On the Expression of Pejorative Mood: Echo Reduplication

Reduplication structures can be observed in many languages for many reasons. Concentrating on so-called *shm*-reduplication in English, we lay out an analysis that takes this particular instances of echo-reduplication to be an expression of pejorative mood.

Suppose that echo-reduplication is a chain within the same *command unit* (Uriagereka 1999) of two left-peripheral positions (Grohmann 2003) that, due to a distinctness requirement within the Transfer to PF (Richards 2002), cannot be mapped onto linear-order (Kayne 1994). The following seemingly unrelated facts may then be shown to result naturally (α, β denote the first and second phrases in a reduplicative structure respectively):

(1) **_Cartographic_**: English *shm*-reduplication (**Money, shmoney, *who needs it (anyway)?***) cannot appear in an argument position (**Who needs **money, shmoney** (anyway)?*), nor can it be moved from one (****Money, shmoney**, who needs __ (anyway)?*).

(2) **_Not-Antisymmetric_**: The two copies in *shm*-reduplication are strictly adjacent: assuming that linear order is homomorphic with asymmetric c-command, this means that no phonologically realized syntactic head may c-command β but not α (*Money (*yesterday) shmoney, nobody needs it.*).

(3) **_Prosodic:_** The phonological phrasing of α and β is not the intonation of a compound.

(4) **_Pragmatic:_** The discourse context of *shm*-reduplication is not out-of-the-blue.

(5) **_Phonological:_** α is a well-formed phrase, while β represents a phonological modification resulting in a nonsense word. Importantly, no echo reduplication process is in the reverse order (**Shmoney, money, who needs it.*).

Though the "syntax of reduplication" with respect to its *internal* morphological structure has been studied (Broselow 1982, Travis 2001, Ghomeshi *et al* 2003), the distributional locus of *shm*-reduplication *within* a sequential functional structure has not been examined. *Shm*-reduplication is not a "word-internal" phenomenon, immune to syntactic concerns, because its intonational pattern exemplifies that of an XP, not an X^0.

We establish its status within the typology of syntactic objects. On the view that *Money, shmoney, I don't need it* constitutes a semantics of the form: λx. [I don't need x]' ([money]') along with the conventional implicature that the speaker holds a pejorative attitude towards the lexical item under discussion (Potts 2002), the semantic identity of α and β requires an LF generated from a syntactic dependency between α and β. A research program advanced most vociferously by Hornstein (2001) and Grohmann (2003) is that all syntactic dependencies should be expressed by movement. As a result, the phenomena of anaphora, control, and contrastive left dislocation can plausibly be understood in terms of the copy theory of movement (Chomsky 1995, Nunes 2004), with case-theoretic and linear-correspondence conditions imposing further requirements on the realization of copies.

Historically, the phenomenon of reduplication has been considered a phonological one that realizes abstract morphological features (Moravcsik 1978). In contrast, we argue that the dependency relation between the base position of the reduplicandum and the locus of the morphosyntactic features is one of syntactic movement. However, such movement is *too* local, as it never crosses more than one domain. An anti-locality constraint on movement (as argued for by Grohmann 2003) requires non-identity among the two positions, implemented through the PF-realization of Copy Spell Out (CSO). Assimilating reduplication to other instances of CSO provides further support that CSO is not an isolated phenomenon limited to insertion of pronominal elements; rather it may involve modification of the phonological form of a copy. The LCA demands that at most one copy of a syntactic element may be realized within a domain, in order to prevent symmetric or reflexive precedence. Movement (or, more generally, re-merger) is thus subject to (6):

(6)   An object O in a phrase marker must have an exclusive occurrence in each domain.

The condition can be skirted, however, through CSO, which renders the lower copy within a domain *phonologically distinct.* Usually this is in the form of a grammatical formative, such as a resumptive pronoun, as in German contrastive left dislocation:

(7)   [Seinen   Vater], [~~seinen Vater~~ ⮑ den]   mag jeder.
        his-ACC father,   RP-ACC likes everyone

The need for PF-distinctness arises because the movement is between TopP and CP, two positions within the same domain. If this account is on the right track, we should expect to find other mechanisms for PF-distinctness, and subsequently we investigate the question why pronominalization would be the only way to achieve this.

The discourse properties of *shm-* have a pejorative reading for the left-peripheral element. However, this element must also be *given* (Schwarzschild 1998) within the linguistic context. The reduplicandum occupies two discourse functions: topicalization and pejorativization. Suppose they are instantiated through left-peripheral heads, within the same domain. Then the second copy cannot be realized identically to the first, due to (6), resulting in (8):

(8)   [$_{PejP}$ Binding Theory [$_{TopP}$ ~~Binding Theory~~ ⮑ Shminding Theory
                              [$_{IP}$ we already have the theory of movement]]]

Importantly, an otherwise puzzling phonological property of *shm*-reduplication is derived: why it is always the *second* (or immediately lower) copy that is dissimilatory. As Grohmann (2003: 243) observes: "it is the lower copy that deletes (it has a less complete set of checked features)." The lower copy is only in TopP, while the higher copy moves on to check pejorative features (where we remain agnostic whether PejP = CP or ForceP of Rizzi 1997).

An otherwise unexplained syntactic property of *shm*-reduplication (Nevins & Vaux 2003) is captured here: *shm*-reduplication can never appear in argument positions: The structure in (8) places both copies in what we may call the Discourse-, not the Case- or Theta-Domain.

(9)   *Who needs Binding Theory, Shminding Theory?
(10)   *Binding Theory, Shminding Theory is a lousy GB module.

We can make further predictions, explaining why reduplication never is the exponent of Case- or *wh*-movement. The traditional view of reduplication relegates it to the phonology, claiming it is the way a particular language provides the exponent for a feature-checking relation with a head H. But there is a huge gap: why can't H ever be Tense or C? If the phonological view is right, reduplication could crop up as the way a hypothetical language realized nominative case or another language realized *wh*-phrases.

Echo reduplication, however, is strictly limited to plurality within argument position, i.e. anti-local movement within the Theta-Domain, as in Hindi (Abbi 1982) or Kannada (Lidz 2001), and pejoration-of-a-topic (anti-local movement within the Discourse-Domain). On a larger scale, our proposal ties in some instances of topicality with the formal expression of mood and is in this way related to recent research that aims at specifying the expression of the notion "topic" (see, for example, Haegeman 2003, 2004 on "speech event topics"). We take this to be an interesting avenue to pursue, since it allows for a finer identification of typical discourse/speech-act properties and the grammar, possibly shedding some light of the object of our studied defined as "narrow syntax" in recent work by Chomsky (2000, 2001). On this note, our study opens up the narrowness of syntax in a desirable manner.