

Reduplication in Hungarian

Verbal particles in Hungarian have stimulated a great deal of interest in the past two decades. Their ability to reduplicate and thus produce an 'erratic' meaning (repetition of the action at irregular intervals), however, has not received much attention.

- (1) a. Péter kinyitja az ablakot.
Peter.NOM out-open-3SG the window-ACC
Peter opens the window.
b. Péter ki-kinyitja az ablakot.
Peter.NOM out-out-open-3SG the window-ACC
Peter opens the window every now and then.

Non-reduplicated particles are post-verbal when the sentence involves focus or negation ('reverse order'). A central property of particle reduplication is the unavailability of the reverse order.

- (2) a. Péter nem nyitja ki az ablakot.
Peter.NOM not open-3SG out the window-ACC
Peter does not open the window.
b. *Péter nem nyitja ki-ki az ablakot.
Peter.NOM not open-3SG out-out the window-ACC
Peter does not open the window every now and then.

In this paper we carefully study the syntactic behaviour of the reduplicated particle and discuss new empirical facts that have not been published up to date. Specifically, we show that reduplication is grammatical with long-topicalisation and active and adverbial participle formation, as well as with particles that form an idiom with the verb. We also give an account of particle reduplication whereby reduplication is phonological copying that serves to give phonetic content to a higher functional head, which does have syntactic and semantic features, but not phonological features.

Previous accounts of particle reduplication in Hungarian are few and sketchy. Kiefer (1999) argues that the reduplicated particle is a clitic, and when an auxiliary intervenes between the reduplicated particle and the lexical verb, then the whole reduplicated particle + auxiliary sequence functions as a clitic. We show that this approach cannot be maintained, as a case-marked full DP can intervene between the reduplicated particle and the verb.

Pinon (1991) analyzes the first particle in reduplication as an I' adjunct, while the second particle in reduplication is placed into I⁰ (applied to our example (1): [_{I'} ki [_I ki [_{VP} nyitja]]]). We demonstrate that this analysis faces both conceptual and empirical problems, such as the arbitrariness of the structure and not predicting that the two particles in reduplication form a constituent.

We analyze reduplication in terms of phonological copying and propose that the irregular repetition meaning associated with it is the contribution of a vP-external low functional head we call 'Erratic' (see also Muriungi 2008). The X-slots of 'Erratic' come without any melodic material linked to them. Instead, the melody of the particle gets copied, which produces a reduplicated particle. Whether 'Erratic' has phonological material associated to it already in the lexicon or not is language specific, but we point out that it is filled by copying in a number of Bantu languages as well as Japanese.

As for the straight order found in (1), we offer a remnant-movement account. We propose that the movement of the reduplicated particle to the preverbal position is movement of ErraticP, from which every vP-internal material but the particle has been evacuated.

As far as the reverse order is concerned, we adopt the proposal of É. Kiss (2002), who argues that the verb > particle order results from the blocking of particle movement across the verb, i.e. the particle moves up in the straight but stays in situ in the reverse order. We argue that in reduplication there is an adjacency requirement between the source and the goal of the melody to be copied, and this condition is not met in the reverse order due to the low position of the particle.

Our results are in line with many recent studies which argue that particle-movement to the preverbal position is phrasal movement (see Koopman and Szabolcsi 2000, Surányi to appear and references cited therein) and that the verb and its dependents are scrambled out of the Hungarian vP in the course of the derivation (Surányi 2006).