**Rarum begets rarum: A rare clitic and morphosyntactic reduplication in Chechen and Ingush**

**Data:** A conjunctive clitic *'a* found in both Chechen and Ingush has been argued by Peterson (2001) to be an instance of a rare clitic type: a penultimate-position enclitic. Specifically, it is placed immediately before the verb in the (head-final) verb phrase. Among other things, this means that *'a* leans "the wrong way"—it is syntactically positioned with respect to the verb but leans phonologically away from it. A relevant example from Chechen is given in (1), where instances of the clitic are bolded. Strikingly, this enclitic appears to play a role in the appearance of another rarum: morphosyntactic reduplication (Conathan and Good 2001). An example, with reduplicants bolded, is given in (2), also from Chechen.

(1) *Maliika* [*loomax      hwal* **='a** *jeelara,*]$_{VP}$ [*ohwa* **='a** *joessara*]$_{VP}$.
    Malika  mountain.LAT up    and J.go.WP   down and J.descend.WP
    "Malika climbed up and down the mountain."

(2) *Maalik* [**viela**      *='a viilara,*]$_{VP}$ [**vialxa**    *='a vilxara*]$_{VP}$.
    Malik   V.laugh.INF and V.laugh.WP V.cry.INF and V.cry.WP
    "Malik laughed and cried."

The bolded verbs in (2) are copies of the main verb of the clause with the form of morphological infinitives. These copy verbs are associated with no special semantics or pragmatic force, and they appear in a predictable environment: immediately before *'a* when the verb it precedes is simplex and intransitive—in other words, when the verb phrase would otherwise consist of only one word.

**Problem:** Peterson (2001:149) suggests that *'a* actually triggers reduplication of the verb in order to allow it to have a host within the verb phrase. If Peterson's suggestion is correct, this raises the intriguing possibility that the appearance of one rarum (a typologically unusual clitic) is the driving force behind the appearance of another (morphosyntactic reduplication). This paper more fully develops Peterson's idea in order to arrive at a better understanding of how these two rara might be related to each other.

**Analysis:** Descriptively, we can analyze *'a* as being associated with a template like the one in (3), which stipulates that *'a* be preceded by some element in the verb phrase. The appearance of a copy verb can then be understood as a type of repair strategy—a "dummy" element used to satisfy the template.

(3) [ [...='a]$_{Word}$ [    ]$_V$]$_{VP}$

Taken in isolation, this analysis is not particularly insightful. However, it has parallels with phonological minimality phenomena well attested at the word-level. In Ndebele, for example, as seen in the second verb in (4), monosyllabic stems in imperative constructions appear with a dummy *yi-* prefix in order to fulfill a two-syllable minimal size restriction on surfacing verbs.

(4)
| IMPERATIVE | GLOSS | TRANSLATION | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *lima* | 'cultivate' | 'cultivate!' | |
| *yi-dla* (**dl-a*) | 'YI-eat' | 'eat!' | Hyman et al. (To appear) |

Analogizing from the Ndebele case to the Chechen and Ingush case, we can understand the template associated with *'a* to result from a comparable type of minimality constraint, applying at the level of the phonological phrase instead of the phonological word: A verb phrase containing *'a* must consist of at least two phonological words. The "rare" aspect of the phenomenon, then, is not the general nature of the restriction but, rather, the level of constituency at which it occurs—the phonological phrase.

Analyzing the appearance of the reduplicant as being phonologically-driven allows us to develop in more detail Peterson's idea that that there is a connection *'a*'s positional requirements and the reduplication construction. As noted, *'a* leans away from the element governing its syntactic position. Given this, we can view the proposed phonological minimality restriction as one which minimizes this phonology-syntax clash by ensuring that *'a* will never lean on an element outside of the verb phrase—it will either lean on an element that is there "naturally" or on an inserted copy verb. The clitic's "wrong-way" leaning can, thus, be directly implicated in the appearance of morphosyntactic reduplication.

**Implications:** If the basic thrust of this analysis is correct, it suggests that the rarity of some phenomena may not be because they themselves are inherently "unusual". Rather, they are rare because their appearance is only triggered by the presence of other rara.

Conathan, L., and J. Good. 2001. Morphosyntactic reduplication in Chechen and Ingush. In A. Okrent and J. Boyle (Eds.) *Proceedings of CLS 36*, 49–61.

Hyman, L. M. et al. To appear. Morphosyntactic correspondence in Bantu reduplication. In K. Hanson and S. Inkelas (Eds.) *The nature of the word: Essays in honor of Paul Kiparsky*. Cambrige Mass.: MIT.

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