

VARIATION AND CHANGE IN ARANDIC REDUPLICATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

Full presentation

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In the Arandic languages of central Australia, certain reduplicative construction types in verbs show variation within dialects and across dialects and languages. Two types of variation are examined: (i) variation in the size of the reduplicant, a type of variation well-recognised in a range of languages, and (ii) variation in the position of the reduplicative marker within the morphological structure of the verb. In the second type, segmentism is involved, that is, the markers are partly reduplicative and partly specified for the segmental content. The Frequentive in Eastern/Central dialects of Arrernte is marked by /ep/+VC(C) in a position relatively late in the verb structure, immediately preceding the obligatory Tense/Aspect/Mood suffix (Wilkins 1989). In the Alyawarr dialect, the Frequentive has the form VC(C)+/ep/ and occurs as a prefix to the verb root (Moore p.c.). The converse relation applies between the Arrernte Continuous Inceptive and the corresponding element in Kaytetye.

Both types of variation can be accounted for by reanalysis of the verb structure in verb forms which are structurally ambivalent. In the second type, this involves a reanalysis of the identity of the base vs the reduplicant. However, in both types the direction of the change is not directly determinable.

A further issue is the presence of a distinctive reduplicative structural type in both Kaytetye and the other Arandic language(s), despite the fact that the specific morphological elements that employ this structural type do not correspond across the languages.

The analysis presented here has consequences for evaluating the genetic relatedness of Kaytetye to the other Arandic languages (Koch 2004), a matter which has been disputed by Dixon (2002).

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