CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF REDUPLICATION IN SUNDANESE AND BAHASA INDONESIA

Sri Handayani[1], Rani Rachmatriyani[2], Nabilah Citra Azzahra[3], Imelda Saskia[4], Aulia Citra Dewi[5]

[1]*English Department, Universitas Kebangsaan Republik Indonesia, Indonesia*
[2,3,4,5] *English Department, Widyatama University, Indonesia*

Corresponding author
nabilah.azzahra@widyatama.ac.id

Abstract: This study, titled "Contrastive Analysis of Reduplication in Sundanese and Bahasa Indonesia," explores the linguistic phenomenon of reduplication in two closely related Austronesian languages spoken in Indonesia. Reduplication, a process where a word or part of a word is repeated to express various grammatical or semantic functions, plays a crucial role in both languages but in distinct ways. The aim of this research is to identify the similarities and differences in the types, forms, and meanings of reduplication in Sundanese and Bahasa Indonesia, with a view to understanding how language structure reflects cultural and communicative needs. Using a qualitative descriptive method within a contrastive analysis framework, the study examines data from both written and spoken sources, including traditional texts, modern media, and everyday conversation. The study reveals that while both languages use reduplication for similar functions—such as indicating plurality or intensity—there are notable differences in form, usage rules, and cultural significance. For example, Sundanese often exhibits more phonological variation in reduplicated forms, and some reduplications carry idiomatic or culturally embedded meanings not found in Bahasa Indonesia. Furthermore, the study highlights the pedagogical implications of these findings for language teaching, particularly for bilingual speakers, second-language learners, and educators designing curriculum materials for regional and national language integration. It also emphasizes the importance of preserving local languages like Sundanese, whose unique grammatical features contribute to Indonesia's rich linguistic heritage. In conclusion, this contrastive analysis not only contributes to the field of comparative linguistics but also provides practical insights into how language structure and meaning evolve in relation to cultural and social context.

INTRODUCTION

Reduplication is a captivating linguistic phenomenon that is inherent in the morphological patterns of the majority of languages, particularly those spoken in Southeast Asia. Reduplication refers to the copying of an entire word or the portion of a word with the aim of conveying various meanings such as but not limited to plurality, strength, or the way an action is carried out. The current study focuses on a comparative study of reduplication in Sundanese and Bahasa Indonesia, two linguistically close languages with high morphological complexities. The exact origins of reduplication are unknown; however, it is widely understood that the linguistic process occurs in a wide range of languages globally.

Chaer (2003) hypothesizes that "reduplication is a morphemic process that involves repeating base forms, either wholly or partially" (p. 182). Similarly, Soedjito (1995) defines it as "the process of word formation by repeating base forms, whether fully or partially, with or without phonemic variation" (p. 109). This indicates the morphological importance of reduplication in linguistic structure. Reduplication in Indonesia is very common and is employed not just for Bahasa Indonesia but also for other regional languages like Sundanese. The occurrence of the reduplicated forms has additional linguistic diversity and has created a host of studies trying to identify and categorize the different types of reduplication found in the languages. Based on Ramlan (1985), "the process of reduplication involves the repetition of grammatical units, either entirely or partially" (p. 57).

The characteristics of reduplicated lexemes generally include grammatical meaning and consist of a combination of morphemes but with an essential structure. Significantly, the grammatical class of the original word is not changed after reduplication; for example, reduplication of a noun will still be a noun. This sort of consistency allows for easy communication and understanding in Sundanese as well as Bahasa Indonesia. The purpose of this research is to discuss the different types of reduplication in Sundanese and Bahasa Indonesia by assessing their similarities and differences. Through a comparison of examples used in the two languages, the research aims to identify the distinctive way that these linguistic processes occur, as well as acknowledge the trends that are shared. The results will help to further understand linguistic diversity and supply useful information to teachers who instruct in these languages.

Moreover, in many Austronesian languages such as Sundanese and Bahasa Indonesia, reduplication serves not only a grammatical function but also a cultural one. Language is inherently tied to the worldview of its speakers, and reduplication often reflects nuances of politeness, repetition in daily life, or emphasis in storytelling and conversation. In Sundanese, for example, reduplication can carry polite connotations or express gentleness, while in Bahasa Indonesia, it may be used to soften commands or enhance clarity. Understanding these cultural-linguistic dimensions is essential to appreciate how reduplication functions beyond mere morphology and syntax.

Typologically, reduplication can be classified into several forms: complete (full) reduplication, where the whole base word is repeated; partial reduplication, where only a segment of the base is repeated; and affixed reduplication, where reduplication is combined with affixation. Some forms even include reduplication with phonological variation, in which the repeated word undergoes slight changes in sounds or tones. Each type may serve different purposes—plurality (*rumah-rumah*, houses), iteration (*lari-lari*, running around), intensity (*cepat-cepat*, very quickly), or category shifting. Identifying these forms is a key step in analyzing how reduplication contributes to meaning construction.

From a morphological standpoint, reduplication is particularly significant in agglutinative languages like Sundanese and Bahasa Indonesia, where morphemes are added in sequences to form words. Unlike inflectional languages where grammar is often encoded within internal changes or affixes, agglutinative languages frequently use reduplication as a productive morphological strategy. As such, the process of reduplication becomes a vital part of the lexicon expansion and meaning differentiation in these languages, filling in where suffixes or inflections might be used in other language families. Additionally, understanding reduplication has practical implications for language teaching, translation studies, and linguistic preservation. With the increasing integration of regional languages into the national education curriculum, teachers must be equipped to explain

how and why reduplication works differently across languages. For translators, recognizing the nuances of reduplicated forms ensures better accuracy when conveying emphasis or repetition. Finally, as language shift and loss continue to affect local languages; descriptive studies like this one help document unique grammatical features that may otherwise disappear.

METHOD

This study adopts a contrastive analysis orientation in investigating the reduplication process in Sundanese and Bahasa Indonesia. The overall objective is to compare and analyze the various forms of reduplication in the two languages, especially their structural features and semantic meanings. The study uses qualitative methods in gathering information from various sources, including linguistic materials, research papers, and native speaker feedback. The corpus contains examples of Sundanese and Bahasa Indonesia reduplicated words, selected to represent each language's pattern of reduplication. The words are selected on the basis of linguistic variation and richness such that a comprehensive analysis can be performed.

To construct the corpus, the researcher gathered data from multiple sources, including printed texts (such as dictionaries, traditional stories, schoolbooks, and language learning resources), as well as spoken discourse collected through casual conversation, interviews with native speakers, and transcriptions of multimedia content such as radio broadcasts and YouTube videos. These sources ensure that the examples reflect both formal and informal usage in real communicative contexts. Special attention was given to the natural occurrence of reduplication, avoiding artificially constructed or overly prescriptive examples.

The selected data were categorized according to the type of reduplication (e.g., full, partial, affixed, phonologically altered) and its grammatical category (e.g., noun, verb, adjective). Each example was analyzed in terms of its form (morphological structure) and function (semantic contribution). For instance, the noun reduplication *buku-buku* (books) in Bahasa Indonesia and *imah-imah* (houses) in Sundanese were analyzed for how they express plurality. In contrast, verbs like *lari-lari* (running around) or *cicing-cicing* (remaining still) were examined for semantic effects such as intensity, repetition, or habitual action.

The research also integrates informant validation, where native speakers of both Sundanese and Bahasa Indonesia were consulted to verify the meaning and usage of reduplicated forms in contemporary settings. These consultations were conducted through informal interviews and structured questionnaires. Informants were asked to explain the function of each form, provide synonymous alternatives, and identify whether certain reduplications were archaic, formal, colloquial, or context-specific. Data analysis followed a descriptive-interpretive approach, where patterns of similarity and difference were identified and interpreted in light of linguistic theories on reduplication, morphology, and language typology. The findings were then grouped into categories reflecting structural and semantic trends, such as pluralization, habitual action, emphasis, diminutiveness, or politeness. Where applicable, the study also included discussion on idiomatic or culturally specific usages of reduplication. The results were cross-referenced with existing literature to determine whether observed patterns aligned with, expanded upon, or contradicted prior research. This allowed the study to contribute not only to the understanding of Sundanese and Bahasa Indonesia but also to the broader field of contrastive and comparative linguistics.

(Handayani, Sri,. et. al., Contrastive Analysis of Reduplication in Sundanese And Bahasa, 2025)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Here, we provide an in-depth analysis of Sundanese and Bahasa Indonesia reduplication, its diverse forms, functions, and implications on linguistic structures and sociolinguistic contexts. By analyzing these factors, we aspire to be able to describe the importance of reduplication as a significant morphological feature in the two languages.

Data 1

Reduplication in Morphological Structures

Reduplication is a strong morphological device that adds structural richness to Sundanese and Bahasa Indonesia. It allows speakers to modify the sense of words, often to indicate plurality, intensity, or continuity. To illustrate, in Bahasa Indonesia, "anak" (child) can be transformed into "anak-anak," which means "children." This form not only indicates plurality but implies a sense of communal or group affiliation among children. In Sundanese, "budak" (child) becomes "budak-budak," which further marks more than one child within a social group. Chaer (2003) claims that "the morphological function of reduplication is to form new lexical items with certain grammatical meanings" (p. 182). This implies that reduplication has a function beyond repetition; it is a critical process of building new meaning. Having such a facility enhances the expressive potential of languages so that speakers can express complex ideas concisely.

In addition, the use of distributed reduplication theory explains why some structures vary from language to language. Whereas Indonesian and Javanese realize full reduplication with senses of repetition, reciprocals, goal uncertainty, and intensification— all based on three morphemes—their Sundanese equivalents only emphasize reciprocals and intensifiers using two morphemes12. The variation illustrates how linguistic groups in the Austronesian branch modify reduplicatory mechanisms based on their respective grammatical requirements.

By building on these findings of linguistic study—and integrating them with real-world applications—it is clear that competence in reduplication lies at the center of successful communication in Sundanese-speaking areas and broader Indonesian settings. Teachers who want to instruct these languages would be well advised to incorporate reduplication training into curricula; this would provide students with more sophisticated vocabularies better able to convey finer nuances of meaning effectively15.

Ultimately, an appreciation for the different functions of reduplication underscores its pivotal position within Austronesian morphological systems—a reflection of the creative power of humankind in conceiving communicative tools designed to express complexity via simplicity.

Data 2

Semantic Implications of Reduplication

The semantic effects of reduplication are the same in both languages. Complete reduplication tends to carry a connotation of abundance or intensity. The verb "lari" (to run), for instance, can be reduplicated to "lari-lari," implying not only a repeated action but an intensified or spirited form of running. In Sundanese, the same kind of change happens with "ngapung" (to fly), which is reduplicated to "ngapung-ngapung," implying a lively or playful form of flying.

Soedjito (1995) claimed that "the semantic load carried by reduplicated forms can add expressiveness to communication" (p. 109). This extra expressiveness is particularly useful in everyday conversations, in which speakers need to express more strongly emotions or states. Reduplicated forms are also used to make adjectives stronger; for instance, "besar" (big) can be reduplicated as "besar-besar," denoting something extremely

big or huge.

Furthermore, reduplication is also employed to indicate repetitive or continuous actions or processes. Here, constructions such as "makan-makan" (to eat) describe continuous or repeated action as opposed to an event that happens once. This aspect is very useful in the context of narration when the speaker desires to emphasize repetitive practice or habitual actions.

Other than adjectives and verbs, reduplication extends beyond these to noun phrases as well, thus increasing their expressive value. For instance, "buku-buku" (books) not only indicates a number of books but also implies a group or set of books that can vary in terms of kinds or types. Such plurality enhances the language in that it allows the speakers to convey shades of meaning which otherwise would be lost to singularity.

The semantic impact of reduplication is brought out by its role in social interaction. In informal speech, reduplicated words have the effect of softening the force of requests or commands, making them friendlier or more polite. For example, "tolong ambilkan air-air" (please get some water) is less commanding and more hospitable than a direct request for water. This role reflects the politeness and social harmony norms in Indonesian and Sundanese societies.

As Agus Subiyanto (2018) notes, "the semantic functions of full reduplication include repetition, intensity, and reciprocal actions" (p. 33). This multi-functionality means that reduplication is a linguistic device that not only allows expressiveness but also embodies the cultural values that the language conveys. An awareness of such semantic undertones is essential for both learners and teachers as it equips them with the requisite knowledge to decode complex sentences and interact more intensely with the Bahasa Indonesia and Sundanese cultural contexts.

Data 3
Phonological Variations

Phonological reduplication variations differ significantly in Bahasa Indonesia and Sundanese. Phonetic variation is possible in reduplication in Bahasa Indonesia, such as "sayur-sayuran" (vegetables), in which the "-an" suffix conveys collective meaning. Such phonological adjustment provides flexibility in word construction without affecting meaning intelligibility. Conversely, the Sundanese language would retain a more monosyllabic phonetic form in forming reduplicated words. For example, the term "sayur" would be retained as "sayursayuran," although with definite phonetic changes that reflect the features of Sundanese phonology. According to Ramlan (1985), "the phonological rules for reduplication can vary widely across languages, affecting how meaning is established" (p. 57). These differences reflect the vast influence of phonetics on the grammatical makeup of specific languages.

Conversely, Sundanese phonology is more liberal in syllable structure for reduplication. The underlying phonetic structure of the language may lead to vowel quality variation or consonant clusters, indicating regional dialect features or speaker characteristics. For instance, the word "cahaya" (light) can be reduplicated as "cahaya-cahaya," but certain dialects can form variant forms such as "cahayah-cahayah," with the final vowel altered for easier pronunciation. This flexibility illustrates how Sundanese speakers navigate their sound environment while at the same time adhering to the general grammatical rules of their language.

In addition, the interaction between phonology and morphology in reduplication is also capable of providing an insight into language development and language contact. According to Sato and McDonnell (2019), "the interaction between morphological

operations and phonological processes tends to leave characteristic imprints of earlier changes in the language" (p. 5). The above sentence is especially applicable in the Indonesian context, where languages are likely to be borrowed from each other because of cultural exchanges. For example, contact with Bahasa Indonesia may influence Sundanese speakers to embed certain phonological aspects in reduplication activities, resulting in hybrid forms which blend features of the two languages.

The knowledge about these differences in phonology is of the utmost importance to learners and linguists alike. Learners can then appreciate further the intricacies involved in reduplication as a linguistic process based on identification with the application of different phonetic rules across different languages. Trainers can utilise this knowledge for designing specific lessons on phonology differences, improving students' comprehensive understanding of both Bahasa Indonesia and Sundanese as a whole.

Data 4
Sociolinguistic Context

Sociolinguistic context is also responsible for conditioning the use and understanding of reduplication in both languages. In casual contexts, it is natural for people to use reduplicated words more frequently as a sign of familiarity or closeness. For example, endearments usually involve reduplication; "bunda-bunda" (motherly) in Indonesian is used to express affection and closeness towards mothers or mother figures. Corresponding Sundanese usage is also common; e.g., "kekasih-kekasih" is employed to refer to sweethearts or loved ones and conveys nearness on an affective level. Reduplication in such cases reflects cultural assumptions regarding family and personal relationships, which emphasize interdependencies between individuals.

Furthermore, the sociolinguistic variables, including social stratification and geographical dialects, can have a significant bearing on the use of reduplicated forms. Certain groups can prefer specific kinds of varieties of reduplication based on local fashion or linguistic trends. These sorts of sociolinguistic variables are crucial in making sense of language's position in social contexts and its historical development.

It is imperative that these sociolinguistic dimensions be known so that we may identify the mechanisms by which language functions in society and evolves further. Language's relationship to social identity is most apparent in Indonesia, with ethnic diversity producing a rich matrix of linguistic practice. Subiyanto (2018) sees that "the social context not only shapes language use but also affects the perception of identity among speakers" (p. 34). This recognition highlights the significance of reduplication as a signal of identity that allows speakers to successfully negotiate their social worlds.

Moreover, the deployment of code-switching—when speakers switch between languages—typically involves reduplicated forms as a way to convey cultural subtleties. For example, a Sundanese speaker may code-switch to Bahasa Indonesia but retain the reduplicated form to emphasize, i.e., "makan-makan" when referring to a family reunion in predominantly Indonesian-speaking environments. Such flexibility is an excellent example of how speakers deploy their linguistic repertoire to express meanings that are significant to their hearers.

Within schools, an awareness of the sociolinguistic nature of reduplication can result in enhanced language teaching by the promotion of cultural context awareness among students. Teachers who provide explanations of how and why particular forms are used in particular social contexts can make learners more appreciative of the language. Through a focus on the significance of sociolinguistic awareness, teachers can condition learners to be able to use Sundanese and Bahasa Indonesia more naturally in different contexts.

Data 5

Educational Implications

Knowing the complexity of reduplication has important instructional implications for both language learners and teachers. The inclusion of reduplication instruction can serve to strengthen learners' awareness of morphological constructs and enhance their capacity for communication in both languages. As Putri (2017) noted, "teaching reduplication not only enables vocabulary learning but also enhances students' knowledge of grammatical complexity" (p. 10). This is supported by the need for teacher emphasis on the role of these linguistic structures in language education. With inclusion of reduplicated forms in educational curriculum, instructors are able to provide students with the tools to navigate more effectively difficult linguistic landscapes.

In addition, sensitivity to the cultural significance of reduplication can foster students' enjoyment of linguistic diversity. Accessing cross-cultural understanding in more familiar ways using examples from both languages can open learners up to their interest and willingness to explore the wealth of their own linguistic heritage. Furthermore, recognition of the cultural significance of reduplication would make learners more appreciative of linguistic diversity. By exposing learners to examples from both languages, teachers will be able to promote cross-cultural sensitivity and get students to appreciate the richness of their own linguistic heritage. For instance, teachers can introduce activities that tap into storytelling in terms of reduplicated forms as a means of engaging learners directly with the expressive potential of language. This experiential learning strategy is used to not only reinforce their understanding of reduplication but also their ability to use it creatively in their written and verbal communication.

In addition, the incorporation of technology in language instruction can greatly enhance the learning process. Computer programs can provide interactive drills and games on reduplication, thus making student participation more effective in the process. For example, computerized quizzes that demand learners to identify or produce reduplicated forms can reinforce their understanding while providing instant feedback. Such tools can access different learning styles, ensuring all learners are given the chance to acquire a thorough understanding of these concepts.

Moreover, the ongoing professional development of teachers is central to providing them with adequate knowledge and skills to teach the subject of reduplication competently. Interactive workshops and specially tailored training with a focus on morphological aspects such as reduplication can assist teachers in deriving strategies for incorporating such subjects into their pedagogy. By generating a deeper insight in teachers, we can ensure that they will be adequately equipped to guide their learners towards mastering the intricacies of language.

CONCLUSION

The current study has contrasted the process of reduplication in the case of Sundanese and Bahasa Indonesia, highlighting its function as a process of morphology that enriches both languages. By exploring in detail the various forms of reduplication—full, partial, phonetic substitution, trilingual, affixed, and pseudo reduplication—we have established the major similarities and contrasts regarding the existence of these phenomena in both languages.

Complete reduplication is employed to mark plurality and degree, but incomplete reduplication allows for nuanced interpretations that have relation to the original speech acts. Phonetic alternation also discloses the distinctive phonological rules of each language that govern the formation of meaning. Beyond this, sociolinguistic context plays a

significant role in deciding the use of reduplicated constructions, reflecting cultural norms and emotional resonance in communication.

Also, the discussion emphasizes the pedagogical value of understanding reduplication. With the incorporation of instruction on this linguistic feature in language courses, teachers can enable learners to expand their vocabulary and their knowledge of grammar. Being conscious of the cultural significance of reduplication can also foster learners' appreciation of linguistic diversity.

In short, the study of Sundanese and Bahasa Indonesian reduplication not only increases our understanding of the two languages but also highlights the mutually constitutive nature of linguistic form and social context. Future research might examine in more detail how reduplication evolves as a response to sociolinguistic change and how it has implications for language teaching and learning in various contexts.

REFERENCES

Chaer, A. (2003). Linguistik Umum. Rineka Cipta.

Putri, R. A. (2017). Analysis Contrastive Reduplication Language Javanese With Infonesia. Journal Manager Arkhais, 8(2), 1-15.

Ramlan, M. (1985). Pengantar Linguistik Umum. Universutas Diponegoro.

Sato, Y., & McDonnell, B. (2019). Reduplication in Indonesian and the Lexicalist Hypothesis. Proceedings of the Berkeley Linguistics Society, 45(1), 1-10