

Reduplication for Past Actions in Auhelawa*

David R. Lithgow
Summer Institute of Linguistics

Reduplication is a regular feature of many Austronesian languages. In Auhelawa, however, it sometimes has the unusual function of marking past tense. In this paper I examine these constructions.

1 Reduplication in Related Languages

Auhelawa is closely related to Tubetube, and in many ways Auhelawa is also similar to Bunama. There is evidence that Bunama and Auhelawa have borrowed extensively from each other. All of these languages have been influenced by Dobu, which is the general lingua franca of the area.

The dominant function of reduplication in these languages is to denote continuous or repeated actions. For most Dobu verbs this is done by reduplicating the first two syllables of the verb stem. In a few verbs in Dobu there is merely a lengthening of the first vowel of the verb stem. Dobu reduplicates the first syllable of the verb stem for future tense or impending action.

For Bunama and Auhelawa first syllable reduplication usually denotes continuous action, but this meaning is also achieved by reduplicating the first two syllables. As the practice of reduplicating the first two syllables seems to be increasing, it could be the result of influence from the Dobu language. In Bunama and Auhelawa there is occasional, but definite, use of first syllable reduplication for impending actions, which could also be the result of Dobu influence. Examples from Auhelawa are given in (1).

- 1) 'i-lau¹ 'he goes' or 'he will go'
'i-la-lau 'he is about to go'

There is no future tense marker in Bunama or Auhelawa.

* Editor's note: This is the last paper David wrote. We are publishing it posthumously with a minimum of editing.

¹ All examples are in the practical orthography. <'> indicates a glottal stop.

From my limited knowledge of Tubetube, the pattern is similar to Dobu with first-syllable reduplication used for impending actions.

In Dobu, negative verbal constructions require two-syllable reduplication as in (2a), or the subjunctive verbal prefix *-da-* as in (2b).

- 2) a. *nigeya ya-'ita-'ita*
not 1s-REDUP-see²
- b. *nigeya ya-da-'ite-na*
not 1s-SUBJUNC-see-3s

Both constructions mean 'I do/did not see it.'

In Auhelawa, two-syllable reduplication is used for prohibition.

- 3) *havena 'u-hae-hae* 'don't you go up'
PROHIB 2s-REDUP-go.up

However, for general negatives the subjunctive prefix *-ya-* is used. In Auhelawa *-ya-* is used only for negatives.

- 4) *nigeya 'i-ya-lau* 'he did not go'
NEG 3s-SUBJUNC-go

2 Reduplication in Past Actions

2.1 Structure

Since reduplication is used only for continuous or repeated actions and for negation in other languages of the area, it seems strange to find first-syllable reduplication used in Auhelawa for single past actions. This occurs only when the demonstrative clitic *-ne* is also added to the verb. This verbal construction will be indicated with bold type in this article as in (3).

- 5) *'i-la-lau-ne* 'he has gone'

Some Auhelawa speakers claim that the meaning of this construction is the same as that of a verb with the suffix *-'o*.

² The following abbreviations are used in the glosses:

COMP	completed	NEG	negative	REDUP	reduplicated
CONT	continuous	PL	plural	SUBJUNC	subjunctive
DEM	demonstrative	PROHIB	prohibition		

- 6) *'i-lao-'o* 'he has already gone'
3s-go-finish

It will be shown later that the meanings of (3) and (4) are not the same.

The demonstrative clitic *-ne* is one of two demonstrative clitics in Auhelawa and Tubetube; the other demonstrative clitic in both languages is *-wa*. The general demonstrative suffix in Bunama is *-ina*, but *-wa* also occurs very rarely, probably borrowed from Auhelawa.

In Auhelawa the demonstrative clitics may be suffixed to words of a number of different classes, but especially nouns, verbs and modifiers. Of the two, *-ne* denotes 'that particular one', and *-wa* means 'the one mentioned previously'. However there is considerable overlap and stylistic variation. Here are some examples of the demonstrative clitics in Auhelawa.

- 7) *'ehebo 'adi-gelu-ne 'i-hae. Na waihiu-wa 'i-vai 'ana pou*
one 3p-friend-DEM 3s-go.up and woman-DEM 3s-take 3s egg

'the friend of their went up. That woman took an egg to eat'

- 8) *'owa mata vedova 'u-dena-ne?*
2s later how 2s-flee-DEM

'what is the way you will flee?'

- 9) *vada-wa guniguni-na-wa*
house-DEM side-3s-DEM

'the side of the house'

The demonstrative clitic *-ne* is also used in the construction for a negative question. This construction is similar to the past tense construction, except that the subjunctive prefix *-ya-* is used instead of the reduplicated morpheme.

- 10) *vedova ta nigele 'u-ya-wunui-ne?*
why and NEG 2s-SUBJUNC-kill-DEM

'why did you not kill it?'

2.2 Usages

The verbal construction in which reduplication combines with a demonstrative suffix is used within the broad semantic area of past time. It is used infrequently. There is individual stylistic variation, but on average it is found only about once per paragraph, apparently for

some kind of special emphasis. If a sentence contains a series of past-action verbs, this special construction will usually be employed only once, if at all, while the rest of the verbs will have no past or completed aspect markers.

- 11) *na hesi 'edewa-o-wa hi-'eli ta hi-luwu na hi-wu-wuniu-ne*
 and instead dog-PL-DEM 3p-dig and 3p-enter and 3p-REDUP-kill-DEM

'but those dogs dug down and went into (the hole) and killed him'

I will illustrate seven usages of this construction.

1. Questions – This construction is used sometimes for questions.

- 12) *yaiya pou-gu-ne 'i-'a-'ai-ne?*
 who egg-1s-DEM 3s-REDUP-eat-DEM

'who ate my egg?'

2. Single Actions: It is used for single actions which are completed, but not for repetitive actions.

- 13) *ta 'i-ha-hae-ne muguwa-i 'i-mahalava na 'i-'ita-hae*
 and 3s-REDUP-rise-DEM shore-at 3s-appear and 3s-look-up
nubai-na-wa 'i-'aba-'abahi
 cousin-3s-DEM 3s-CONT-hang

'and he came up on the shore and appeared, and looking up he saw that cousin of his hanging (there)'

3. Location – The past action may be one of movement to another location.

- 14) *yana 'ona 'i-vai ta 'ehebo we'aha 'ainai 'i-tu-tuli-ne*
 3s net 3s-take and one stream at 3s-REDUP-ascend-DEM

'walaise habi 'ai'ona
 prawn to catch

'he took his net and went up a stream to catch prawns'

4. Pivot – This construction may act as a pivot where the focus of the story changes. In this example the reduplicated past construction is used when the sugarcane pins the rat to the ground.

- 15) *Hauga-na gwaito-wa 'i-'uta-'uta, gwaito-ne 'i-be'u ta*
 time-3s sugarcane-DEM 3s-CONT-chew sugarcane-DEM 3s-fall and
'i-'e-'eno-'alatei-ne; 'o'ola'a 'i-dou-dou nuwanuwa-na nubai-na
 3s-REDUP-lie-above-DEM rat 3s-CONT-cry desire-3s cousin-3s
'i-hae 'i-hagu-i
 3s-ascend 3s-help-him

'While he was chewing that sugarcane, the sugarcane fell and lay on him; (the) rat was crying, wanting his cousin to come up and help him.'

5. Final Verb – This construction is often found as the last verb at the end of an action paragraph.

- 16) *Golugolu hina-na 'i-dobi-ma 'i-walo ta nubai-na-o-wa*
 owl mother 3s-downwards-come 3s-tell and cousin-3s-PL-DEM
hi-hae hi-nabai-di-ma ta hi-lau hi-ye-yemahuli-ne.
 3p-go.up 3p.carry-3p-DEM and 3p-go 3p-REDUP-cook.feast-DEM

'The owl's mother came down and told the cousins of his, and they went up and carried him back here, and they went inside and made a feast.'

6. Repeated Focal Actions – This construction used for past actions repeated in a succession of paragraphs is often in the same form for every occurrence.

- 17) a. *'i-walo yaiya pou-gu-ne 'i-'a-'ai-ne?*
 3s-say who egg-1s-DEM 3s-REDUP-eat-DEM

'She said, "Who has eaten my egg?"'

- b. *Tomowa-o-wa hi-walo, o, 'ai nigele 'a-ya-'ai pou-m-ne;*
 person-PL-DEM 3p-say oh 3px NEG 3p-SUBJUNC-eat egg-2s-DEM

Sinemataladiladi 'i-'a-'ai-ne.
 Sinemataladiladi 3s-REDUP-eat-DEM

'Those people replied, "We did not eat your egg; Sinemataladiladi ate it."'

7. Tail-head linkage – This construction may be the tail in a tail-head linkage, the head of which usually has a different, unreduplicated, form.

- 18) *na hi-gabu 'abo hi-'u''umini-ne. Hi-'umini 'i-'ovi na*
 and 3p-singe then 3p-REDUP-bake-DEM 3p-bake 3s-finish and
hi-dobi
 3p-go.down

'they singed it and then baked it. Having baked it, they went down'

2.3 Meaning

In natural text *-ne* is used as a demonstrative, and single-syllable reduplication is used for impending or continuous actions; but the construction we have just been considering combines these structural features of the language to produce something with a completely different meaning. For this reason all of these affixes on verbs need to be looked at carefully to determine the correct meaning.

At this point let us look at the examples above to see if there is a central strand of meaning or function for the use of this construction. We have already established a general context of past tense, but what are the factors which restrict it from being used for any past action? It appears to be used only for significant actions which may cause a change in the direction of events.

1. Questions – When it is used in a question, the action (verb) is more important than the subject. My data contains no questions with more than one verb.
2. Single Actions – To signal a change in the course of events this construction is used with single action verbs, and not with reduplicated continuous or repeated action verbs.
3. Location – A change of location usually changes the situation and also the focus.
4. Pivot – A pivotal function fits our definition nicely, as in the example given above under this heading.
5. Final Verb – The final verb in a paragraph frequently leads into a different situation.
6. Repeated Focal Actions – This construction when used in a question and also in its answer keeps the focus on the action that is enquired about, with no possibility of ambiguity.

7. Tail-head Linkage – This is similar to the usage of the reduplicated past construction for the last verb of a paragraph, except that in this case it is then used in the next paragraph in its unreduplicated form.

The completive suffix *-o* shows that an action is truly completed, and so its meaning is not the same as the reduplicated past construction. This is illustrated from a passage in a story where the same events are described from two different perspectives.

- 19) a. *Na maheya-wa yadi puwali-wa 'i-pulihi ta 'i-de-dena-ne*
 and pig-DEM 3p net-DEM 3s-tear and 3s-REDUP-flee-
 DEM

‘And the pig tore that net and he fled’

- b. *O, yada puwali-wa bada maheya-wa 'i-pulihi-ya-'o ta*
 yes our net-DEM already pig-DEM 3s-tear-3s-COMP and
'i-dena-'o
 3s-flee-COMP

‘Yes, that pig tore our net and fled’

When the events occurred the focal action was that the pig fled. In the second sentence where this is reported, it is shown by *-o* suffixes that both the events have really happened.

3 Conclusion

In Auhelawa two dissimilar morphemes combine with a verb stem to produce a past tense construction which is used only in focal situations which may cause changes in the course of events.