On the lexical status of reduplicative ideophones in German

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Ideophones are expressive words that signify sensory imagery through phonological markedness. These words can be thought of as rhetorical devices that, like gestures, enrich the meaning of the message by rendering it more affectively engaging or stimulating or by making the listener imagine the sensory experience or affective involvement of the speaker. Repetition and reduplication are phonologically conspicuous and therefore potent markers for ideophones and for expressives in general. The grammarian has to distinguish different kinds of iteration and carefully delineate morphological reduplication (commonly restricted to doubling) form lexical sequencing (potentially unrestricted). This holds also for reduplicative forms in German, which will be surveyed in this talk. Specifically, I will present a morphological taxonomy of reduplication in German (Kentner 2017) that distinguishes i. (phonotactically illegal) interjections (*hahaha*) and ii. iterative syntagmas (*hopp hopp hopp*, "get a move on") from iii. reduplicative lexical items (*Mischmasch* "mish mash"). This taxonomy reveals a regularity concerning reduplicative forms in German that has previously gone unnoticed (Kentner 2022): In order to become lexicalized, reduplicative words must not contain exact adjacent repetitions of phonological material (syllables, phonological feet, words). Forms that violate this regularity are – except for a few well-defined exceptions – un-lexicalizable nonces (e.g., contrastive focus reduplications like *Kaffee-kaffee*, "standard variety coffee", see e.g., Horn (2018)). The distinction between a) repetitions with alternation and b) identical repetitions/iterations bears an uncanny resemblance to a distinction made by Bressem (2021) in the context of research on gesture: Bressem notes that gesture repetitions with alternation build up complex meaning alongside spoken material, while identical repetitions/iterative gestures pragmatically enforce rather than semantically modify the spoken message. In this talk I will discuss the distinction regarding the semantic or pragmatic import of identical and non-identical repetition along with the distinction concerning the lexical status of reduplicative ideophones in German.

References: • Bressem, J. (2021). *Repetitions in gesture*. Berlin: De Gruyter. • Horn, L. (2018). The lexical clone: Pragmatics, prototypes, productivity. In: Finkbeiner, R. & Freywald, U. (eds.), *Exact repetition in grammar and discourse*. Berlin: De Gruyter. 233-264 • Kentner, G. (2017). On the emergence of reduplication in German morphophonology. *Zeitschrift für Sprachwissenschaft* 36, 233-277. • Kentner, G. (2022). DO NOT REPEAT: Repetition and reduplication in German revisited. In: Eitelmann, M. & Haumann, D. (eds.), *Extravagant morphology*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 181-205.