

## Agreeing in Number: Suppletive Verbal Plurals

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Problem: It has been argued that verbal suppletion for participant number is conditioned by a word-external trigger: the plural argument (Bobaljik & Harley *to appear*; Toosarvandini 2016). However, cross-linguistically, there is substantial overlap in the distribution of reduplication as well as suppletion in marking participant number. I argue (i) if both reduplication and suppletion mark participant number, then plural arguments must be specified at a verb-internal node; and (ii) word-external triggers are instances of an agree relationship between the argument and the #-head.

Background: Bobaljik & Harley (*to appear*) show that in Hiaki, suppletion for plural participant number occurs with subjects of intransitives (unaccusatives) and objects of transitives. They argue that the plural internal argument triggers VI of the plural root (1):

- (1)  $\sqrt{P}$   
 $\begin{matrix} 3 \\ DP + PL \\ ! \end{matrix} : \begin{matrix} \sqrt{KILL} \\ sua \\ kill.pl.obj \end{matrix} < \_ - *me'a (*kill.sg.obj)$   
*ume toto'im* : *sua*  
the.pl chickens kill.pl.obj (Bobaljik & Harley *to appear*: 7)

When VI occurs, *sua* ‘kill.pl’ will be inserted at the root (instead of *me'a* (kill.sg)), because it is a sister to *ume toto'im* ‘the.pl chickens’ and no phrasal projection intervenes.

In Niuean, though, both suppletion and reduplication mark the plural internal argument. Reduplication marks iterativity and makes the plural argument interpretation available depending on the lexical semantics of the verb (Haji-Abdolhosseini, Massam, & Oda 2002). Suppletion (2b) and reduplication (3b, 4b) mark plurality of the internal argument on the verb.

- (2)a. To **fano** a au b. To **ō** a **tautolu**  
FUT go ABS I FUT go.PL ABS we(incl)  
“I will go...” “We will go....”
- (3)a. Ne hoko mai a Sione b. Ne **hohoko** mai a **laua**  
PAST arrive there ABS Sione PAST arrive.PL there ABS they  
“Sione arrived/came there.” “They arrived/came there.”
- (4)a. Kua hala e ia e lā akau  
PERF cut ERG he ABS branch tree  
“He cut the branch.”  
b. Kua **hahala** e ia e **tau** **lā** **akau**  
PERF cut.PL ERG he ABS PL branch tree  
“He cut the branches.” (HMO 2002:476)

Like suppletion in Hiaki, Niuean reduplication and suppletion mark the plural subject of intransitives and plural object of transitives. Since reduplication marks the internal argument as an affix, VI must occur at a head that I will argue marks participant number.



(Yaqui) Verbal Reduplication. *International Journal of American Linguistics*, 75 (2), 233-272. **Toosarvandani, M. 2016.** Vocabulary insertion and locality: Verb suppletion in Northern Paiute. *Northeast Linguistic Society (NELS)* 46, (3). 247-257.