



Reduplicative Words in English Vocabulary: A Literature-Based Analysis

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received May 25, 2026

Revised June 04, 2026

Accepted June 08, 2026

Available online June 13, 2026

Kata Kunci :

Reduplikasi, Pembentukan Kata, Morfologi, Kosakata Bahasa Inggris, Morfem Ekspresif

Keywords:

Reduplication, Word-formation, Morphology, English Vocabulary, Expressive Morphemes

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini mengkaji penggunaan kata reduplikasi dalam kosakata bahasa Inggris dengan menganalisis jenis, pola struktur, dan fungsi komunikatifnya. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif melalui pendekatan studi pustaka dengan sumber data berupa buku, artikel jurnal, dan penelitian terdahulu yang berkaitan dengan reduplikasi dan morfologi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kata reduplikasi dalam bahasa Inggris umumnya diklasifikasikan menjadi reduplikasi penuh, reduplikasi berima, dan reduplikasi ablaut. Selain itu, bentuk reduplikasi terutama berfungsi sebagai unsur ekspresif dan stilistik. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa reduplikasi tetap menjadi unsur yang kreatif dan bermakna dalam kosakata dan komunikasi bahasa Inggris.

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the use of reduplicative words in English vocabulary by analyzing their types, structural patterns, and communicative functions. The study employed a qualitative descriptive method through a library research approach using books, journal articles, and previous studies related to reduplication and morphology. The literature analysis indicates that English reduplicative words are generally classified into full reduplication, rhyming reduplication, and ablaut reduplication. Furthermore, reduplicative forms mainly function as expressive and stylistic elements used to convey emphasis, emotional expression, playfulness, and informal meaning in communication. The study concludes that reduplication remains a creative and meaningful feature of English vocabulary and communication. The study employed a qualitative descriptive design through library research by analyzing 18 scholarly sources related to reduplication and morphology.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a system of communication used by humans to express ideas, thoughts, and feelings. It serves as a fundamental medium of interaction, and its effectiveness is strongly influenced by vocabulary mastery. Vocabulary plays an important role in language learning because words enable speakers to express meaning clearly and effectively. Furthermore, vocabulary continues to develop through various word-formation processes. One of these processes is reduplication, which refers to the repetition of all or part of a word to create new lexical or semantic meanings (Safarova, 2025).

Reduplication is a common linguistic phenomenon found in many languages. It may appear in the form of full reduplication, where an entire word is repeated, or partial reduplication, where only certain sounds or syllables are repeated (Khashimova, 2022). In addition, some reduplicative forms are used for expressive or stylistic purposes, especially in informal speech and popular vocabulary. These forms demonstrate that reduplication contributes to the creativity and diversity of language use (Williams, 2021).

The function of reduplication differs across languages. In some languages, reduplication is used productively for grammatical purposes such as pluralization or intensification. In English, however, reduplication is not commonly used as a grammatical process. Instead, it mainly appears in informal expressions, sound-symbolic vocabulary, idiomatic forms, and playful communication (Dairabekova et al., 2022). Examples such as flip-flop, zig-zag, bye-bye, and teeny-weeny show how English speakers use repeated sounds to create expressive meanings and memorable vocabulary. In addition, studies on slang expressions reveal that reduplicative forms are commonly associated with informal social interaction and expressive language styles (Farhan & Hassan, 2025).

Reduplicative words are also closely related to sound patterns and cognitive processing. Research shows that repeated sound structures are easier to recognize, remember, and process *cognitively* (Kentner et al., 2022). Similarly, studies in neuropsychology indicate that repetitive patterns influence cognitive recognition and memory processes, making reduplicative structures highly memorable in communication (Diamantaras et al., 2023). Because of this, reduplicative words are frequently used in advertising, entertainment, and branding. Recent studies further demonstrate that sound reduplication in brand names increases emotional appeal and attractiveness among consumers (Motoki et al., 2025).

Although reduplication has been widely discussed in linguistic studies, research focusing specifically on the use of reduplicative words in English vocabulary remains limited. Most previous studies discuss reduplication from broader typological or theoretical perspectives (Yuldashovna, 2023). Furthermore, variations of English such as South African English demonstrate that reduplicative forms may continue to develop through borrowing and informal discourse practices (Van Rooy & Wierenga, 2025). Therefore, studying English reduplicative vocabulary is important in order to understand its forms, structures, and communicative functions within modern English usage. Theoretically, this study contributes to morphological studies by clarifying how reduplication functions within a language that does not employ reduplication as a productive grammatical process. The findings may also enrich discussions on expressive morphology and lexical creativity in English.

Previous studies have extensively discussed reduplication from typological, morphological, and cross-linguistic perspectives. However, most studies focus on theoretical discussions of reduplication across languages rather than providing a comprehensive synthesis of reduplicative words specifically found in English vocabulary. In addition, existing studies tend to examine individual aspects such as phonological patterns, expressive functions, or language-specific characteristics separately. Therefore, a literature-based synthesis that integrates the types, structural patterns, and communicative functions of English reduplicative words remains limited. Unlike previous studies that focus on particular dimensions of reduplication, this study integrates morphological, phonological, and communicative perspectives to provide a comprehensive overview of English reduplicative words. The study contributes to the understanding of English word formation by synthesizing findings from recent scholarly literature and identifying common patterns across different studies.

This study aims to analyze the use of reduplicative words in English vocabulary. Specifically, the study identifies the types of reduplicative words found in English, explains their structural patterns, and examines their semantic and communicative functions. Through this analysis, the study contributes to the understanding of English word formation and expressive vocabulary development. Based on these objectives, the study addresses the following research questions: What types of reduplicative words are found in English vocabulary? How are reduplicative words structurally formed in English? What functions do reduplicative words serve in English communication? Answering these questions will provide a comprehensive overview of English reduplication as a morphological phenomenon.

In summary, reduplication represents one of the creative ways vocabulary develops in language. Although English does not have a highly productive reduplication system, reduplicative words still appear frequently in informal expressions and expressive vocabulary. Therefore, analyzing reduplicative words in English vocabulary helps explain how repetition contributes to meaning, style, and communication in the English language.

2. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive method using a library research approach. The research focused on analyzing reduplicative words in English vocabulary through existing academic references, linguistic studies, and scholarly publications. Since the study was based on literature review, no field observation or direct participant involvement was conducted. The data used in this study were obtained from journal articles, books, and previous studies related to reduplication, morphology, and English word formation collected from academic databases such as Google Scholar, Cambridge Core, MDPI, and Semantic Scholar. The data analysis process was conducted through four stages: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.

Data Collection

Data collection was executed by gathering secondary sources relevant to the morphological and typological parameters of reduplication. A total of eighteen scholarly publications, research papers, and theoretical book chapters focusing on morphological duplication, word-formation systems, and cross-linguistic analyses were compiled from major academic indexes (e.g., Google Scholar, Cambridge Core,

MDPI, Semantic Scholar). These texts served as the primary analytical dataset for evaluating English reduplicative patterns within contemporary morphological frameworks.

Data Reduction

After collecting the references, the researcher reduced the data by selecting and focusing only on information directly related to English reduplicative words. During this process, irrelevant discussions and unrelated linguistic topics were excluded. The selected data were categorized into several aspects, including full reduplication, rhyming reduplication, ablaut reduplication, structural patterns, and communicative functions.

Data Display

The reduced data were then organized and presented descriptively to identify similarities, differences, and patterns among reduplicative words. The findings were systematically displayed through narrative explanations and literature analysis matrices in order to make the analysis clearer and easier to interpret. The discussion focused on the structural characteristics, phonological patterns, and semantic functions of reduplicative words in English vocabulary.

Conclusion Drawing and Verification

In the final stage, conclusions were drawn based on the analyzed data and findings. The researcher verified the results by comparing the patterns and functions identified across the collected references to ensure consistency and validity. Through this process, the study produced conclusions regarding the types, structures, and functions of reduplicative words in English vocabulary.

Source Selection Criteria

The sources included in this study met the following criteria:

- a. discussing reduplication or reduplicative word formation,
- b. published in scholarly journals or academic books,
- c. written in English,
- d. relevant to morphology, phonology, or English vocabulary studies.

Sources that did not directly discuss reduplication or lacked academic credibility were excluded.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

Theoretical Matrix of Reduplication Literature

To establish a clear structural framework for analyzing English reduplicative words, a systematic evaluation of the fourteen primary reference sources was conducted. Table 1 displays the structured data mapping out the core focuses, theoretical claims, and morphological contributions of these studies.

Table 1. Literature Analysis Matrix for Reduplicative Morphology

No	Primary Source/Reference	Core Morphological Focus	Key Linguistic Findings & Insights	Analytical Implications for English
1	Source 1: Reduplication in the English Word-Formation	Structural mapping of repetition in English vocabulary.	Proves that English reduplication exists as a marginal but highly structured word-formation system.	Establishes the foundational categories for classifying English repetitions.
2	Source 2: On the Concept of Reduplication in Linguistics	Typological and terminological definitions of duplication.	Highlights that "reduplication" lacks a single definition and remains highly controversial.	Mandates a highly rigid, criteria-based definition for analyzing English datasets.
3	Source 3: Functional Semantics of	Semantic values of repetitive items in colloquial English.	Identifies that English repetitions primarily carry expressive	Shifts analytical focus from rigid syntax rules to expressive lexical functions.

	Reduplicative Elements		meanings and vivid sound-symbolism.	
4	Source 4: Poetics of Reduplicative Word Formation	Cognitive processing, rating, and lexical recall experiments.	Proves a distinct cognitive bias and retention advantage for rhyming/sound reduplications.	Validates the practical pedagogical use of repetitive words in vocabulary acquisition.
5	Source 5: Morphosyntactic Analysis of Reduplication	Generative syntactic architecture of copied elements.	Models duplication as a syntactic spell-out of an inclusion predicate under MDT.	Provides a non-affixal generative approach to trace how double forms are built.
6	Source 6: Word Building Reduplication	Morphological categorization of modern lexical creations.	Evaluates how modern colloquial language creates new words using sound-copying patterns.	Connects historical lexicalized duplicates to modern language evolution.
7	Source 7: Exploring the Phenomenon of Reduplication	Cross-linguistic and cross-cultural structural analysis.	Contrasts high-reduplicating language frameworks against minimal, sporadic systems.	Contextualizes English within a broader typological framework of world languages.
8	Source 8: Reduplication in Distributed Morphology	Post-syntactic node copying within generative grammar.	Articulates that duplication represents a post-syntactic readjustment rule on features.	Supplies the necessary theoretical framework to handle marginal English word-building.
9	Source 9: Correlation Between Reduplication & Discourse	Applied linguistics and syntactic comprehension.	Links clear morphological understanding of repetitive forms directly to advanced discourse processing.	Demonstrates that analyzing reduplicative forms enhances overall language mastery.
10	Source 10: Reduplication as Expressive Morphology	Functional grammar and emotional/expressive marking.	Classifies reduplication as a primary vehicle for marking intensity, diminutiveness, and playfulness.	Helps decode the precise pragmatic motivations of informal English terms.
11	Source 11: Regular Reduplication Across Modalities	Multi-modal language analysis (spoken vs. signed).	Examines how structural repetition maintains fixed phonological constraints across modalities.	Explains the strict vowel and consonant ordering rules seen in English pairs.
12	Source 12: Semiotic Study of Reduplicative Slang	Semiotics, cultural pragmatics, and slang expressions.	Proves that reduplicative slang terms act as semiotic shortcuts to signal informal registers.	Decodes why English duplicates cluster heavily inside highly informal social domains.
13	Source 13: Morpheme-Specific Phonology	Optimality Theory and phonological constraints on stems.	Outlines how localized phonological rules govern the exact form and shape of the copied element.	Models the strict phonetic behaviors governing English vowel changes.
14	Source 14: Non-Affixed Total Reduplication Process	Aspectual marking and total stem duplication models.	Explores how full duplication encodes aspectual qualities (iterative, habitual) within morphology.	Illuminates how full English repetition changes the baseline descriptive weight of words.

15	Source 15: Reduplication in South African Englishes: A What Gets A Life of Its Own	Lexical borrowing, total reduplication, and dialectal variation.	Demonstrates how contact-induced total duplication (e.g., what-what) transitions from a borrowed item into a fully native discourse marker.	Illustrates structural adaptability, showing how non-standard English varieties expand their vocabulary through duplicative adoption.
16	Source 16: Expressivity in European Languages	Cross-linguistic syntactic and morphological parameters of expressives.	Maps structural constraints governing expressive lexical formations across major European language sub-families.	Provides a comparative morphological benchmark to analyze structural variations in English colloquial creations.
17	Source 17: A Unified Morphosyntactic Analysis of Reduplication as Inclusion	Syntactic identity constraints and operational unified doubling.	Reinforces generative syntactic alignment, mapping identical phonological exponents to shared relational inclusion domains.	Enhances formal clarity regarding how the mental grammar constructs compound structures without standard affix operations.
18	Source 18: Foreign Components in Legal English	Structural borrowing, etymological tracing, and specialized sub-registers.	Unpacks how external lexical frameworks and formulaic repetitive doublets integrate into technical historical English registers.	Informs current structural mappings by tracing how specialized sub-registers utilize historical repetitions to ensure legal exactness.

Discussion

Types of Reduplicative Words in English Vocabulary

The analysis of the collected references shows that reduplicative words remain an important part of English vocabulary, especially in informal and expressive communication. Although English does not apply reduplication as a productive grammatical process in the same way as several Asian or African languages, English still possesses a wide range of reduplicative forms used in daily interaction, entertainment, media, advertising, and stylistic expression (Source 1). The findings indicate that reduplicative vocabulary in English is strongly associated with phonological creativity, sound symbolism, and pragmatic meaning rather than with grammatical inflection.

Based on the analyzed data, English reduplicative words can generally be classified into three main categories: full reduplication, rhyming reduplication, and ablaut reduplication. These categories demonstrate different structural and phonological characteristics that contribute to the uniqueness of English vocabulary. The first category is full reduplication, which involves the direct repetition of an identical lexical item without any phonological modification. This type is commonly found in informal speech, child-directed language, and colloquial communication. Examples include *bye-bye*, *goody-goody*, *no-no*, *go-go*, and *night-night*. These expressions often create soft, playful, or emphatic effects in communication. In many cases, full reduplication simplifies pronunciation and increases memorability because repeated sound structures are easier to recognize cognitively. Source 14 explains that full duplication may strengthen iterative or emphatic meaning by intensifying the semantic value of the original lexical form. In addition, full reduplication frequently appears in spoken interaction because the repeated structure creates rhythm and familiarity.

Another important finding is that full reduplication in English is commonly associated with emotional or interpersonal communication. Expressions such as *bye-bye* and *night-night* are frequently used in conversations with children because repeated forms sound more affectionate, simple, and emotionally engaging. This indicates that reduplication not only functions linguistically but also serves social and communicative purposes in everyday interaction. Furthermore, some full reduplications develop into lexicalized forms that become permanently stored in English vocabulary. These forms are no longer perceived as temporary repetitions but instead function as independent lexical units recognized by speakers.

The second category identified in the analysis is rhyming reduplication. In this type, the repeated word changes the initial consonant while maintaining similar rhyme structures. Examples include *super-*

duper, hocus-pocus, lovey-dovey, boogie-woogie, and teeny-weeny. These forms rely heavily on sound similarity and rhythmic balance, making them highly memorable and aesthetically attractive. According to Source 4, rhyming reduplication creates strong cognitive salience because speakers tend to remember rhythmic and repetitive sound structures more easily than ordinary lexical forms.

Rhyming reduplication also contributes significantly to expressive communication. These forms often appear in popular culture, entertainment, songs, advertisements, and humorous expressions because they create playful and emotionally engaging effects. Source 12 explains that reduplicative slang expressions commonly function as semiotic markers of informality and social identity. This means that speakers use these forms not only to convey literal meaning but also to create particular interpersonal impressions, such as friendliness, humor, or emotional closeness.

In addition, rhyming reduplication frequently appears in branding and marketing because repeated sound structures attract attention and are easier to recall. Modern linguistic studies reveal that reduplicative sound patterns positively influence emotional responses and memorability among consumers. This explains why rhythmic and repetitive expressions are often selected as brand names, slogans, and media titles. Therefore, rhyming reduplication demonstrates how phonological repetition contributes directly to communication effectiveness and audience engagement.

The third category found in the analysis is ablaut reduplication, which involves changes in vowel sounds while maintaining relatively similar consonantal structures. Common examples include flip-flop, zig-zag, tick-tock, ding-dong, criss-cross, and ping-pong. Unlike rhyming reduplication, ablaut reduplication focuses on internal vowel alternation rather than rhyme similarity. The findings indicate that this pattern follows relatively fixed phonological ordering rules rather than random sound variation.

Source 11 explains that reduplicative structures often maintain systematic phonological constraints across different linguistic systems. Similarly, Source 13 highlights that localized phonological rules strongly influence the final shape of reduplicative forms. In English ablaut reduplication, vowel ordering patterns usually move from high front vowels toward lower or back vowels, creating recognizable sound sequences. For example, expressions such as tick-tock and ding-dong demonstrate structured vowel movement rather than arbitrary alternation.

Ablaut reduplication also contributes to sound symbolism in English vocabulary. Many expressions imitate movements, actions, or sounds occurring in the physical world. For instance, tick-tock imitates the repeated sound of a clock, while ding-dong represents repeated ringing sounds. This demonstrates that reduplication functions iconically by reflecting repetition in meaning through repetition in sound structure. Consequently, English reduplicative vocabulary often creates vivid sensory imagery that strengthens communication effectiveness.

The findings further reveal that English reduplicative words are predominantly associated with expressive morphology rather than grammatical morphology. Unlike languages that use reduplication for pluralization, tense marking, or derivational processes, English mainly employs reduplication for stylistic, emotional, and pragmatic purposes. Source 10 classifies reduplication as an expressive morphological strategy that conveys intensity, playfulness, emphasis, and emotional nuance. Therefore, reduplicative vocabulary in English functions primarily as a creative communicative resource rather than as a grammatical necessity.

Another important finding is that English reduplicative forms continue to evolve through informal discourse and cultural influence. Source 15 demonstrates that varieties such as South African English have developed unique reduplicative forms through borrowing and language contact. Expressions such as what-what illustrate how non-standard reduplicative constructions may eventually become established discourse markers within particular speech communities. This finding suggests that reduplication remains a dynamic and evolving feature of English vocabulary despite its limited grammatical productivity.

Overall, the analysis confirms that English reduplicative words represent a highly structured and meaningful aspect of vocabulary formation. Although reduplication occupies a marginal position within English grammar, its phonological attractiveness, expressive flexibility, and communicative functions ensure its continued presence in modern English usage. The diversity of reduplicative forms also demonstrates the creative potential of sound repetition in shaping vocabulary and enhancing interaction.

A comparison of the three categories indicates that rhyming and ablaut reduplication are more prominent in contemporary English usage than full reduplication. While full reduplication is commonly associated with child-directed speech and interpersonal interaction, rhyming and ablaut reduplication frequently occur in media, advertising, and popular culture. This suggests that phonological variation contributes to greater memorability and communicative effectiveness in modern English vocabulary. Therefore, English speakers tend to favor reduplicative forms that combine repetition with sound variation rather than exact repetition alone.

Structural Patterns of English Reduplicative Words

The analysis reveals that reduplicative words in English vocabulary are formed through systematic phonological repetition and structural modification rather than through ordinary affixation processes. Unlike traditional word formation processes such as prefixation or suffixation, reduplication involves the repetition of lexical elements either fully or partially. The findings indicate that English reduplicative structures rely heavily on sound patterns, rhythmic balance, and phonological symmetry, which contribute to their memorability and expressive quality.

Based on the analyzed references, the structural formation of English reduplicative words can generally be divided into full repetition patterns and partial repetition patterns. Full reduplication involves the exact repetition of the same lexical item without phonological alteration. Examples such as *bye-bye*, *night-night*, *go-go*, and *no-no* demonstrate this structure clearly. In these forms, the repeated word creates rhythmic balance and strengthens emphasis or emotional tone. Source 1 explains that although English does not use reduplication productively in grammar, repeated lexical structures still appear consistently within informal vocabulary systems.

The findings further show that full reduplication frequently occurs in spoken interaction because it simplifies pronunciation and improves familiarity. In conversations involving children or close interpersonal relationships, repeated forms sound softer and more emotionally engaging than ordinary lexical expressions. This indicates that structural repetition contributes not only to phonological simplicity but also to communicative intimacy. Moreover, many full reduplicative forms eventually become lexicalized and are recognized as fixed vocabulary items rather than temporary repetitions produced spontaneously in speech.

Another major structural pattern identified in this study is rhyming reduplication. In this structure, the second lexical element changes the initial consonant while maintaining similar rhyme and syllabic patterns. Examples such as *super-duper*, *love-dovey*, *teeny-weeny*, and *hocus-pocus* illustrate this process. These forms create strong phonological harmony because the repeated elements share similar sound endings and rhythmic structures.

According to Source 4, rhyming reduplication possesses high cognitive salience because rhythmic sound repetition is easier for speakers and listeners to process and recall. This explains why rhyming reduplication frequently appears in songs, advertisements, slogans, and entertainment media. The repeated rhyme patterns produce a musical and memorable effect that strengthens audience attention and emotional engagement. In addition, Source 12 explains that rhyming reduplication commonly functions as a marker of informal or playful communication within social interaction.

The analysis also demonstrates that rhyming reduplication reflects the creative flexibility of English phonology. Speakers often manipulate sounds intentionally to produce aesthetically pleasing expressions without changing the core semantic meaning significantly. This structural flexibility allows reduplicative forms to develop continuously in popular culture, social media communication, and branding practices. Therefore, rhyming reduplication illustrates how sound repetition functions as both a linguistic and stylistic strategy in English vocabulary.

The third structural pattern identified in the findings is ablaut reduplication, which involves internal vowel alternation while maintaining relatively stable consonantal structures. Examples include *flip-flop*, *zig-zag*, *ding-dong*, *tick-tock*, and *ping-pong*. Unlike rhyming reduplication, ablaut reduplication does not preserve identical rhyme endings; instead, it creates contrast through vowel variation.

The findings indicate that vowel alternation in English reduplicative words follows relatively systematic phonological ordering patterns. Source 11 explains that reduplicative forms across languages often obey fixed phonological constraints, while Source 13 emphasizes that localized phonological rules determine the shape of copied structures. In English ablaut reduplication, speakers generally prefer vowel movement patterns that progress from high front vowels toward lower or back vowels. This explains why forms such as *tick-tock* sound more natural than reversed alternatives.

Furthermore, ablaut reduplication contributes significantly to sound symbolism. Many of these forms imitate repetitive physical movements, sounds, or visual patterns occurring in everyday life. For example, *zig-zag* represents repeated directional movement, while *ding-dong* imitates repeated ringing sounds. Through these sound patterns, speakers create iconic relationships between phonological repetition and real-world repetition. Consequently, reduplicative vocabulary becomes highly vivid, expressive, and memorable in communication.

The findings also reveal that English reduplicative structures cannot be fully explained through traditional affixation theories. Source 8 explains that reduplication may be analyzed as a post-syntactic copying process within Distributed Morphology, where structural duplication occurs after syntactic operations are completed. Similarly, Source 17 proposes that reduplicative forms emerge through structural doubling mechanisms that create parallel lexical representations rather than through simple

linear attachment processes. These theoretical perspectives help explain why reduplicative structures display unique phonological and morphological behavior compared to ordinary English word formation patterns.

In addition, the analysis indicates that reduplicative structures contribute strongly to lexical memorability and cognitive processing. Repeated sound patterns are easier to recognize, pronounce, and store in memory because the human brain naturally responds positively to rhythm and symmetry. This explains why reduplicative vocabulary is commonly used in educational contexts, advertising, media communication, and entertainment industries. The repetition itself strengthens phonological recognition and increases audience engagement.

Another important structural finding is that English reduplicative forms often appear in highly informal registers rather than formal academic or technical communication. Most reduplicative expressions are associated with spoken interaction, humor, emotional expression, and casual discourse. However, Source 18 demonstrates that repetitive lexical structures may also appear in specialized registers such as legal English, particularly in historical formulaic expressions and fixed lexical pairings. This finding shows that reduplicative structures are more flexible and widespread across communicative contexts than commonly assumed.

From a morphological perspective, the findings support the view that English reduplication functions as a non-affixational word-formation process. Unlike derivation and inflection, reduplication creates new lexical expressions through phonological repetition rather than the addition of grammatical morphemes. This confirms previous theories that classify English reduplication as a marginal but systematic morphological phenomenon.

Functions of Reduplicative Words in English Communication

The structural regularity found in reduplicative words may also explain their cognitive advantages. Repeated sound patterns facilitate memory retention and lexical recognition, making reduplicative expressions easier to process and recall than ordinary lexical items. This may explain why such forms remain productive in advertising, entertainment, and informal communication.

The findings show that reduplicative words in English primarily function as expressive and pragmatic vocabulary. Unlike languages that employ reduplication productively for pluralization, aspectual marking, or derivational purposes, English mainly uses reduplicative structures to strengthen emotional expression, create rhythmic effects, and increase communicative emphasis. These findings demonstrate that reduplication in English operates more prominently within vocabulary creativity and discourse interaction than within formal grammatical systems.

One major function of reduplicative words is expressive communication. Repetitive sound structures allow speakers to convey emotional nuance, playfulness, evaluation, and interpersonal attitude more effectively. Source 10 explains that reduplication functions as expressive morphology because repeated lexical patterns naturally intensify emotional and stylistic meaning. In English communication, this expressive function frequently appears in casual interaction, entertainment discourse, advertising language, and popular culture. As a result, reduplicative forms often create a more relaxed, humorous, or emotionally engaging atmosphere compared to ordinary lexical expressions.

The findings also show that reduplication contributes significantly to pragmatic emphasis and stylistic intensification. Repetition helps speakers highlight important meanings, strengthen descriptive force, and direct listener attention toward specific communicative intentions. In discourse, reduplicative structures may emphasize authenticity, emotional intensity, or exaggeration depending on the conversational context. This demonstrates that repetition in English vocabulary serves not only phonological purposes but also pragmatic and interactional functions within communication.

Cross-linguistic evidence further supports the communicative importance of reduplication. In Chinese, reduplication frequently functions to express repetition, intensification, or distributive meaning within grammatical constructions. Arabic dialects similarly utilize reduplicative sound patterns for expressive and emphatic purposes in spoken interaction. These comparisons indicate that although English reduplication is less grammatically productive, its communicative functions remain closely connected to broader linguistic tendencies found across different languages.

Another important function identified in the analysis is sound symbolism. Reduplicative structures often imitate repeated movements, sounds, or sensory experiences, creating direct associations between phonological repetition and real-world repetition. Through this iconic relationship, reduplicative vocabulary becomes more vivid, memorable, and communicatively effective. The repetitive sound patterns strengthen imagery and improve listener interpretation, particularly within spoken discourse and informal communication.

The findings additionally reveal that reduplicative vocabulary contributes strongly to cognitive processing and lexical memorability. Source 4 explains that repeated sound structures are easier for speakers and listeners to recognize, process, and recall because the human brain naturally responds positively to rhythm, balance, and symmetry. Similarly, Source 9 highlights that understanding repetitive morphological structures supports vocabulary comprehension and discourse interpretation. This suggests that reduplicative vocabulary may support language learning by improving pronunciation awareness, vocabulary retention, and listening comprehension.

Another significant finding is that reduplicative forms are widely used in branding, media discourse, entertainment, and advertising because repetitive phonological structures attract attention effectively. Rhythmic sound repetition increases memorability and emotional appeal, making reduplicative vocabulary highly suitable for persuasive and audience-oriented communication. Studies related to sound symbolism and lexical attraction also indicate that repeated sound structures positively influence audience perception and engagement.

The analysis further demonstrates that reduplicative words function predominantly within informal communication rather than formal academic discourse. Most reduplicative expressions appear in spoken interaction, casual conversation, humor, and popular culture because these contexts allow greater stylistic flexibility and expressive creativity. Nevertheless, some repetitive lexical structures may also appear in specialized registers and historical formulaic expressions, indicating that reduplication is more adaptable across communicative contexts than commonly assumed.

Language contact and cultural interaction additionally contribute to the development of reduplicative vocabulary in different English varieties. The findings show that certain reduplicative expressions emerging from borrowing processes may eventually become established discourse markers within local speech communities. This demonstrates that reduplication remains a dynamic linguistic feature capable of adapting to social, cultural, and communicative change.

These findings confirm that reduplicative words continue to play an important role in English communication despite their limited grammatical productivity. Through expressive meaning, stylistic emphasis, sound symbolism, cognitive support, and communicative creativity, reduplication remains a meaningful component of English vocabulary development and everyday interaction.

Although reduplicative forms contribute significantly to expressive communication, not all repetitive expressions can automatically be categorized as reduplication. Some expressions may function as lexical compounds or fixed collocations rather than genuine reduplicative constructions. This indicates that the boundary between reduplication and other word-formation processes remains open to further investigation.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that reduplicative words have an important role in English vocabulary, especially in informal, expressive, and stylistic communication. Theoretically, the study contributes to morphological research by demonstrating that reduplication in English functions primarily as an expressive lexical mechanism rather than a productive grammatical process. The findings reinforce the role of sound repetition as an important strategy in English word formation. Practically, the findings may help English teachers, students, and language learners better understand creative vocabulary formation and the communicative functions of reduplicative expressions. The study may also support vocabulary teaching by introducing learners to expressive and stylistically meaningful lexical forms. The analysis identified three major types of reduplication in English, namely full reduplication, rhyming reduplication, and ablaut reduplication, each characterized by distinctive phonological patterns and structures. Although English does not use reduplication as a productive grammatical process, reduplicative words such as *bye-bye*, *super-duper*, and *flip-flop* remain widely used in everyday communication, entertainment, advertising, and branding because they are memorable, expressive, and easy to process cognitively. Furthermore, reduplicative words serve important functions such as emphasizing meaning, expressing emotions, creating playful effects, and imitating sounds or repeated actions. Therefore, this study contributes to the understanding of English word formation by showing that reduplication, although limited in English, remains a creative and meaningful feature of modern English vocabulary.

Future studies are recommended to employ corpus-based methods or empirical analyses to investigate the frequency, distribution, and contextual usage of reduplicative words in contemporary English. Further research may also compare reduplicative patterns across different English varieties to provide a broader understanding of their linguistic development.

5. ACKNOWLEDGES

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the lecturers of the English Education Study Program at Institut Pendidikan Tapanuli Selatan for their valuable guidance, support, and encouragement during the completion of this article. Special appreciation is also addressed to friends and colleagues who contributed ideas, motivation, and constructive suggestions for the improvement of this study. Finally, the authors would like to thank all researchers and scholars whose works and previous studies on morphology and reduplication provided important references for this article.

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