

One Form – Opposite Meanings? Diminutive and Augmentative Interpretation of Full Reduplication in Bikol

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Productive full reduplication in Bikol, a Central Philippine language, can have plural and intensive meaning on the one hand, and diminutive and imitative meaning on the other hand.

balík 'come and go' - *balík-balík* 'to come and go repeatedly'

haróng 'house' - *haróng-hárong* 'temporary shelter'

líkad 'recover' - *likád-likád* 'recover a little bit'

lubák 'hole' - *lubák-lubák* 'full of holes'

sibót 'busy' - *sibót-síbot* 'very busy'

The phenomenon of syncretism in inflectional paradigms is fairly widespread and has been investigated in several studies. But the noteworthiness in the case of Bikol full reduplication is, that we are not dealing with a certain phonological form fulfilling several functions, but with one single, highly iconic, morphological (derivational) operation which produces various meanings.

There exist full reduplications with raising-raising stress pattern (e.g. *kiwág-kiwág* 'shake a little'), and with raising-falling stress pattern (e.g. *rabá'-rába'* 'a little bit destroyed'). There is data of similar reduplication types in some other Malayo-Polynesian languages, which suggest that the two stress patterns discriminate the opposite meanings. Based on my fieldwork in the region of Legaspi and Pilar (Legaspi-dialect of Bikol) and on analysis of the entries in Mintz and Del Rosario Britanico's dictionary (1985), I, however, assume that prosody does not, at least synchronically, differentiate between the two opposite interpretations in Bikol. Both stress patterns are documented with all meanings.

Consulting my extensive set of data, I am looking for criteria which disambiguate the two opposite meanings.

- Are there any formal criteria of base and reduplicant which systematically correspond to the respective meaning?
- Are there any lexical or semantic criteria which allow an unambiguous interpretation? I.e. does the meaning of the reduplicated word depend on the lexical category and/or the semantic properties of the base?

Even after having found out some useful strategies for disambiguation, there are still several examples in my data which actually allow both interpretations (e.g. *lúgad* 'wound' - *lugád-lugád* 'a small wound' or 'a lot of wounds', *la'óg* 'inside' - *la'óg-la'óg* 'entirely inside' or 'a little bit inside (i.e. almost outside)'). In this case, disambiguation is only possible via the context and the question arises, how this coincidence of diametrically opposed

interpretations in one form can be explained in a semantically/cognitively plausible way.