Reduplication and repetition processes in Karitiana (Tupi family, Arikém branch) are described in this article. Although verb reduplication is a very productive process in the language, there are verbs that do not reduplicate because they have suppleted forms for singular or plural events. In nouns, a repeated root is onomatopoeic and makes reference to a typical repetitive movement or sound characteristic of the living being denoted by the noun. In ideophonic phrases, repetition applies to activities and indicates a durative event. The quantifier -Vra that attaches to adjectival roots can be reduplicated to intensify the quantification.

1 Introduction

This article aims to describe and analyze reduplication processes in Karitiana (Arikém branch, Tupian family) affecting verbs and an affixal morpheme that functions as a quantifier of adjectives. Nouns that could arguably be described as reduplicated are rather shown to be onomatopoeic. A repetition of ideophones in narratives is also discussed but distinguished from reduplication. Müller, Storto and Coutinho-Silva (2006a) have shown examples in which Karitiana, a language that has no plural morphology whatsoever in noun phrases, uses complete root reduplication of verbs to mark plurality of events. Sanchez-Mendes and Müller (2007) argue that verb roots are reduplicated in Karitiana to unambiguously indicate plural events—a linguistic phenomenon called plura-actionality by Lasersohn (1995). I show that, although reduplication of verbs is a very productive process in Karitiana, there are verbs that do not reduplicate, but have a suppletive form instead, to indicate plural events. This does not necessarily falsify Sanchez-Mendes and Müller’s account since it appears that the suppletive plural forms in these cases are equivalent in meaning to the reduplicated forms, resulting from the same kind of semantic operation. In onomatopoeic nouns, an iconic phonological string is repeated and makes reference to a typical repetitive movement or sound characteristic of the animate being or object denoted by the noun. An affixal morpheme -Vra that typically attaches to adjectival roots to quantify them as “many” can also be reduplicated.
to intensify the quantification. In ideophonic phrases, repetition of an ideophone is used to indicate a durative event.

2 Verb Reduplication

2.1 Ambiguity between Singular and Plural Readings in Noun Phrases

Before we discuss verb reduplication and demonstrate that it denotes plurality of the event represented by the reduplicated root, it is necessary to show that Karitiana does not mark the plural of nouns morphologically:

\[ \text{pikom } \varnothing\text{-naka}^2\cdot'y\text{-t asyryty} \]

\( \text{monkey 3-DECL-eat-NFUT banana} \)

‘(The/a) monkey(s) ate (the/a) banana(s).’

As the translation shows, sentence (1) can mean that one or more monkeys—definite or indefinite—ate one or more bananas—definite or indefinite. This raises the following question: if a plural interpretation of the event is always available without verb reduplication, why should reduplication apply at all? Sanchez-Mendes and Müller (2007) give an explanation that will be discussed in section 2.3.

Müller, Storto and Coutinho-Silva (2006a and 2006b) were the first to show that sentences in Karitiana are often ambiguous as a result of the fact that noun phrases headed by common nouns in the language do not have articles

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1 All Karitiana examples are transcribed orthographically. Karitiana orthographic conventions represent five vowel qualities \( a, e, i, o, y \) (the latter represents a high central vowel), as well as phonemic vowel length \( (a\text{-}, e\text{-}, i\text{-}, o\text{-}, y\text{-}) \). Nasal vowels, both short and long, exist in the language, but the orthography only marks vowels as nasal when they are not contiguous to nasal consonants (labial \( m \), alveolar \( n \), palatal \( j \) and velar \( ng \)). Only the latter requires a following vowel to be marked as nasal. The symbol \( j \) represents the nasal palatal in oral environments or the predictable consonantal use of \( i \). Nasal consonants at other points of articulation are pre-oralized \( (bm, dn, gng) \) when preceded by oral vowels or post-oralized \( (mb, nd, ng) \) when followed by them. The pre- and post-oralized allophones of nasals that exist in the language are represented orthographically by \( mb, nd \) and \( ng \). The syllabic pattern is \( (C)V(C) \) and stress falls on the last syllable of a root. Some suffixes have inherent stress, and when they occur in a word, the stress of the suffix is primary and that of the root is secondary (Storto 1999).

2 The allomorphs of the declarative mood are: \text{na-} after null agreement (third persons) and \text{ta-} after overt agreement (first and second persons). The morpheme \text{-ka} is an augmentation of the declarative prefix that is present when the verb stem is stress-initial.