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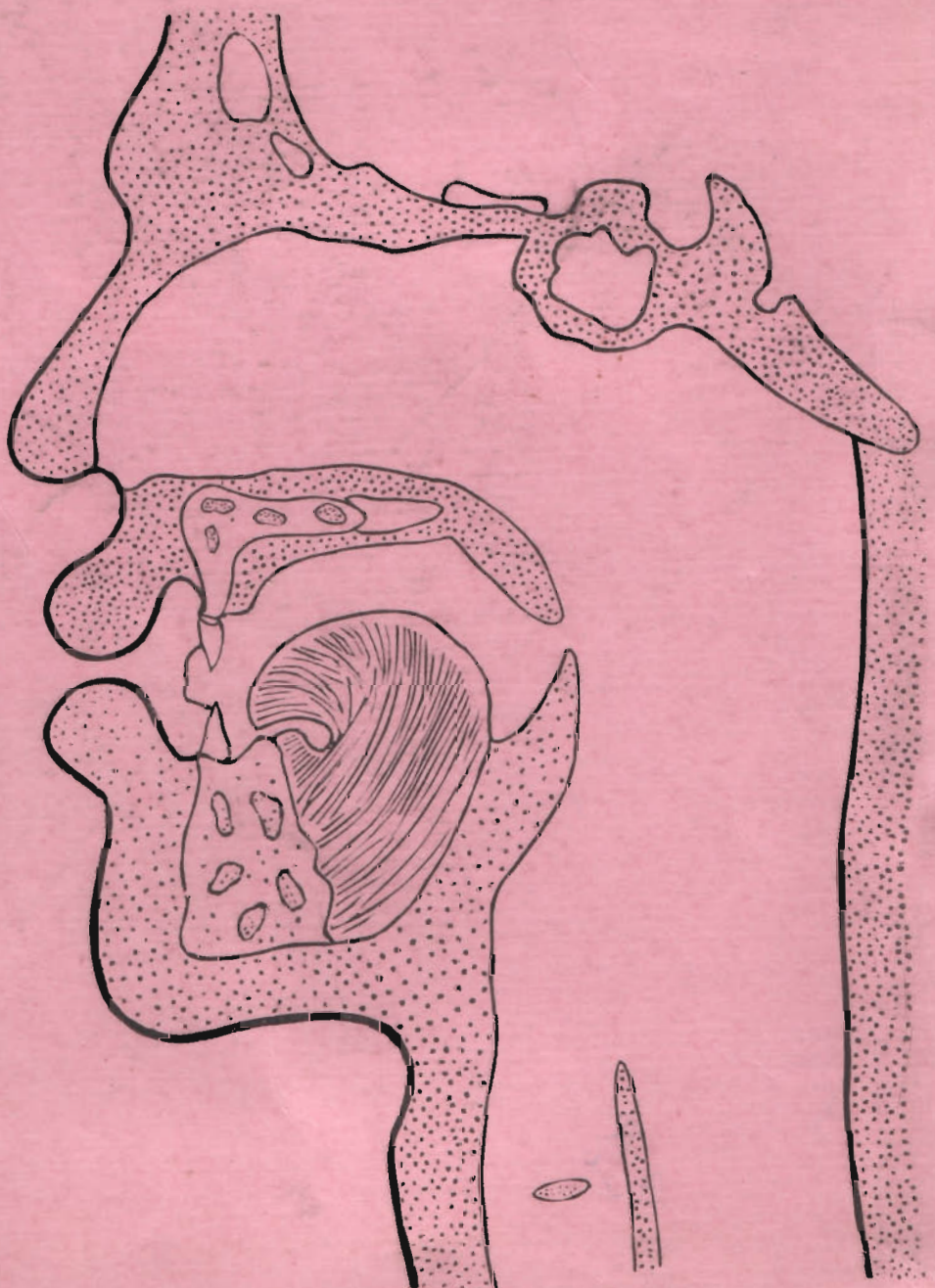

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REDUPLICATION IN GOKANA IDEOPHONES

0.1 A brief look at the Gokana Language. Gokana is one of the languages of the Ogoni group. Its closest neighbours are Kana and Eleme. The Gokana people are found some 25 miles east, South east of Port Harcourt. They share a common Local Government head quarters with Kana, which is Bori.

Although Gokana is composed of a number of dialects, the Gịọkoo or Gokana central variety is the variety used here. The reason being for the purpose of analysis.

0.2 DEFINITION OF THE IDEOPHONE:

Various definitions have been given to what the ideophone is. People like Courtenay (1976), Newman (1968), Samarin (1967) Alexandre (1972) have observed it from various points of views, such as phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic. Several attempts have been made by both African and non-African scholars to define the subject. Fivas (1963), cites the following observation by scholars:

Colenso, in his Zulu grammar of 1871, classified it as a particle (of tentimes the fragment of a verb) used adverbially. Bryant (1905), called them 'verbal particles; which he said were often onomatopeeic'. George Fortune (1962), remarks that the perculiarities of the ideophone, and its unlikeness to any thing in the grammarians background, were revealed by the startling variety of teminology and treatment which it recieved. Another scholar is Pierre Alexandre (1972). He said, 'Another widespread characteristic in all Black Africa ... is the existence of a category of vocables baptized with various names: "descriptive adverb", "exclamatory descriptions", "predicative interjections", "impressives", "image words", or ideophones". The wealth of these names indicates the prevailing uncertainity about their exact nature. I personally prefer the term "ideophones" (by analogy

one can give for them is approximately "vocables" which transmit a sensory feeling or a complex moral emotion".

However Clement Doke 1941 and 1954, was the first to suggest the term ideophone'. This term seems to have gained wide acceptance among linguists working on African languages. He was the first to treat ideophones under a separate part of speech, although he grouped them with the adverbs under'descriptive', one of his six basic parts of speech.

Apart from being a vivid representation of an idea in sound Doke defines the ideophone as 'a word, often onomatopoeic, which describes a predicate, qualificative or adverb in respect of manner, colour, sound, action, state or intensity."

1.0 REDUPLICATION - DEFINITION

Reduplication is the repetition of words or syllables in a sentence or utterance when the repetition is done thrice, we refer to it as triplication. Reduplications are either partial or incomplete, and full or complete.

A few observations have been made on this phenomenon by scholars. Some of these are examined below.

1.1 OBSERVATIONS

Reduplication is a very important characteristics of ideophones in African languages. Scholars like Williamson (1965) says of Ịjọ "A very large number of ideophones are reduplicated (e.g. gẹ́ẹne gẹ́ẹne - 'shrill'), or even triplicated (ẹg lálala - 'pure white'). It is however much more marked among the ideophones than in other parts of the vocabulary. Out of 392 ideophones examined, 190 (48.4%) were reduplicated, 19 (4.8%) were triplicated. Welimers (1971) says of Mwera syntactically their reduplicated or triplicated usage is unique. Semantically, they seem to share some kind of intensive reference',... they are frequently reduplicated or triplicated'. He gives the following example from Mwera, which gives an intensive or continuative meaning: kufenda jende jende - 'to walk far'. keep on moving' important in the structure and meaning of ideophones in many

African languages, Gokana being no exception.

1.2 TYPES OF REDUPLICATION

a. COMPLETE OR FULL REDUPLICATION

This is when the whole word or syllable is repeated. This is often done twice. Full reduplication expresses iconic meanings such as plurality (of quantity) or distribution.

Examples:

zàga zàga	-	hairy
lẹ́gẹ́ lẹ́gẹ́	-	weak
zége zége	-	brand new
zép zẹ́p	-	brisk movement
pak pak	-	skeletal
zùùga zùùga	-	cowardly
baari baari	-	roggish, cunning movement
sẹ́rẹ́rẹ́ sẹ́rẹ́rẹ́	-	sluggish
gbọ́rọ́rọ́r gbọ́rọ́rọ́r	-	long, slender
kpògòro kpògòro	-	uneven (stony)

b. PARTIAL OR INCOMPLETE REDUPLICATION

This is when only a part of the word or syllable is repeated. It often expresses intensity or shows dramatic emphasis

Examples:

dá - daga	-	close together, compact
té - tẹ́gẹ́	-	thin, lean in stature
sọ́ - sọ́gọ́	-	little bits
fí - figi	-	small hole
bi - bìira	-	very tight (not spaceous)
dì - dìa	-	little, useless things
sá - saari	-	tiny (e.g. tree)
vúrúru - rú	-	very large (circumferance)
pàrara - rà	-	run at very fast speed
sẹ́rẹ́rẹ́ - rẹ́	-	sluggishly
fárara - rá	-	drag feet on the floor
zìriri - rì	-	ice - cold
gbọ́rọ́rọ́ -rọ́	-	very narrow, long

vọrọrọ - rọ - very oversised

gbinini - ni - very slender, thin

1.3 FUNCTIONS OF REDUPLICATION

Reduplication has three basic functions in Gokana ideophones. These are: stylistic, grammatical and semantic.

a. GRAMMATICAL: .

When you make a statement involving ideophones in a discussion (usually reported speech), the reduplication of the ideophone, gives the utterance or statement a complete sense to the typical Gokana listener.

His however vital to note here that statements or sentences involving ideophones in Gokana could be easily understood without the use of reduplication or triplication. However when the ideophone is repeated it helps to give the sentence a better aesthetic structure and pattein, and consequently a more precise reference or meaning.

i. Nwin á kup nùtọ naa gbài gbài

(lit) The child banged the door twice

ii. À tèni naa vìp vìp vìp.

(lit) It lashed past toand fro (many times)

The repetition of the ideophones, according to Emenanjo (1978), 'lends more precision and concreteness to the narration or description'.

b. SEMANTIC:

Usually, when making a point explicit, emphasis are laid on matters of crucial importance many people who have observed elders speak in most African communities, will see them use gestures and other facial expressions along with the ideophones being used.

Some emphasis could be either exaggerations or exclamations. In watever forms such emphasis may take, the ideophone so used are of great semantic significance. To this Emananjo says, ... In some cases the ideophone is completely replaced by such expressive movements, when in the opinion of the narrator such movement describes the action/state better than the ideophone

E.g.

i. À naa sǎ naa zai zai

(lit) There were series of sparks of light. (e.g. electricity sparks)

ii. À naa baari baari

(lit) He moved roggishly (craftily)

In the second example, the Gokana speaker may say:

À naai naai naai

(lit) He went this way, that way etc.

The triplicated forms 'naai' goes with gestures involving hand/body movements showing how the roggue was moving craftily or cunningly. This is semantically important

c. STYLISTIC:

Some people tend to 'play' with the ideophone idiosycratically in their expressions. The reason may be either to stress a point or for dramatic emphasis thus producing an aesthetic effect.

E.g.

In describing a very fast runner, one may say:

À terra naa parara - rara (etc)

(lit) He ran at a very fast speed

ii. À ọrị naa varara-rara (etc)

(lit) It slided down the smooth surface

We find here that the forms are mostly partial reduplications. There is also an 'arbitrary' lengthening or addition of the final syllables as many times as possible. This is just to add colour or vigour to the action or state being described, dramma-tized or commented upon by the speaker.

CONCLUSION:

It is important to bear in mind that since one of the important aims of communication is to give information, one must aim at being understood. In our effort to do theis we ought to consider the intelligibility of the hearer(s) when we speak. If this is not done, the speaker may be misunderstood or termed a non native speaker of Gokana.

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