptive linguistics. Findings of the study revealed that reduplication in Tiv is a derivational morphological process restricted to nouns and adjectives. The study also showed that only complete reduplication occurs in the language.

Ejabee (2018), in a related study, examined the reduplication process in Urhobo and their implications. Urhobo belongs to the Edoid group of languages in Nigeria. The data was partly sourced from six native speakers of the standard Agbarho dialect, and from other secondary sources. The study found out that the formation of adjectives and adverbs in the language are mainly through reduplication.

The above reviews show similarities between previous studies and the current paper in some ways. For instance, they adopted qualitative methods to analyse their data. Moreover, both research articles are studies on reduplicates. Notwithstanding these similarities, there are differences between the two articles. The review has revealed very scanty studies on reduplicates in Nigerian languages. In addition to this, none of the previous studies did a comparison between English and Edumoga reduplicates. These differences have created knowledge gaps that need to be bridged, thereby providing a good justification for this study.

### **Onomasiological Theory of Word Formation**

An influential morphological theory today is Onomasiology. The pioneering work on this theory is that of Stekauer (1999). Since then, Stekauer et al. (2005) have broadened the theory to cover other issues. The theory is guided by nine principles, one of which is word formation as an independent component of language. This means that word formation is a separate linguistic unit, and so independent of other levels like syntax.

According to Stekauer (1999), onomasiology is a speech community-oriented theory. This principle emphasizes the role of the speech community, focusing on how words are used and the motivation behind naming a concept. The speech community is believed to be able to respond to its own naming needs. Thus, if the speakers of a language coin new words, they are only doing so because they have a need for it; and they have the sole prerogative for doing so. After all, language, in Saussurian linguistics, is thought to belong to a group or community of speakers.

Stekauer (1999 & 2005b) states in the theory that word formation rules are productive and regular. This principle allows for the creation of new words. He recognizes the creative role of the individual speaker as a coiner of new complex words in the process in response to the naming needs of a speech community. Kortvelyessy (2010) hinges creativity on both psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic factors. Since the speakers own the language, they know what words they need in the language from time to time, and determine how they want to use them.

The goal of the onomasiological approach, according to Stekauer (1999), is to do away with the traditional word-formation processes. It favours a meaning-first approach to word formation. Hence, it dismisses traditional word formation processes like suffixation or compounding as the primary basis for classification and argues that a strictly language-internal approach does not provide objective and adequate accounts for the formation of new complex words. Any naming unit so created through word formation has the sign nature. Thus, the unit represents a specific concept as understood in Saussurian linguistics.

In the theory, Stekauer (1999) suggests that the process of naming involves concept-to-form directionality. It moves from the cognitive or conceptual level (the idea to be named) to the formal linguistic level (the actual phonetic production of the new word). The movement is not only directional but also hierarchical in structure, following a specific, ordered set of levels such as conceptual, semantic, onomasiological, onomatological, and psychological levels.

Word formation in onomasiology is seen as lexicon-based. Therefore, it focuses on the meaning and use of existing words as the foundation for new ones and pays no attention to their structure in sentences. It is also guided by the principle of word-formation base, the idea that there are existing lexical items from which new words are derived.

The above theory is very relevant to the data that we shall be analyzing in our study. Therefore, in this article, we shall identify some reduplicates in English and in Edumoga dialect of Idoma, and use onomasiological theory to account for any variations in their structures, as well as explain their functions.

### **Methodology**

This is a qualitative study needing no inferential statistics for analysis. The data consists of reduplicates taken from English and Edumoga dialect. Samples of English reduplicates were obtained from English language text books and other secondary materials. However, to collect data on Edumoga reduplicates, the researcher used participatory observation method to listen to different speakers of Edumoga dialect in Ingle, Okpailē, Ai-Onakpata, Ai-Abbah, Ugbokolo and Ekeh of Edumoga district in Okpoku Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria. The reason for choosing this dialect is not far-fetched. The dialect area is not only one of the most populous in Idoma land, but also in the most central location and shares extensive land boundaries with other dialect areas. Secondly, the dialect is renowned for its informal varieties that have been a rich source of humour, and frequently used to confuse other speakers of Idoma. The researcher used participatory observation method and listened to different speakers at age-

group meetings, drinking joints, markets, public works, as well as during interpersonal exchanges like conversations, quarrels, arguments and so on, cutting across the areas. In the process, different data regarding production of reduplicates in the dialect were elicited, observed, written down and transcribed for analysis.

### **Presentation of Data and Analysis**

The results obtained from the study are presented below. The presentation is in accordance with the stated objectives of the research.

### **Examples of Reduplication in English**

Our search for data on English reduplicates led to the identification of 42 instances in the language; they are listed as follows:

#### **Reduplicate**

ziz-zag  
wishy-washy  
Willy-nilly  
wig-wag  
voo-doo  
tittle-tattle  
shilly-shally  
roly-poly  
pell-mell  
niminy-piminy  
pall-mall  
namby-pamby  
mumbo-jumbo  
mish-mash  
itty-bitty  
hurly-burly  
tick-tock  
ping-pong  
fiddle-faddle  
hocus-pocus  
riff-raff  
crisscross  
dilly-dally  
ding-dong  
flim-flam  
sing-song  
boogie-woogie  
hanky-panky  
easy-peasy  
super-duper  
bye-bye  
pooh-pooh  
boo-boo  
hush-hush  
itsy-bitsy

#### **Meaning**

a letter-like pattern that bends to the right and left  
being weak in courage  
randomly  
an act of sending a signal by waving a flag  
followers of a religion  
informal conversation  
indecision  
short and plump  
recklessly  
refined  
a game of the 17<sup>th</sup> century  
being weak in courage  
nonsense  
randomly  
very small  
disorderly outburst  
sound of a clock  
a game  
nonsense  
a magic trick  
unruly people  
a pattern  
time wasting  
sound of a bell  
a trick  
a monotonous speech  
a dance  
bad behaviour  
simple  
excellent  
farewell  
incorrect idea  
minor injury  
a quiet sound  
very small

gewgaw  
 harum-scarum  
 higgledy-piggledy  
 hocus-pocus  
 hodge-podge  
 hotch-potch  
 hubble-bubble

cheap jewelry  
 cheerfully irresponsible  
 disorderly  
 verbal misrepresentation  
 disorderly mix of things  
 disorderly mix of things  
 an oriental tobacco pipe

### Examples of Reduplication in Edumoga Dialect of Idoma

The following 39 reduplicates in Edumoga dialect of Idoma were identified from the conversational exchanges of the speakers of the language; they are listed below.

#### Reduplicate

otu-ta  
 ichi-cha  
 ēnyēē-nya  
 alakpa-lakpa  
 oli-la  
 ēmēē-ma  
 fia-fia  
 ọbọwu-ọbọwu  
 gboo-gboo  
 onewu-newu  
 ologo-logo  
 nyēnkē-nyēnkē  
 mēēlē-mēēlē  
 ọhi-ọhi  
 bọ-bi  
 agene-gene  
 odengu-dengu  
 olugu-laga  
 ticho-tajē  
 tamu-taanu  
 iwē-wē  
 ochalamu-chalaanu  
 kpa-kpa  
 ọfu-ọfu  
 biọbi-biọbi  
 ọla-ọla  
 ọlọlọ-la  
 weele-weele  
 wune-wune  
 tọ-tọ-tọ  
 wọkọ-wọkọ  
 tọkọ-tọkọ  
 yama-yama  
 oko-ko

#### English Meaning

talisman, alligator pepper  
 relic, grass, mushroom  
 hurriedly  
 worthless, stupid  
 a lunatic, a foolish person  
 carefully, slowly  
 very quickly  
 exclamation of impossibility  
 continuously  
 exclamation of seriousness  
 exclamation of grievousness  
 smallish, insignificant  
 perfect completion  
 very well  
 bad  
 summit, topmost  
 exclamation of mockery  
 exclamation of mockery  
 up and down, helter/skelter  
 neither here nor there  
 worthless  
 animal part  
 truth, straight course  
 firmly, powerfully  
 grievously  
 exclamation of mockery  
 instantly  
 slim-looking  
 very big  
 inarticulate, naive  
 unsteady  
 naïve, sluggish  
 doing something anyhow  
 name of a person

<b>mlē-mlē</b>	very thoroughly
<b>mlē-mlē</b> (rise-fall in tone)	slippery
<b>manka-manka</b>	hyperactive
<b>ēmē-ma</b>	carefully, slowly
<b>alaba-laba</b>	devilish nocturnal lightening creature

The onomasiological approach sees the reduplicates identified above in the languages as linguistic signs representing specific concepts. As a lexicon-based theory, they are also meaningful and functional (Stekauer, 1999). The forms from the two languages exemplify morphological creativity at work, which is explained by Stekauer as the ability of a language to fully respond to naming needs of a speech community. The speech community in the present case includes the speakers of the languages in the data. By choosing to use the forms, the speakers of the languages are simply filling various word vacuums in the respective context. Kortvelyessy (2017) calls the forms “Cluster of Word-Formation Types” which were coined and imbued with meaning by the language speakers using both sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic factors.

### Discussion of Findings

#### Grammatical Classes of English and Edumoga Reduplicates

The second objective of the study is to classify English and Edumoga reduplicates according to their grammatical classes, as well as describe their structural constituents. Findings of the study indicate that reduplicates of English belong to four different parts of speech. Of the 42 forms in the data, 28 of them are noun reduplicates, such as *tittle-tattle*, *voodoo*, *hurly-burly*, and so on. In the data, there are nine (9) adjectival reduplicates like *harum-scarum*, *higgledy-piggledy*, *super-duper*, and so forth. Adverb has only 3 reduplicates in the data-- *willy-nilly*, *mish-mash*, *pell-mell*. There are only 2 verbal reduplicates—*dilly-dally*, *wig-wag*— found in the data. With the exception of the English *bye-bye*, there is no sentential reduplicate in the data.

In Edumoga dialect, noun reduplicates include *otu-ta*, *ichi-cha*, *oli-la*, *mēlē-mēlē*, *tamu-taanu*, *ochalamu-chalaanu*, *kpa-kpa*, *oko-ko*, *alaba-laba*, *agene-gene*. For verb, there is only *yama-yama*. Adjectival reduplicates in the dialect are *alakpa-lakpa*, *oli-la*, *nyēnkē-nyēnkē*, *agene-gene*, *iwē-wē*, *weele-weele*, *wune-wune*, *tōkō-tōkō*, *mlē-mlē*, *manka-manka*, *bō-bi*. The adverbial reduplicates found in the study are *ēnyē-nya*, *ēmē-ma*, *fia-fia*, *gboo-gboo*, *ticho-tajē*, *lofu-lofu*, *lohi-lohi*, *biōbi-biōbi*, *oḷoḷ-la*, *tōḷ-tōḷ*, *wōkō-wōkō*, *mlē-mlē*, *ēmē-ma*. Finally, sentential reduplicates include *oḅowu-oḅowu*, *onewu-newu*, *ologo-logo*, *odengu-dengu*, *olugu-laga*, *oḷa-oḷa*. These exclamations are used for ridiculing a serious situation.

#### Structural Patterns of Reduplicates in English and Edumoga Dialect

Our description of the structural patterns of reduplicates in English and Edumoga dialect is based on onomasiological principle of productivity and regularity (Stekauer, 1999). The data gathered on English reduplicates revealed four structural patterns for describing reduplicates in English. In one of the patterns, the premise and the reduplicated forms have the same number of syllables, though they have different initial consonant letters in them. Reduplicates exhibiting this pattern are the most widespread in English as seen in words like *willy-nilly*, *voodoo*, *roly-poly*, *niminy-piminy*, *namby-pamby*, *mumbo-jumbo*, *hurly-burly*, *hocus-pocus*, *boogie-woogie*, *hanky-panky* and so on. In all of these, the only difference between the premise word and the reduplicate is the variation in their consonant letters.

In another type of English reduplication, the premise form and the reduplicate show different vowel sounds in their first syllables. Some words in this pattern include *zig-zag*, *wishy-*

*washy, tittle-tattle, shilly-shally, mish-mash, tick-tock, ping-pong, fiddle-faddle, riff-raff, criss-cross, dilly-dally, sing-song*, and so on. In the second pattern, the vowels in the two forms are not the same.

There are other reduplications in English that are not as widespread as the first two above. In one of them, the premise word and the reduplicate are the same. Words exemplifying this pattern are *bye-bye, pooh-pooh, boo-boo, and hush-hush*.

English also consists of reduplicates where a similar form of the premise is repeated in the reduplicate after an initial consonant sound. Words showing this pattern include *itty-bitty, easy-peasy, itsy-bitsy*, and others. In this case, the difference in pronunciation between the two is the initial consonant sound in the reduplicate form.

Four structural types of reduplicates are noticeable in Edumoga dialect from the above data. The reduplicates in the first structural pattern are perhaps the simplest forms; they are those in which the base words and the reduplicated forms are the same. In other words, the letters making up the two parts are spelt and pronounced the same. Thus, in Edumoga adverbial *fia-fia*, there is no difference at all between the two, just like in the exclamation *obowu-obowu*.

In Edumoga, there are some reduplicate forms in which the initial vowel sound in the premise word is omitted in the reduplicated form. Once the first letter is dropped from the first word, it automatically assumes the same form with the reduplicated form. This is clear in examples such as *onewu-newu, ologo-logo, agene-gene* and *odengu-dengu, alaba-laba*; this is the commonest form of reduplication in the dialect.

However, some reduplicates in Edumoga dialect have more complex structural patterns and are more difficult to describe than the first two forms presented above. The difference between the two forms is mainly vocalic. All the vowels in the initial form either change to other vowel sounds or disappear completely in the reduplicated form. Examples are *olugu-laga, oticho-tajè and so forth*. There are also a few consonantal differences between the two forms.

There are other reduplicates in the dialect with forms in which the first syllables of the two forms are the same, with phonological elongation in the realization of the second form. However, the reduplicated forms still adopt many features of the base word. Cases of such are *tamu-taanu* and *chalamu-chalaanu*. Another difference is that of consonantal contrast between the first and the second forms. For example, the consonant sound /m/ in the premise word changes to /n/ in the reduplicated form in the two examples above. These are the most noticeable reduplicates in the dialect.

As demonstrated above, the only point of similarity between reduplications in the two languages is the case where the premise word and the reduplicate forms are the same, as in English *hush-hush* and Idoma *fia-fia*. In other aspects, however, the two are mutually exclusive of each other. For instance, English reduplicates appear to have less complex structures than those of Edumoga. Moreover, some reduplicates in the dialect are notoriously elongated as seen in *tamu-taanu*; this feature is absent in English. We have shown in our discussion here that under each structural pattern, there are different reduplicates. This is because, in onomasiological principles, the rules for forming new words are supposed to be productive and regular (Stekauer, 1999). These variations demonstrate that the morphotactic of languages are not only different from one another but are also adapted to suit the peculiar needs of languages.

### **Functions of Reduplication in English and Edumoga Dialect**

Word formation in onomasiological theory is community-oriented in nature (Stekauer, 1999). Hence, the reduplicates noticed in the languages were created and assigned values by their speech communities. Thus, coining a new complex word is only permitted to the extent that it

will satisfy the language need of the speakers. Reduplication exists in languages as a response to genuine linguistic demands; hence they are used in a wide range of ways in conversations. The reduplicates of English and Edumoga identified belong to a particular part of speech like nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs, and perform some syntactic functions in the two languages. As such, they can function in sentences as subject of verbs, object of transitive verbs, object of prepositions, adjuncts and complements. For instance, to state that something is “itsy-bitsy” is using the adjectival reduplicate to function as subject complement, as in *The prize she received was an itsy-bitsy compared to her sacrifice*.

As characteristic of English reduplicates, there are morphological reduplicates in Idoma that are used as qualifiers in Edumoga dialect. Being qualifiers, they describe nouns. A common form is *tamu-taanu*, meaning, *neither here nor there*. If something is regarded as “tamu-taanu”, it is said to be midway or neither here nor there. This is also a case of adjectival reduplicate functioning as a subject complement. The reduplicate is also used to talk about quality. Of fabrics, for example, it means neither superior nor inferior, or neither of low nor high quality. Another good example is *lohi-lohi*, where the base means *beautiful* and the reduplicated form only intensifies the description. Moreover, the forms *mêlê-mêlê* and *ochalamu-chalaanu* can only be used as nouns; as such, they are names. Thus, a successful accomplishment in this particular dialect is also the *omêlê-mêlê* or the consummation of that thing. In the dialect, this particular form can be used in the nominative and also as a subject complement.

Other reduplicates of Idoma are adverbs and used as adverbs among Edumoga speakers. As modifiers, they describe the manner of actions. The ones that quickly come to mind are *fia-fia*, *gbo-gbo* and *ticho-tajê*. *Fia-fia*, which is the equivalent of “quickly”, an adverb of manner, *gbo-gbo*, meaning “continuously”, is used for frequency. On the other hand, *ticho-tajê* is the exact form of “helter-skelter” in English; hence they both serve as adverbs working to modify verbs.

However, a key finding about Edumoga reduplicates is their exclamatory function. As exclamations, some of them are sentences for expressing deep emotions such as surprise, awesomeness, fear, helplessness, ridicule, and so on. Someone declining an offer of help to another might politely say *olo-olo* and keep quiet instead of *I can't do it*, which will be more hurting. Among speakers of Edumoga dialect, the exclamatory reduplicate *ologo-logo*, being a sentence, is widespread in conversations and usually uttered in reaction to a piece of information that is somehow scary or dreary. Using this is often a call or an appeal to imagine the magnitude of a situation. In English, an example of exclamatory reduplicate is the “bye-bye” for bidding someone farewell. There are other reduplicates that are uttered as exclamations, but often serve other social intentions. For instance, some forms in the dialect are used simply to taunt. This is prevalent during community meetings where speakers make use of them to win others over in debates. Thus, forms like *odengu-dengu*, *onewu-newu*, and *olugu-laga* are normally interjected before the real argument. Whenever this strategy is employed to present an argument, it is intended to ridicule an already desperate situation. The objective is, more often than not, to add to the pain in order for those concerned to understand the situation. In Edumoga dialect, some reduplicates are for expressing awesomeness and the helplessness associated with it. Sometimes, an awesome situation causes one to lack words to describe it. In this case, it is common to hear forms like *obowu-obowu* and *olo-olo*. This is when there is a feeling that a problem is so enormous that little or nothing can be done to it. A speaker may react to a request for financial assistance from another by exclaiming *olo-olo* or *obowu-obowu*. The asker hearing this would

understand immediately that his request is unlikely to be granted, even if the person does not tell him *I'm totally helpless!*

The findings above have established, as noted by Stekauer (1999), that language manifests its creative capacity through its users.

### **Conclusion**

The study has looked at reduplicates in English and Edumoga dialect of Idoma with the objectives of identifying the reduplicative forms and their grammatical classes, describing the structures of the identified reduplicates in the two languages, and explaining their functions. The data consists of reduplicates taken from English and Edumoga dialect. Samples of English reduplicates were obtained from English language text books and other secondary materials. The researcher used participatory observation method and listened to different speakers at age-group meetings, drinking joints, markets, public works, as well as during interpersonal exchanges like conversations, quarrels, arguments, and so on to generate data for Edumoga dialect. The data were analysed and discussed using onomasiological theory of morphological processes.

Findings from the study on English and Edumoga dialect showed that though the two languages are characterised by reduplicates, the reduplicated forms are, by no means the same in terms of process of formation, structures and functions. These differences are accounted for in onomasiological theory of word formation which stresses that individuals and languages have their ways of creating words that are independent of the regular morphological processes, depending on the language needs of a community. It is also pointed out in the theory that new words could be coined through the creativity of individual speakers and from the productivity of language (Stekauer et al., 2005b). Thus, if a language runs short of an appropriate word, it will always look for a way to close the gap. Therefore, some of the reduplicates in our data may have been created by individual speakers and later adopted by the language community, while others might have arisen from the productive character of language in response to its own needs.

### **Suggestions for Further Studies**

The reduplicates studied in this article are those of Edumoga dialect of Idoma. Interested researchers may wish to study reduplicates of other dialects of the language. Further studies are also suggested on word formation processes generally in Idoma.

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