Reduplication is a phenomenon that occurs in the majority of the world’s languages, which explains why Pott’s (1862) seminal monograph on reduplication bears the title *Doubling (reduplication, gemination) as one of the most important building means of language*. Although definitions of reduplication vary, it is generally considered a morphological process that involves repetition of words or parts of words as a derivational—and sometimes inflectional—strategy. In many languages it is a marginal phenomenon. In European languages it tends to be limited to expressions such as English *bye-bye, hush-hush, so-so, wishy-washy, riff-raff*, etc. Other languages, however, may exhibit elaborate patterns of reduplication, having many different functions. The Austronesian languages are well-known for reduplication, such as Malay, where plural is indicated by doubling the noun, e.g. *anak ‘child’ vs. anak anak ‘children.’* Different types of reduplication may have different grammatical functions, as in Tagalog *sulat ‘write’ vs. su~sulat ‘will write’ (FUTURE) and mag-sulat–sulat ‘write intermittently’ (DISTRIBUTIVE).

In the last decade there has been an increased interest in reduplication among linguists. This has resulted in special conferences on reduplication (Graz 2002, 2007, Brussels 2012), many articles, and several dedicated volumes (e.g. Ammann and Urdze ed. 2007, Hurch ed. 2005, 2009, Hurch and Mattes eds. 2009, Inkelas and Zoll 2005, Kouwenberg ed. 2003, Michaud and Morgenstern eds. 2007, Stolz et al. 2011) in which descriptive, historical and theoretical issues have been raised and intriguing reduplication phenomena from a diverse number of languages have been discussed. South American indigenous languages, however, have been underrepresented in these developments. This situation is unfortunate both for indigenous linguistics of South America and for general and typological linguistics. The relatively few studies of reduplication in certain specific South American languages, such as Araújo (2008), Borges (2008), Bruno (2003), Dixon and Vogel (1996), Everett and Seki (1986), Fargetti (1998), García-Medall (2003), Gomes (2007), Goodwin Gómez (2009), Meira (2000), Rose (2005), Seki (1984), van Gijn (to appear), and van der Voort (2003), both confirm universally attested patterns and show unusual phenomena that have not been recorded elsewhere or discussed in the general literature. Clearly, South American languages have an important contribution to
make to the general study of linguistics, but a better and more detailed understanding of these languages is required.

In July 2009, we organized a symposium, Reduplication in Amazonian Languages, at the 53rd International Congress of Americanists in Mexico City. The stimulating results motivated us to put out a call for submissions to a general volume on reduplication in indigenous languages of South America. In the present volume, we have brought together fifteen descriptive and theoretical articles by scholars of South American languages. These contributors were referred to Moravcsik (1978), Rubino (2005; 2011) and the Graz Reduplication Project website (http://reduplication.uni-graz.at/) as the basic sources on reduplication for basic concepts and terminology. In order to focus our efforts as much as possible on comparable phenomena, we defined reduplication in a relatively narrow but generally accepted way: the repetition of morphemes or of parts of morphemes by which a new morpheme with a new, related meaning is created, or by which a grammatical function is systematically expressed. Not all repetition, however, is reduplication. A distinctive characteristic of reduplication is that it does not entail repetition of semantic content. Rather, the meaning of a reduplicated form is different from that of its components. This essential part of the definition excludes mere repetition of words or phrases as in very, very good, suppletive repetition of synonyms as in dazed and confused, recursive application of morphemes as in great-great-grandfather, or argument agreement as in Nósfala-mos português. ‘We speak Portuguese.’ This and other criteria for the distinction between repetition and reduplication are discussed extensively in, e.g., Gil (2005) and Stolz (2007a).

With regard to terminology used by the authors in this volume, we have suggested that the ‘original,’ or ‘source’ component in a reduplication construction be identified as the base and the ‘copy’ component as the reduplicant (elsewhere also reduplicand). For segmentation and glossing of bound forms we suggested following the Leipzig glossing convention (Comrie et al. 2008) of separating the base and reduplicant in a morphological reduplication construction with a tilde (~). However, we decided not to follow the Leipzig practice of giving a semantically specific gloss for the reduplicant. Rather, if the reduplicant represents a copy of the entire base, it is glossed identically; in case the reduplicant represents only part of the base, it is glossed as ‘RED.’ The reason for this is that we did not want to obscure the special reduplicative nature of the construction by non-literal, interpretive glossing. An exception to this practice is made by Haude (this volume) with regard to a specific complex subset of reduplicative constructions in Movima, where such glossing would hamper transparency of the examples.