On the emergence of reduplication in German morphophonology

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The sparse literature on reduplication in German (Bzdęga 1965; Schindler 1991; Wiese 1990) acknowledges a great variety of reduplicating forms in this language but suggests that this process of word formation is unproductive. Specifically, it appears that there is no uniform analysis available for the various patterns of reduplication found in German. I suggest that the great diversity of seemingly or effectively reduplicating patterns, their use in mainly non-standard registers, and their unpredictability, have obscured the regularity and productivity of two kinds of reduplication, viz. rhyme reduplication and ablaut reduplication. Evidence comes from an informal internet search yielding a corpus of 200+ reduplicated items.

Here, I propose i) a delineation of different types of reduplicated word forms in German, which paves the way for ii) an OT analysis of reduplication in German. Delineation: In this sorting exercise, I concentrate on those forms that are based on, and used as, lexical items and ignore pure interjections and onomatopoeias. I distinguish between phonological doubling (e.g. *Mama*), where no morphological base can be identified, and reduplication in a strict sense, operating on morphological material. Moreover, a sequence of identical morphs that is open to syntactic fission (*dalli dalli* vs. *dalli, los, dalli*, 'hurry up') does not qualify as reduplicative word formation but as lexical sequencing. If more than one base can be identified, the resulting word is considered a compound or blend (*Schnippschnapp*, 'snap' < *schnippe(l)n*, 'to flick' and *schnappen*, 'snap'). Concurring with Hohenhaus (2004), I will treat contrastive focus reduplication (CFR) as a special form of compound.

Correspondingly, rhyme (1-a) and ablaut reduplication (1-b) may be considered the only true types of reduplication in modern standard German.

(1)　　a.　*Hasemase, Kallepalle, Schorlemorle, Michipichi, Schickimicki*
　　　　b.　*Mischmasch, tippeltappel, Quitschquatsch, Zickezacke, schwippschwapp*

OT analysis: Several generalization w.r.t. the morphophonological behavior of rhyme and ablaut reduplication can be formulated on the basis of the corpus:

(2)　　a.　Reduplication results in strictly bipedal words
　　　　b.　The foot structure is strictly trochaic (bimoraic or disyllabic trochee), iambic or polypedalic bases cannot undergo reduplication
　　　　c.　The segmental makeup of base and reduplicant must not be fully identlical → rhyme or ablaut
　　　　d.　The sequencing of base and reduplicant is co-determined by phonological constraints in ablaut reduplication

The OT approach to rhyme and ablaut reduplication follows the spirit of Kirchner

(2010) and eschews constraints that explicitly refer to base-reduplicant correspondence. Instead, reduplication is shown to emerge from constraints that hold whenever a phonologically underspecified morpheme is attached to a base. The ranking of the constraint DEP (banning epenthetic material) over INTEGRITY (banning the reuse of morphs) ensures that underspecified morphemes surface as copies of the base. The trochaic template of reduplication is the result of constraints on foot structure that are active elsewhere in the grammar (plural, hypochoristics, diminutives etc., cf. Wiese 2000). The non-identy of base and reduplicant is mandated by OCP constraints that are also responsible for haplology in German (Plag 1998). Universal phonotactic constraints demand the ablaut sequence /i/→/a/, or, in the case of rhyme reduplication, the labial onset of the reduplicant (e.g. Cooper & Ross 1975).

The proposed OT grammar successfully models the emergence of the fixed bipedal structure, the obligatory segmental deviance of the reduplicant, non-exponence in the case of non-trochaic bases, the variable linearization of base and reduplicant in ablaut reduplication, and the interaction of reduplication with i) segmental alternations and ii) onset complexity.

Certain (cross-linguistic) correlations regarding constraints on reduplicative word formation and poetic devices, such as rhyme and meter, will be discussed.

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