

# The origin of predicate reduplication in Suriname Eastern Maroon Creole

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## Introduction

The structure and functions of reduplication in Creoles have received a fair amount of attention in discussions about Creole grammar. The origin of reduplication in Creoles has, however, received relatively little attention in this literature for several reasons: first, it has been widely and relatively uncritically accepted that reduplication in Creoles emerged due to substrate influence. Second, until recently little was known about the different processes of reduplication. Third, data from the relevant substrate languages was not easily available.

The present study<sup>1</sup> attempts to determine the origin of two types of predicate reduplication which I will refer to as approximative (1) and stative reduplication (2) in the Suriname Eastern Maroon Creole (EM).<sup>2</sup> It focuses on describing and comparing their structure and functions in EM and its primary substrate, the Gbe group of languages (Arends, 1995; Migge, 1998) to determine the impact of the substrate on the emergence of these two types of reduplication in EM.<sup>3</sup>

- (1) A *atuku ya lepi-lepi*  
DET soursop here ripe-ripe<sup>4</sup> 'This soursop is not quite ripe yet'
- (2) A *muntolo ya de booko-booko*  
DET motor here COP break-break 'This out-board motor is (still) in a broken state'

I follow Huttar & Huttar (1997:395) in assuming that reduplication in the strict sense of the word involves "the repeating of all or part of a word (more than a single segment), the result still being a phonological word, with its pitch and stress pattern". This definition excludes from consideration emphatic doubling of adjectival and adverbial modifiers to express intensification, since my observation suggests that they involve iteration rather than reduplication as defined above. Iteration is "the repeating of a word, each word having its independent phonological (and semantic) qualities" (ibid, 395f). Huttar & Huttar consider an example such as (3), which involves doubling of an adjectival modifier, to be a reduplication. However, each occurrence of *lebi* here is separately emphasized, in contrast with the approximative reduplication in (4). The doubling in (3) thus displays the properties of iteration rather than reduplication:

- (3) A *gi mi wan lebi lebi buuku*  
3s give 1s a red red trousers 'She gave me a red pair of trousers'
- (4) A *gi mi wan lebi-lebi buuku*  
3s give 1s a red-red trousers 'She gave me a reddish pair of trousers'

1 Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the 5th annual workshop in comparative linguistics, language contact, language change (Columbus, Ohio, November 1995) and at the 4th Westminster workshop on Creole languages (London, April 1999). I would like to thank S Kouwenberg, M Kramer, D Winford for helpful comments and criticisms on various aspects of this paper. Special thanks go to my informants J-P Agbogba, A Atchade, U Deel, D Gagnon, S B Sana, T Sodji, C Velanti, F Velanti, who helped me obtain and/or provided the data on which this paper is based. Any errors and omissions are, of course, the responsibility of the author.

2 The term Eastern Maroon Creole was chosen as a neutral label instead of the more common term Ndyuka, since the latter is typically used among native speakers of these varieties to refer to the Okanisi people and their language variety. Members of the Paamaka and particularly the Aluku-Boni community do not always appreciate being referred to by this name (Bilby, 1999).

3 If not otherwise indicated, all the examples in the text were collected by the author herself. The EM and Gbe data for the analysis come from recordings and observations of natural conversations carried out in the native villages of the informants, and from formal elicitations with native speakers including native speakers of Saramaccan (SM) and Sranan Tongo (SR). Gbe languages for which data were collected are Aja (A), Fon (F), Gen (G), Maxi (M), Waci (W), Xwela (X). For a detailed discussion of the origin of the EM and Gbe data see Migge (1998). Where no language information is provided, examples represent EM.

4 Where both an active or processual and a stative interpretation are available for verbs, the gloss provides the stative interpretation.

In (1), the reduplicated verb has an approximative semantics. It refers to only part of the quality referred to by the unreduplicated item (*lepi* '(to be) ripe') (Huttar & Huttar, 1997:403). In (2), the reduplicated verb has a stative semantics. It expresses that the subject exists in a state whose quality is referred to by the unreduplicated element. Both processes of reduplication have typically been treated together in previous studies (Huttar & Huttar, 1997; Winford, 1997) suggesting that they or their outcomes are related. This study argues that these two processes of reduplication are clearly distinct: they yield words which have the same phonological structure but whose syntactic and semantic properties are clearly different. They also do not have the same origin: I will argue (§4) that stative reduplication in EM was modeled on a similar process found in all varieties of Gbe, while approximative reduplication in EM seems to have emerged as the result of the reinterpretation of one of the strategies for marking progressive aspect retained from Gbe.

## 1 Stative reduplication in EM and Gbe

### 1.1 The derivation of stative reduplicated items

In both the Suriname Creoles and the Gbe group of languages, stative reduplicated items are derived via a productive process of reduplication from verbs referring to an activity which results in a visible or ascertainable state (5, 6), or verbs which refer to concepts of human propensity<sup>5</sup> (7, 8).<sup>6</sup> Typical activity denoting verbs such as 'go' (*go* in EM, *yi* (A, G, M, W) or *sm* (X) in Gbe) cannot function as inputs to the process of stative reduplication (cf Alleyne, 1987:84; Bakker, 1987:25; Huttar & Huttar, 1997:404-09).

- (5) *booko* / *booko-booko* 'to break / (in a) broken (state)  
*baala* / *baala-baala* 'to broaden / (in a) broad (state)
- (6) *to* / *to-to* 'to make muscular / (in a) muscular (state)' (Gbe, W)  
*gba* / *gbi-gba* 'to break / (in a) broken (state)' (Gbe, M)
- (7) *giili* / *giili-giili* 'to make greedy / (in a) greedy (state)  
*takuu* / *takuu-takuu* 'to make evil/ugly / (in a) evil/ugly (state)
- (8) *nyra* / *nyra-nyra* 'to make evil/ugly / (in a) ugly/evil (state)' (Gbe, W)

In all the Suriname Creoles and in some Gbe varieties (A,G,W) the verbs are fully reduplicated. In other Gbe varieties (M,F,X) only the first consonant is reduplicated and an epenthetic vowel is inserted between the base and the reduplicated element (e.g. *gbi-gba*).<sup>7</sup> In Aja and Xwela and much less regularly in the other varieties of Gbe, the reduplicant may also carry the suffix *di/de* (9). Capo (1984) suggests that it is used to distinguish stative reduplicated items from those in progressive aspect (10):

- (9) *Ame b le klɔ-klɔ-e*  
 person DET COP big-big-ADJ 'The person is (in a) big (state)' (Gbe, A)
- (10) *Ame b le klɔ-klɔ kɔ*  
 person DET COP big-big PRT 'The person is getting fat' (Gbe, A)

### 1.2 The semantics of stative reduplicated items

Semantically, stative reduplicated items are used to describe the properties of the state of their referent. They may describe visible or ascertainable states such as physical or mental states caused by an intervention. According to my EM and Gbe informants, they do not, however, necessitate human intervention as previously suggested by Litvinov & Agbodjo (1988) for the Gbe variety Ewe. In this respect stative reduplicated items differ from their unreduplicated counterparts, in

<sup>5</sup> A number of property items referring to concepts of human propensity in Gbe are expressed by nominal expressions rather than by verbs: *e di fonli* [3s resemble laziness] 'He is lazy' (Maxi).

<sup>6</sup> In Gbe only monosyllabic/unreduplicated verbs are reduplicated (Litvinov & Agbodjo, 1988). The overwhelming majority of verbs in Gbe are, however, monosyllabic.

<sup>7</sup> [i] is the epenthetic vowel if the base vowel is an unround vowel and [u] is the epenthetic vowel if the base vowel is a round vowel. In Maxi, [u] is also used as an epenthetic vowel if the consonant of the reduplicant is labial and the vowel of the base is not [i]. For further information see Capo (1990).

that the latter may also attribute to their referent properties which did not come about through some active intervention, such as inherent states. Reduplicated items may be used to describe two types of states of their referents: resultative states and unusual states – unusual given the speaker's real world knowledge about the referent.

### 1.2.1 Resultative states

Reduplicated items which may express resultative states are typically derived from verbs whose activity results in a visible state:<sup>8</sup>

- (11) *A pasi be de meki-meki di a kon ya*  
 DET path PAST COP make-make when 3s come here  
 'The path was already in existence when he came (to work) here'
- (12) *A uwii fu mi de lusu-lusu kaba*  
 DET hair POSS 1s COP loose-loose finish  
 'My hair is already (in an) unbraided (state)'
- (13) *Axwe lo le kplɔ-kplɔ*  
 house DET COP sweep-sweep  
 'The house is (in a) swept (state) (someone swept it)' (Gbe, A)
- (14) *Agu lo de si-só*  
 yam DET COP pound-pound  
 'The yam is in a pounded state' (Gbe, X)

### 1.2.2 Unusual states

Reduplicated items which are used to describe unusual states in the Suriname languages and Gbe are derived from both change of state verbs and property items. The term "property item" refers to properties, qualities or characteristics of entities (Thompson, 1988:167). It is meant to be a neutral term, unlike categorical labels such as adjective, verb, etc which specify the syntactic categories into which such items may fall in different languages.

My data suggest that stative reduplicated items are used to describe the following kinds of unusual states: first, in all the Suriname Creoles and in all the Gbe varieties they may describe a state which continues contrary to the speaker's expectation. In this context the predicate – consisting of the copula and the reduplicated property item – is often accompanied by an adverb meaning 'still', which reinforces the interpretation that the state referred to has been persisting:

- (15) *A de / tan dee-dee ete*  
 3s COP/stay dry-dry still  
 [It is raining badly and a sheet was left lying under a dilapidated roof. When a child fetches it and hands it to her aunt, the latter announces:] 'It is still (in a) dry (state) (although it should be wet in this weather)'
- (16) *Awu ɔ do xu-xu*  
 cloth DET COP dry-dry 'The piece of clothing is still (in a) dry (state)' [same context as (15)] (Gbe, M)

Second, in all the Suriname Creoles but SR and in Gbe, stative reduplicated items may be used to refer to an unusual state which has acquired a certain degree of permanence or normality from the speaker's point of view. In the Gbe varieties such constructions are often accompanied by the adverb *tegbɛɛ* 'always':

- (17) *A dda ya de mangi-mangi*  
 DET father here COP thin-thin  
 [Some relative has been gone for some years. On her return she points out to someone in the family that the uncle has gotten thin. The addressee, knowing that he hasn't changed for a long time, says:]  
 'This elder has been (in a) thin (state) for a long time (he hasn't had a regular figure in ages)'

<sup>8</sup> In Gbe, activity or change of state verbs can often not be used passively since an inanimate patient argument occurring in subject position would be interpreted as an actor rather than as a patient. Thus, \**Agu lo so* [yam DET pound] (intended meaning: 'The yam is/has been pounded'). In the Suriname Maroon Creoles, such constructions are (more) acceptable but seem to be dispreferred. Thus, ??*A pasi meki* [DET path make] 'The path is/has been made'. In both the Maroon Creoles and Gbe, semantically equivalent transitive constructions are used, or the resultative constructions in (11-14) (Alleyn, 1987; Litvinov & Agbodjo, 1988).



- (25) a. \**Na fatu-fatu a dagu ya de fatu-fatu* b. *Na fatu a dagu fatu*  
 FOC fat-fat DET dog here COP fat-fat FOC fat DET dog fat  
 a. [intended meaning:] 'This dog is (in an) fat (state)' / b. 'The dog IS fat/HAS BECOME fat'<sup>10</sup>
- (26) a. \**Blɔ-blɔ ye nyɔnu vi a lə blɔ-blɔ* b. *Blɔ ye nyɔnu vi a lə blɔ*  
 thin-thin FOC woman small DET COP thin-thin thin FOC woman small DET COP thin  
 a. [intended meaning:] 'The girl is (in a) thin (state)' (W) / b. 'The girl IS THIN/HAS GOTTEN THIN'

Stative reduplicated property items may also function as postposed modifiers of NPs functioning as object arguments to verbs such as 'find' (27), 'see' (28) etc (Alleyne, 1987:84; Bakker, 1987:30f; Huttar & Huttar, 1997:405f; Migge, *in press*). In this function they describe the state in which the object of the verb exists.

- (27) *Di mi kon doo mi feni en libi-libi*  
 when 1s come arrive 1s find 3s.poss alive-alive 'When I got there, I found her (in an) alive (state)'
- (28) *E mɔ mɔɔ lɔ gbi-gba*  
 3s see car DET break-break 'He found the car (in a) broken down (state)' (Gbe, X)

Finally, stative reduplicated items may also function as prenominal modifiers. In this function they do not have the same frequency or meaning in the Suriname Creole languages and Gbe. According to Kramer (p c), SM property items are generally unreduplicated when functioning as attributive modifiers; only a small number of them such as *kuá-kuá* 'unripe' are always reduplicated in attributive function. They may, however, be reduplicated to attribute to a referent an unusual state or property or a state which is the result of a deliberate action.<sup>11</sup> In EM and SR, verbs are similarly typically unreduplicated when functioning as attributive modifiers (29). They may, however, be reduplicated when they attribute a resultative state to their referent (30). Stative reduplicated items referring to an unusual state do not seem to appear in attributive position.

- (29) *wan gaandi boto / \*wan gaandi-gaandi boto*  
 one old boat / one old-old boat 'an old boat'
- (30) *Te i wani da i kon anga lusu-lusu / lusu uwii*  
 when 2s want then 2s come with loose-loose / loose hair  
 'When you are ready (to braid your hair), come by with unbraided hair'

A few EM change of state verbs such as *fon* 'to pound', *meki* 'to make' etc are always reduplicated in attributive function (31). In the Gbe varieties, monosyllabic property items are always reduplicated when functioning as nominal modifiers. These reduplicated items may refer to unusual, resultative, and inherent states (32).

- (31) *wan fon-fon alisi / \*wan fon alisi*  
 DET pound-pound rice 'a quantity of pounded rice'
- (32) *mɔto kpu-kpu ɔ*  
 car old-old DET 'old car'(Gbe, M)

## 2 Approximative reduplication in EM

In EM and SR, verbs may be reduplicated to express approximation. This process of reduplication is not attested for the Gbe varieties and SM.

### 2.1 The generation of approximative reduplicated items

The process of approximative reduplication is a productive process of full reduplication in EM and SR (Huttar and Huttar, 1997; Migge, 1998; Winford, 1997; Adamson & Smith, *this volume*).<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Capital print in English translations indicates focus/emphasis.

<sup>11</sup> See Alleyne (1987), Bakker (1987), Veenstra (1996) for similar points of view.

<sup>12</sup> What I call approximative reduplication has also been called diminutive, imperfective, or pejorative reduplication (see, for instance, Adamson & Smith, *this volume*).

- (33) *nyoni / nyoni-nyoni* 'to (make) small / to (get/be) smallish' (EM)  
*langa / langa-langa* 'to (make) long / to (get/be) longish' (EM, SR)  
*safu / safu-safu* 'to (make) soft / to (get/be) softish' (EM, SR)

In SR, the final vowel of the base of verbs ending in [i] and [u] is frequently elided, as in *red-redi* '(to get/be) reddish', *fat-fatu* '(to get/be) fattish'. My EM informants rejected these examples, explaining that they are typical of Sranan Tongo-influenced varieties only.

In both EM and SR, property-denoting (23b) and all kinds of activity-denoting (34) verbs may be reduplicated to express approximation. In this respect approximative reduplication differs from the reduplication which derives statives, since the latter may only be derived from property-denoting verbs and activity verbs whose action results in a visible state (cf. §1.1).<sup>13</sup>

- (34) A *boi lon-lon ala pe ai go*  
 DET boy run-run all place 3s-PROG go 'The boy is always kind of running wherever he is going'

Huttar & Huttar (1997) suggest that the group of verbs in EM which may be reduplicated to express approximation is more restricted than those which may be reduplicated to express a resultative or unusual state. They found that several colour-denoting property items such as *donu* 'yellow', *asisi* 'gray' and change of state verbs such as *lai* 'to load', *koti* 'to cut', *doo* 'to sever', *fon* 'to beat', *bai* 'to buy' cannot be reduplicated to express approximation. They are, however, unsure about the properties which characterize the group of verbs that may be reduplicated to express approximation.

In contrast, according to my EM informants all the property items that Huttar & Huttar (1997) exclude can express approximation when reduplicated. The acceptability of items like *fon-fon* 'half-pounded', *bai-bai* 'half-bought', and *koti-koti* 'cut in several places/sliced' is, however, highly dependent on the type of subject and the general discourse context.<sup>14</sup>

My own investigation suggests that in both EM and SR only verbs referring to gradable properties/actions that can be (further) reduced may be reduplicated to express approximation. That is, 'long' can be reduced to some intermediate state situated in-between 'long' and 'short' (longish) (35) but 'short' cannot be further reduced since in EM culture there does not seem to exist a state between 'zero length' and 'short'; hence, *\*satu-satu* [short-short] (intended meaning: 'shortish'). There are also verbs referring to seemingly non-gradable properties which may, however, be reduplicated to express approximation since the culture seems to recognize an intermediate state. In EM culture it is thus possible for a human being to be smaller than 'normal size' (*fatu-fatu* 'biggish') and to be bigger than 'thin' (36). There are also verbs which refer to properties that seem gradable but which cannot be reduplicated to express approximation. The unacceptability of *\*takuu-takuu* [evil-evil] for example, is due to the fact that in EM and SR culture evilness is not a gradable property.

- (35) A *sitaati langa-langa*  
 DET street long-long 'The street is/has gotten longish (not quite long yet)'
- (36) A *man ya mangi-mangi*  
 DET man here thin-thin 'This man is/has gotten thinnish (not quite sickly thin yet)'

## 2.2 The semantics of approximative reduplicated items

Property items and activity verbs which undergo approximative reduplication either refer to only part of their original quality (37) or have a distributive interpretation (38):

- (37) En *osu booko-booko*  
 3s.POSS house break-break 'Her house is/has become somewhat dilapidated'
- (38) A *udu ya nyan-nyan*  
 DET wood here eat-eat 'This wood is/has been eaten at in several places'

<sup>13</sup> Huttar & Huttar (1997) suggest that the attributive adjective *gaan* 'big' can also be reduplicated to express approximation. My EM informants rejected reduplication of *gaan*. According to them it may only be iterated to express the notion 'very big'.

<sup>14</sup> Huttar & Huttar (1997:407) make a similar point for *koti-koti*.

It is not quite clear to me whether all approximative reduplicated items can have a distributive as well as an approximative interpretation. It seems that with some items such as *piiti-piiti* [tear-tear] 'torn in several places' the distributive interpretation is (more) prominent while with others (e.g. *booko-booko* (37)), an approximative meaning is (more) dominant.

Approximative reduplicated items are essentially processual verbs which may also have a (current) state reading. The current state interpretation seems to be an entailment of their completed process reading. In this respect, approximative reduplicated items such as *booko-booko* (37) are similar to their unreduplicated counterparts (*en osu booko* 'her house is/has become dilapidated') and differ from stative reduplicated items which denote resultative and unusual states (see examples 2, 5).

### 2.3 The distributional properties of approximative reduplicated items

Approximative reduplicated items are best categorized as verbs since they have the same distributional properties as typical verbs in EM: they may be directly preceded by tense, mood, and aspect markers (39), some of them may take a direct object (40), and they can be predicate clefted (40). In this respect, approximative reduplicated items differ from stative reduplicated items since the latter have the distributional properties of (predicative) adjectives: they are always introduced by a stative verb, they cannot take complements, and they cannot be preceded by tense, mood, aspect, and negation markers (§1.3).

(39) A *pikin f'en e siki-siki ala yuu*  
 DET child POSS-3S.ACC PROG sick-sick all hour  
 'Her child is constantly getting kind of sick'

(40) Na *nati-nati den nati-nati mi koosi*  
 FOC wet-wet they wet-wet my clothes  
 'They made my clothes KIND OF WET'

Approximative reduplicated items may also function as noun modifiers in EM and SR. In this function they behave much like typical attributive adjectives in these languages. They precede the noun they modify (41) and they can be conjoined with other adjectives in the NP (42):

(41) Ne en *gaandi-gaandi yuu a kon ya*  
 LOC-3.ACC old-old hour 3s come here 'During his middle aged years he came here'

(42) A *libi anga wan satu mangi-mangi man*  
 3s live with DET short thin-thin man  
 'She married a short and thinnish man'

Finally, Huttar & Huttar (1997:408) show that reduplicated items functioning as complements of *de* which typically denote unusual or resultative states (a) (cf. §1.2.2) may also have an approximative interpretation (b); the resultative state interpretation seems to be primary while the approximative state interpretation is only secondarily available:<sup>15</sup>

(43) A *patu de lontu-lontu*  
 DET pot COP round-round  
 a. 'The pot has been made/is round' (resultative) / b. 'The pot is roundish'(approximative)

A closer look at these constructions suggests that they are typical state-denoting constructions: in both interpretations, the reduplicated item locates its referent in an unusual or resultative state. In the (a) interpretation, it locates the referent in the unusual or resultative state 'round'; in the (b) interpretation, it locates the referent in the unusual or resultative approximative state 'roundish'. This suggests that the approximative state interpretation results from the fact that the approximative reduplicated item *lontu-lontu* 'roundish' was an input to the process of stative reduplication.

Following this view, a reduplicated item may have three interpretations, as illustrated here for *booko-booko*: when *booko-booko* is a verb (a) it has an approximative interpretation, predicating the property 'somewhat dilapidated' off the referent *osu* 'house'. Second, when *booko-booko* is the

<sup>15</sup> Winford (1997) shows the same for SR. According to my SR informants, the approximative state interpretation is primary and the resultative state interpretation is secondary for reduplicated items functioning as complements of *de*. One of my SR informants, who was also one of the informants for Winford (1997), rejected the stative interpretation altogether.

complement to a stative verb (b), it typically has an unusual or resultative state interpretation, denoting that its referent is in the (unusual or resultative) state of being 'dilapidated'. Third, when *booko-booko* is the complement of a stative verb (c) it may also have an unusual or resultative approximative state interpretation, denoting that its referent is in the (unusual or resultative) state of being 'somewhat dilapidated':

- (44) a. A *osu booko-booko*  
 DET house break-break 'This house is/has become somewhat dilapidated'
- b. A *osu de booko-booko*  
 DET house COP break-break 'The house is (in a) dilapidated (state)'
- c. A *osu de booko-booko*  
 DET house COP break-break 'The house is (in a) somewhat dilapidated (state)'

The constructions in b and c can only be disambiguated by making reference to the discourse context in which they occur. Their similarity is due to the fact that an approximative verb such as *booko-booko* 'to be somewhat dilapidated' (a) cannot be reduplicated to derive the resultative interpretation (c) since it is already reduplicated. In EM (and SR) reduplicated elements cannot undergo a second process of reduplication (45). Their form stays constant but their meaning changes.<sup>16</sup>

- (45) \*A *osu de booko-booko-booko-booko*  
 DET house COP break-beak-break-break  
 [intended meaning:] 'The house is (in a) somewhat dilapidated (state)'

### 3 Summary of the findings

The preceding descriptions of stative and approximative reduplication suggest that the two processes are clearly distinct. They are derived from partially different inputs, and they have a different semantics and distribution. Table 1 below summarizes the important characteristics of these two types of reduplication.

Table 1 Summary of the properties of stative and approximative reduplication

	Stative Reduplication	Approximative Reduplication
Languages	EM, SM, SR, Gbe	EM, SR
Input	- activity verbs whose action results in a visible state; - verbs of human propensity	- property-denoting verbs; - all kinds of activity-denoting verbs referring to a gradable property or action
Semantics	its outcome describes unusual and resultative states (resulting from an intervention)	- its outcome refers to part of the quality of its unreduplicated input; - it denotes processes which may also have a current state reading
Distribution	- predicative: only introduced by a copula / copular verb; - postnominal; - pronominal: only in its resultative meaning in EM and SR	- predicative; - pronominal
Categorical status	adjective	verb (may also function as an adjective)

<sup>16</sup> I did not perceive a tonal or intonational difference in the case of these items in EM or SR.

## 4 The origin of EM predicate reduplication

### 4.1 The origin of stative reduplication

The preceding discussion of the process of stative reduplication in the Suriname Creoles, especially EM, and their Gbe substrate revealed a striking amount of close similarities. These similarities suggest that stative reduplication must have emerged in the Suriname Creole languages as the result of retention from Gbe.

The comparative analysis also revealed a few differences between stative reduplicated items in the Suriname Creoles and their Gbe substrate. These differences are most likely the result of internally-motivated processes of innovation which occur in a wide variety of contact settings. The absence of an adjective suffix similar to Aja and Xwela (see example 9) and the optional postposition *ji* 'on' in the Suriname Creoles is most likely a case of omission whereby items with low semantic content are omitted in order to enhance mutual intelligibility. The absence of the possibility of introducing the state of an object argument as a small clause is most likely the result of levelling; since stative reduplicated nominal modifiers were the only nominal modifiers which allowed a small clause option, it was probably eliminated in order to fully integrate them into the category of nominal modifiers.

At this point it is not quite clear to me why stative reduplicated items in attributive position in EM and Gbe have a different interpretation. It seems most plausible to assume that this difference emerged as the result of reanalysis and levelling: the "Early Suriname Plantation Creole", the predecessor of all modern Suriname Creoles, probably used reduplicated and unreduplicated attributive modifiers since some of its inputs (Kikongo and varieties of English) probably did not reduplicate verbs to function as attributive modifiers, while other inputs (Gbe) did. Rather than omitting one strategy the two were retained but assigned separate functions which mirrored those of their verbal counterparts.

### 4.2 The origin of approximative reduplication

As pointed out above, a process of approximative reduplication does not exist in the Gbe languages. This suggests that this reduplication in the Suriname Creoles was either modeled on one of the other substrate languages or that it emerged independently. The available literature on the Kikongo group of languages does not mention the existence of a process of approximative reduplication (Lumwamu, 1973) and informant work with Akan speakers (a group which became quite prominent in Suriname after 1720; see Arends, 1995) also did not reveal the existence of such a process of reduplication. This would suggest that this process of reduplication emerged independent of a direct model. I propose that it emerged as a result of the reanalysis of one of the strategies for marking progressive aspect in Early Suriname Plantation Creole retained from Gbe.

#### 4.2.1 The marking of progressive aspect in Gbe

In most varieties of Gbe (A, F, M, W) intransitive verbs are marked for progressive aspect in the following way: the verb is reduplicated, the reduplicated verb is followed by a particle, and the reduplicated verb is preceded by the copula (46). The copula in this construction seems to perform somewhat of a double function: syntactically, it predicates the reduplicated item and semantically it functions as an aspectual marker which locates the subject of the construction ('she') in the process denoted by the reduplicated item ('going'). With transitive verbs progressive aspect is indicated in the following ways: the verb is preceded by the copula, the order of the object and the verb is switched, and the verb is followed by a particle (47). The verb is generally not reduplicated if a direct object argument is present.

- |      |          |           |              |           |           |                                   |
|------|----------|-----------|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| (46) | <i>E</i> | <i>dɔ</i> | <i>yi-yi</i> | <i>we</i> |           |                                   |
|      | 3s.F     | COP       | go-go        | PRT       |           | 'She is going' (Gbe, M)           |
| (47) | <i>O</i> | <i>dɔ</i> | <i>nu</i>    | <i>ɔ</i>  | <i>sa</i> | <i>we</i>                         |
|      | 2s       | COP       | thing        | DET       | sell      | PRT                               |
|      |          |           |              |           |           | 'You are selling things' (Gbe, M) |

The relative redundancy in aspect marking is, however, frequently subject to leveling: in Aja the copula is often omitted with intransitive verbs and in Aja and Waci the particle is frequently omitted with transitive verbs. In Xwela and Gen progressive aspect is only marked by the copula

and the intransitive verb is not reduplicated (47); nor does the transitive verb change order with its object complement. These progressive constructions also do not involve a particle:

- (48) *E le yi*  
 3S.G COP go  
 'She is going' (Gbe, G)

When property items and change of state verbs in Gbe are marked for progressive aspect they take on an inchoative interpretation, indicating that their subject is in the process of acquiring the property denoted by the unreduplicated property item. Thus, in (49), the reduplicated item refers to the process of 'getting thin', and indicates that the subject has only acquired part of the quality referred to by the unreduplicated verb. The particle marks the reduplicated item as having an in-progress rather than a in-state meaning:

- (49) *Ame lo (le) do-do ko*  
 person DET COP thin-thin PRT  
 'The person is getting thin (she isn't thin yet)' (Gbe, A)

### 3.2.2 A possible scenario for the emergence of approximative reduplicated items

Assuming that the grammar of the Early Suriname Plantation Creole was not highly focused but involved first language-dependent variation, it is possible that progressive aspect was marked in at least two different ways: one, by reduplication of the verb, presence of the copula, and possibly the presence of a particle (50); two, by reposing of the copula to the unreduplicated verb (51):

- (50) \*A *de (na) wooko-wooko*  
 3S COP PRT work-work  
 'He is working' (hypothesized proto-plantation Creole)
- (51) \*A *de wooko*  
 3S COP work  
 'He is working' (hypothesized proto-plantation Creole)

Only the second type of construction (51) is attested synchronically and diachronically. Note, however, that the progressive marker always has the form *e* in both modern EM and SR.<sup>17</sup>

- (52) A *e wooko*  
 3S COP work  
 'She is working'

Over time the copula came to be reinterpreted or established as the only marker of progressive aspect; the reduplicated items were now free to be reanalyzed as verbs denoting only part of the property expressed by the unreduplicated item. When preceded by the copula—now interpreted as a progressive marker—the reduplicated items and verbs were, by analogy to their unreduplicated counterparts and other verbs, interpreted as being in progressive aspect, i.e. as expressing that their subject is in the process of acquiring part of a property (53). When they were not preceded by an aspect or tense marker, they were, by analogy to their unreduplicated counterparts, interpreted as being in perfective aspect, i.e. as expressing that their subject exists in the (current) state of having (acquired) part of the property (54):

- (53) *De e nyoni-nyoni*  
 3p PROG small-small  
 'They are getting smallish'
- (54) *De nyoni-nyoni*  
 3p small-small  
 'They have gotten/are smallish'

Those reduplicated items which refer to properties which could not be conceived of as assuming an intermediate state (e.g. \**satu-satu* [short-short]; see discussion in §2.1) were simply omitted.

<sup>17</sup> In SM, the verb *tan* 'stay' came to express progressive aspect.

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