The semantics of Jamaican Creole verbal reduplication

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Overview

- **Goal:** examine Jamaican Creole [JC] reduplication in verbs, with comparison to similar Standard English [StEng] formations, and provide a formal analysis
- JC verbal replication is of 2 types (see Gooden 2003b, Gooden et al. 2003)
  - verb only **"intensive"**, e.g. *nyam-nyamaaf* "eat completely"
  - verb+particle **"iterative"**, e.g. *buodop-buodop* "seal with boards repeatedly"
- Propose a formalism capturing both types of verbal reduplication
  - adopt Ramchand's (2008) articulated verb structure
  - treat JC reduplication as underlying a morpheme
  - this morpheme may attach to different levels of verb structure, with different resulting morphological & semantic results

Jamaican Creole Reduplication

Intensive reduplication

- Simple stems [Gooden et al. 2003: 106]
    - *bluo* "to blow" > *bluo-bluo* "to blow a lot"
    - *laaf* "to laugh" > *laaf-laaf* "to laugh a lot"
    - *luk* "to look" > *luk-luk* "to keep looking" (also "look repeatedly" with iterative interpretation)

- Complex (+particle) stems [Gooden 2003b: 96]
    - *buodop* "to seal with boards" > *buod-buodop* "to seal with boards (intensive)"
    - *nyamaaf* "to eat completely" > *nyam-nyamaaf* "to eat completely (intensive)"
    - *naasiop* "to make filthy" > *naasi-naasiop* "to make filthy (intensive)"

Jamaican Creole Reduplication

Iterative reduplication

- Simple stems [Gooden 2003a: 227; cp. Gooden 2003b: 99n8]
  - *tiif* "to steal" > *tiif-tiif* "to steal repeatedly"
  - *rob* "to rub" > *rob-rob* "to rub repeatedly"
  - *juk* "to pierce (not necessarily making a hole)" > *juk-juk* "to pierce repeatedly (not necessarily making holes)"

- Complex (+particle) stems [*Ibid.*]
  - *buodop* "to seal up with boards" > *buodop-buodop* "to seal up with boards repeatedly"
  - *nyamout* "to eat some of" > *nyamout-nyamout* "to eat some of repeatedly"
  - *jukop* "to make (visible) holes" > *jukop-jukop* "to make (visible) holes repeatedly" (Gooden 2003b: 99n8)

Jamaican Creole Reduplication

Morphonological restrictions (Gooden 2003b,a)

- reduplicant must be no more than 2 syllables and non-iambic
- thus *arienj-arienjop* [iambic] (< *arienjop* "to arrange things")
- thus *batabruz-batabruzop* [not a binary foot] (< *batabruzop* "to bruise extensively")
- thus *chambaop-chambaop* [not a binary foot] (< *chambaop* "to cut/chop coarsely")

Standard English Iteratives/Intensives

Iteratives/Intensives

- similar to JC verbal reduplicants both structurally (iconic doubling) and semantically, 2 types (V *and* V; V *again and again*)
- intensive/continuous/durative: *ran and ran*, *looked and looked*
- iterative/noncontinuous: *ran again and again*, *looked again and again*

Standard English focus reduplication

Contrastive focus reduplication Intensive

[Ghomeshi et al. (2004)]

- *it's tuna salad, not sálad-salad*
- *here are the glóve-gloves*
- used to contrast "true", "real" (prototypical) instances (contextually-determined)
- potentially similar to some JC reduplications, e.g. *laas-laas* "truly last" (Kouwenberg & LaCharité 2003)

Verbal Pluralities

- Both types of JC verbal reduplication involve some type of verbal plurality (pluractionality)
- plurality can exist at varying levels, including event internal plurality and event external plurality (for more, see Cusic 1981)
- a verbal structure may involve external plurality (1), internal plurality ("phase"-level) (2) or both types of plurality (3) [cp. Cusic 1981: 65]

    (1)   The mouse bit the cheese again.

    (2)   The mouse nibbled the cheese.

    (3)   The mouse nibbled the cheese again.

- (*nibble* ≈ multiple bitings, with *-le* representing Proto-Germanic *-ilôjan*, used sometimes with a frequentative sense, cf. *crackle, crumple, dazzle, paddle, sparkle, topple, wriggle*)

JC Reduplication approach i

- Goal: explain why particles (e.g. *op*, *aaf* &c.) are included in the reduplicant only for iteratives and not for intensive (and why the pattern is not reversed)
- hypothesis: the same "reduplication" morpheme [REDUP] occurs in both intensive and iterative reduplicating structure (and something similar in StEng)
- REDUP may attach/apply at different levels of verbal structure
- depending on which level of verbal structure associates with REDUP determines whether the verbal particle is included as part of the reduplication and what meaning obtains

JC Reduplication approach ii

- adopt the articulate "first phase" analysis of Ramchand (2008), positing 3 (possible) levels of inner verbal structure (a given verb may not have all 3 levels):
    - initiation (causation/external causer)
    - process (the event itself)
    - result (result state effected by event)

- where REDUP modifies the *proc* head, the result is "intensive" ("phase"-level/event-internal plurality) [and no reduplication of verbal particles]

- where REDUP modifies the entire VP, the result is "iterative" (event-external plurality) [reduplication includes particles]
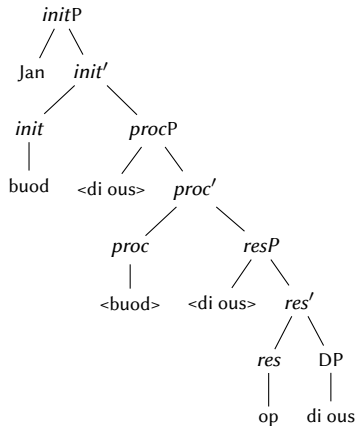
Articulated Verb Structure

Ramchand's (2008) "first phase" verbal syntactic structure
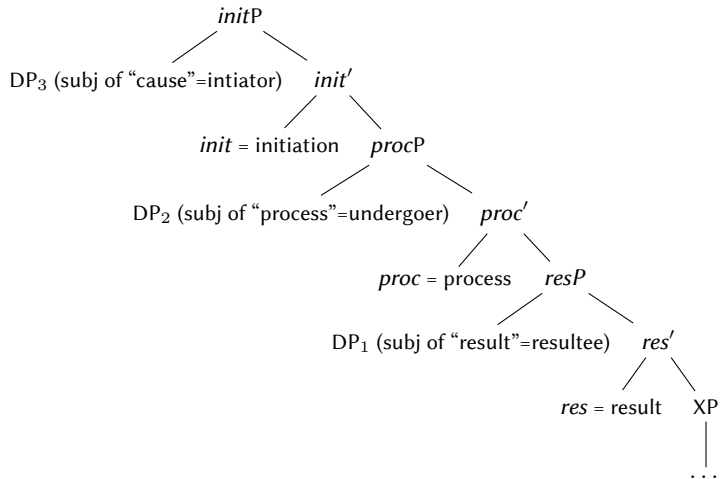
1st phase structure example

Jan buodop di ous "John boarded up the house"

Semantics formalisation of *res,proc,init*

Working definition of *res* (Ramchand 2008: 206)

$[\![res]\!]$ = $\lambda P \lambda x \lambda e [P(e)$ & $res'(e)$ & $State(e)$ & $Subject(x,e)]$
(Given some predicate P, some individual x, some event e: e is a result event described by predicate P, e is a state, and x is the subject of e.)

Working definition of *proc* (*Ibid.*)

$[\![proc]\!]$ = $\lambda P \lambda x \lambda e \exists e_1, e_2 [P(e_2)$ & $proc'(e_1)$ & $Process(e_1)$ & $e = (e_1 \rightarrow e_2)$ & $Subject(x,e_1)]$
(Given some predicate P, some individual x, some event e: there are two events, e_1, e_2: e_2 is an event described by predicate P, and e_1 is a process, and e is a consisting of 2 subevents e_1,e_2, such that e_1 causally implicates e_2, and x is the subject of e_1.)

Working definition of *init* (*Ibid.*)

$[\![init]\!]$ = $\lambda P \lambda x \lambda e \exists e_1, e_2 [P(e_2)$ & $init'(e_1)$ & $State(e_1)$ & $e = (e_1 \rightarrow e_2)$ & $Subject(x,e_1)]$
(Given some predicate P, some individual x, some event e: there are two events, e_1, e_2: e_2 is an event described by predicate P, and e_1 is a state, and e is a consisting of 2 subevents e_1,e_2, such that e_1 causally implicates e_2, and x is the subject of e_1.)

Semantics formalisation

Reduplicative morpheme [definition]

$[\![\text{REDUP}]\!] = \lambda\mathcal{R}\lambda x\lambda e[\mathcal{R}(x)(e) \,\&\, \exists v_1, v_2...v_n \in e]$

(for some pragmatically/contextually determined value for n)

Given some verbal element $\mathcal{R}$ (e.g. proc, VP), the reduplication morpheme adds a requirement that the event associated with that verbal element $\mathcal{R}$ is made up of at least *n* number of subcomponents, each of which is itself an event of the sort described by the verbal element $\mathcal{R}$.

Examples of REDUP attaching at different levels

Examples 1: "the ball rolled and rolled"

adding the reduplication morpheme to *proc*P head *roll* (which itself requires that there be a rolling event e) adds a requirement that the rolling event e is itself made up of at least *n* "subevents of rolling"

Example 2: "the ball rolled again and again"

adding the reduplication morpheme to VP *the ball roll* adds a requirement that the occasion is actually composed of at least *n* events of the ball rolling.

Jan buod-buodop di ous "John boarded up the house (intensive)"
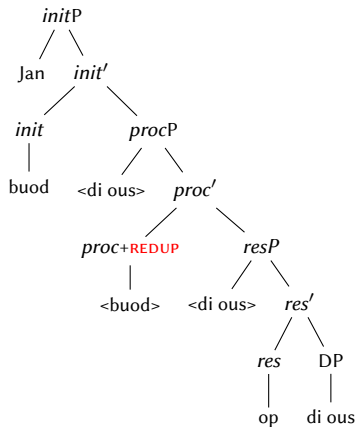
JC intensive reduplication semantic derivation i

Denotation of *res*

(4) $[\![res]\!] = \lambda e[op(e) \ \& \ res'(e) \ \& \ \text{State}(e) \ \& \ \text{Subject}(h,e)]$

Denotation of *proc+buod*

(5) $[\![proc]\!] = \lambda x \lambda e \exists e_1, e_2[board\text{-}up(e_2) \ \& \ res'(e_2) \ \& \ \text{State}(e_2) \ \&$
$\text{Subject}(h,e_2) \ \& \ proc'(e_1) \ \& \ \text{Process}(e_1) \ \& \ e = (e_1 \rightarrow e_2) \ \&$
$\text{Subject}(x,e_1)]$

JC intensive reduplication semantic derivation ii

### Derivation of reduplication morpheme applied to *proc*+*buod*

(6) $[\![proc]\!]$ = $\lambda x \lambda e \exists e_1, e_2 [board\text{-}up(e_2)$ & $res'(e_2)$ & State (e_2) & Subject(h, e_2) & $proc'(e_1)$ & Process(e_1) & $e = (e_1 \rightarrow e_2)$ & Subject(x, e_1) & $\exists v_1, v_2 \ldots v_n \in e]$

Informal paraphrase of (6)

There is a causal connection between two subevents e_1 and e_2, such that e_1 is a process and e_2 is a result state — and these two subevents together constitute event e — such that the house undergoes boarding up ($=e_1$) and ends up in a state of being boarded up ($=e_2$), and this larger event e is made up of an unusually large number of subevents (leading to various possible conversational implicatures, including that the boarding up was particularly "intense").

JC Reduplication in 1st phase structure: iterative

Jan buodop-buodop di ous "John boarded up the house (iterative)"
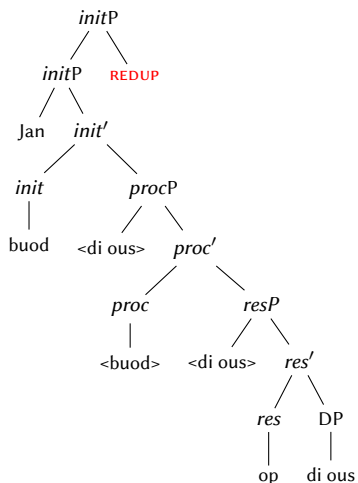
JC iterative reduplication semantic derivation i

Denotation of *init*P

(7) $\llbracket initP \rrbracket = \lambda e \exists e_1, e_2, e_3, e_4$ [*board-up*(e_2) & *res'*(e_2) & State(e_2) &
Subject(h, e_2) & *proc'*(e_1) & Process(e_1) & $e_4 = (e_1 \rightarrow e_2)$ &
Subject(h, e_1) & *init'*(e_3) & State(e_3) & $e = (e_3 \rightarrow e_4)$ & Subject(j, e_3)]

Informal paraphrase of (7)

John initiates a process of boarding-up, the house undergoes a process of
boarding-up, and the house ends up in a result state of being boarded up.

JC iterative reduplication semantic derivation ii

Denotation of *init*P+REDUP

(8) $\llbracket\text{REDUP }(init\text{P})\rrbracket = \lambda e \exists e_1, e_2, e_3, e_4 \;[board\text{-}up(e_2) \;\&\; res'(e_2) \;\&\; \text{State}(e_2)$
$\&\; \text{Subject}(h, e_2) \;\&\; proc'(e_1) \;\&\; \text{Process}(e_1) \;\&\; e_4 = (e_1 \rightarrow e_2) \;\&\;$
$\text{Subject}(h, e_1) \;\&\; init'(e_3) \;\&\; \text{State}(e_3) \;\&\; e = (e_3 \rightarrow e_4) \;\&\; \text{Subject}(j, e_3) \;\&\;$
$\exists v_1, v_2 ... v_n \in e]$

Informal paraphrase of (8)

There is a event such that John initiates a process of boarding-up, the house undergoes a process of boarding-up, and the house ends up in a result state of being boarded up; and this event happens multiple times.

Extension to Standard English

- this same basic analysis should extend to StEng, which shows a similar pattern:
    - the "V and V" construction (e.g. "John ran and ran") involves something like reduplication of an "inner" element, and the semantic contribution is "intensive"
    - the "V again and again" (e.g. "John ran again and again") involves something like reduplication of an "outer" element (the repetitive "again"), and the semantic contribution is "iterative"

Extension to Standard English?

- important differences exist, however:
    - the JC iterative involves no explicit repetitive element, unlike StEng (which uses *again*)
    - unlike JC, StEng verb+particle constructions only work with the "iterative" and not with the "intensive":

    (9)   a.   John boarded up the house again and again.
             b.   *John boarded and boarded up the house.

    (10)   a.   John dashed down pizza again and again.
             b.   *John dashed and dashed down pizza.

- so that even if "duplication" with varyingly "intensive" and "iterative" senses works in a similar fashion in JC & StEng, both employing a similar abstract morpheme, there appear to be significant structural differences in the specifics

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Denotation of *init*

(11) $\lambda x \lambda e \exists e_1, e_2, e_3, e_4$ [*board-up*(e_2) & *res'*(e_2) & State(e_2) & Subject(h, e_2)
        & *proc'*(e_1) & Process(e_1) & $e_4 = (e_1 \rightarrow e_2)$ & Subject(h, e_1) &
        $\exists v_1, v_2 \ldots v_n \in e_4$ & *init'*(e_3) & State(e_3) & $e = (e_3 \rightarrow e_4)$ & Subject(x, e_3)]

Paraphrase of (11)

Given some individual x and some event e: there exist fours events e_1, e_2, e_3, e_4 such that e_2 is an event of boarding and e_1 is a process such that e_4 is composed of a causal relationship between e_1 and e_2, and x is the subject of e_1, and e consists of at least *n*-many subevents, and e_3 is an initiation state and event e itself consists of a causal relationship such that e_3 leads to e_4 and x is the subject of e_3.