Morpho-Semantics of Verbal Reduplication
The case of Mauritian
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The issue: morphological reduplication

Other verbal reduplication types

Mauritian morphology

• Attenuative reduplication (AR) (Baker, 2003) is a productive morphological process.
  • We assume it is a particular type of compounding.
  • The interpretation is not iconic.
  • The alternative interpretation operates along different dimensions of meaning:
    – Intensity
    – Frequency
    – Distributivity
    – Pluractivity

Phonological

Syntactic:

• Iteration:
  Zan tire sante sante, sante sante
  John jist sing'll sante sante, sante sante
  ‘John likes to sing. It’s really sung.’

• Contrastive or prototypical:
  Zan kon te mane mane
  John like-a sing, sing, sing
  ‘John likes to really sing.’

• Predicate-doubling:
  Ala galoupe di Mari galoupe la
  Part of la di that Mary ran.la
  ‘What a runner Mary is!’

• Most vocabulary inherited from French (with phonological adaptations).
• No inflection inherited from French. In particular no TMA or agreement morphology.
• Still, Mauritian verbs have two forms: the long form (LF) and the short form (SF).
• The LF almost always derives from the Fr. infinitive or past participle (Veenstra, 2004).
• The SF usually resembles a Fr. PPS-SG.

Morphology of reduplication

The morphemic distribution of SF and LF

Syntax

The SF is used when the verb is followed by a nonclausal complement; the LF is used otherwise (Henri & Abeillé, 2008).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SF</th>
<th>LF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mo ti manz/'manze kari.</td>
<td>Mo ti ‘manze/manze.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lSG PST eat.SF/LF curry</td>
<td>lSG PST eat.LF/SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I ate curry.’</td>
<td>‘I ate.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discourse

The LF is used under Verum Focus, even in the presence of a nonclausal complement (Henri, 2010).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SF</th>
<th>LF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mo ti kwaw Mari pa MANZE/’MANZ kari pou!</td>
<td>Mo ti kwaw Mari pa MANZE/’MANZ kari pou!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lSG PST think Mary SEG eat.LF/SF curry chicken</td>
<td>lSG PST think Mary SEG eat.LF/SF curry chicken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I thought Mary didn’t eat chicken curry!’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Morphology

They are used as bases in attulative reduplication: the output is the concatenation of the SF and the LF (Henri, 2018).

Why morphology

• AR is not syntactic: The base does not have properties of a phrasal complement.
• They have properties of simple verbs.
• The base and its reduplicant cannot be coordinated.
• AR bears final syllable stress like other simple verbs.
• AR is not a phonological phenomenon: The reduplicant is not phonologically predictable but corresponds to the SF. There is moreover no restriction with respect to syllable structure.

Analysis

• The data argue in favor of an abstractive view of morphology (Blevins, 2006).
• Postulating stems would complicate the picture.

Scalar Predicates

• AR is licensed only for scalar predicates (Henri, 2010).
• Among scalar predicates, only relative and partial (see Kennedy & Mc Nally, 2005) predicates can be felicitously reduplicated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Constraint on the Standard</th>
<th>Degree ordering for $d_k$ and $d_S$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relative</td>
<td>$d_R \geq (d_L, d_F)$</td>
<td>$d_{min} &lt; d_S &lt; d_k$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial</td>
<td>$d_R &lt; d_S$</td>
<td>$d_{min} &lt; d_k &lt; d_S$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$d_k = d_{max}$</td>
<td>Impossible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis

• AR conveys that the predicate holds of its subject at a degree $d_k$ less than the degree $d_S$ of the non-reduplicated predicate: $d_k < d_S$.
• Interpreting a reduplicated predicate means setting a degree for both the reduplicated and non-reduplicated predicate.
• The constraints on standards for reduplicated and non-reduplicated predicates are the same.
• If the constraints on standards are consistent, reduplication is felicitous. If no ordering of degree is possible, reduplication is infelicitous.

Coercions

• Verbal reduplication is possible with non-scalar predicates if they can be licensed by an external scale (Henri, 2010):
  # Laport la ferme-ferme. Zan inn ferm-ferm laport.
  ‘The door is somewhat closed’ ‘John closed the door.’

• The scale is obtained by aspectual coercion, i.e. the only possible interpretation is iterative.
• When no scale is available, reduplication is impossible.

Using Vendler’s classes, we highlight verbs that reduplicate without coercion:

Conclusions: Morphology

• Verbal reduplication shows a morphotactic import: the reduplicant is always SF while the base alternates with respect to object drop.
• The system relies on implicational morphology.
• Mauritian favors word-based lexeme formation.
• The same analysis can be extended to reduplicated nouns, adjectives and adverbs.
• Even if reduplicated material do not have all the characteristics of compounds, reduplication still can be construed as a case of compounding.

Conclusions: Semantics

• Scalarity is the determining property for licensing reduplication.
• The same analysis can again be extended to reduplicated nouns, adjectives and adverbs.
• Reduplicated verbs are not inherently pluractional.
• Two issues remain:
  – To determine the relevant scale for reduplication.
  – To handle the coercion mechanism that produces the necessary aspectual scale for reduplication.
• Bonami and Godard (2006) also offer a (simpler) solution in terms of type-shifting.

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