

Repetition Avoidance and the Exceptional Reduplication Patterns of Indo-European
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THE DATA: Proto-Indo-European is reconstructed with C_1 -copying prefixal reduplication: $\sqrt{C_1(C_2)V-} \rightarrow C_1V-C_1(C_2)V-$. This pattern is continued productively in Greek, Indic, and Anatolian, and is also well-attested although non-productive in Celtic, Germanic, and Italic. In many of the languages, however, there are “exceptional” patterns alongside this CV pattern. Many pertain to the behavior of $s+stop$ roots (1); but other, archaic patterns can be identified as well (2).

(1)

- Sanskrit sT - roots:
 $\sqrt{st^h\bar{a}}$ ‘stand’ \rightarrow perfect $ta-st^h\bar{a}u$ (not $^xsa-st^h\bar{a}u$)
- Ancient Greek sT - and non-rising-sonority roots:
 \sqrt{stel} ‘prepare’ \rightarrow $e-stal-ka$ (not $^xse-stal-ka$)
- Gothic sT - roots:
 \sqrt{stald} ‘possess’ \rightarrow preterite $stai-stald$ (not $^xsai-stald$)
- Latin sT - roots:
 \sqrt{spond} ‘promise’ \rightarrow perfect $spo-pond-\bar{i}$ (not $^xso-spond-\bar{i}$)

(2)

- Sanskrit CaC roots:
 \sqrt{pat} ‘fly’ \rightarrow perf. $p\bar{e}t-ur$ (beside older $pa-pt-ur$)
 \sqrt{sap} ‘serve’ \rightarrow perf. $s\bar{e}p-ur$ (not $^xsa-sp-ur$)
- Gothic Class IV-V preterites:
 \sqrt{gib} ‘give’ \rightarrow preterite $g\bar{e}b-um$ (as if from $*ge-gb-um$)
- Ancient Greek “Attic Reduplication”:
 \sqrt{ag} ‘lead’ \rightarrow perfect $ag\bar{e}ger-mai$ ($< *h_2\acute{a}ge-h_2ger-mai$; see Zukoff 2014)

THE PROPOSAL: These patterns are all avoidance strategies for a single problem: **C_1 -copying is blocked when it is *too difficult to perceive the presence of root- C_1*** . This will be formalized as the interaction between the (non-)availability of phonetic cues (cf. Wright 2004) and the principle of *repetition avoidance* (cf. Walter 2007).

Each of these patterns applies to roots/bases with particular sorts of initial consonant clusters. Therefore, if default C_1 -copying were observed, a sequence of $C_1V-C_1C_2$ would be created. The clusters which undergo these patterns are those in which root- C_1 lacks certain important *phonetic cues* to its presence, namely *release burst*, *intensity rise*, and *consonant-to-sonorant transitions*. The lack of robust cues makes these consonants vulnerable to the perceptual bias against local repetition. These patterns thus represent active avoidance strategies to prevent *poorly-cued consonant repetitions*.

The cued-based approach will be compared to previous sorts of analyses, e.g. Fleischhacker’s (2005) similarity-based framework, Keydana’s (2012) representational solution, and Zukoff’s (2014) syllable-based account, none of which can unite these patterns in such a thorough way.

References

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