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Reduplication and repetition in Russian Sign Language

Abstract: In this paper, I analyze three repetition-related phenomena in Russian Sign Language (RSL). First, following Burkova and Filimonova (2014), I discuss morphological reduplication in RSL which fits the prototypical definition of reduplication (Stolz et al. 2011) despite the presence of some modality effects, such as simultaneity and the use of space. Second, I discuss distributive reduplication which can apply on both morphological and syntactic levels thus questioning the morphological nature of reduplication. Finally, I discuss syntactic doubling of constituents which would not normally be analyzed as reduplication, but which has some features common with reduplication. By showing overlapping properties of the three phenomena in RSL, I question the existence of a clear boundary between reduplication and repetition, at least as applied to this language.

1 Introduction

The aim of this paper is to discuss how data from Russian Sign Language (RSL) can contribute to the debate around the notions of reduplication and repetition, and in particular, to the issue of finding the boundary between these two notions. I will discuss several phenomena from RSL that have to do with multiple copies of elements at different levels and attempt to classify them. Whether some or all of them could be analyzed as reduplication (or repetition) depends on the specific theory of reduplication that one is willing to accept.

The issue of delimiting reduplication and repetition is a long-standing one (Stolz et al. 2011, Stolz and Levkovych, this volume), and different researchers disagree on the answers to the following questions: what exactly falls under reduplication, and what is the relation between reduplication and repetition in general: is reduplication a special type of repetition, or are these two phenomena completely separate?¹

¹ Another interesting question is whether reduplication and repetition are diachronically related through grammaticalization (Fischer 2011; Stolz et al. 2011), but I will not address it here.

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In general, a common solution is to say that reduplication is a morphological operation and thus applies below the word level, and that repetition is a process that applies to words and larger units. However, in some cases of repetition of full words it is still possible to claim that the result is one word, so such cases would be classified as reduplication as well. In addition, reduplication being a part of the grammar is rule-governed, so it is obligatory in some contexts but impossible in others (Stolz and Levkovych, this volume). One such constraint on reduplication is the number of copies: reduplication only allows for two copies, while repetition is unconstrained in this respect. Finally, reduplication has to have a semantic (denotational) contribution, and usually marks verbal aspect, nominal plurality, distributivity, adjectival intensification, and also verb-noun derivation, while repetition only has pragmatic/emotional effects and thus falls outside grammar strictly speaking.

Stolz et al. (2011: 57–58) discussed a possible counterexample to some of the criteria above, from the Portuguese-based Creole Angolar, where reduplication can apply below word level, and has a clear semantics (intensification, distributive, and durative); however, it can produce more than two copies (1). Stolz and Levkovych (this volume) offered a solution to this puzzle: the three (or more) copies are the result of reduplication (which produces two copies and has a semantic contribution) combined with word-internal repetition (which produces an additional copy and has an emotional contribution).

(1) Angolar

Thô a ka foga-foga-foga até pomenha ka biri
 after s/he TAM dance-dance-dance until morning TAM open
 ‘Afterwards one dances on and on and on until the morning comes.’
 (Stolz, Stroh and Urdze 2011: 57)

This solution allows saving some of the criteria for distinguishing reduplication and repetition, but it is based on the assumption that repetition can apply word-internally and thus also opens the possibility that reduplication can apply outside morphology. The main criterion for distinguishing between repetition and reduplication is then semantics. Thus instances of total reduplication of fully inflected words as discussed in Stolz et al. (2011) can still be analyzed as reduplication as long as they have the appropriate meaning.

There is another formal criterion distinguishing repetition and reduplication that I have not discussed so far: adjacency. According to Stolz et al. (2011) the copies of the reduplicated unit have to be adjacent; a single syllable was the only element that was sometimes allowed to intervene between the copies.

However, some other researchers are more liberal in their definition and allow for non-adjacent copies without any special constraints (Inkelas and Zoll 2005). If one accepts non-adjacent copies and also accept the idea that reduplication is not constrained to morphology, then instances of syntactic doubling (Kandybowicz 2007) seem to also fall under reduplication. Stolz et al. (2011) argue strongly against this view, and I will review some of their arguments when discussing the relevant RSL data.²

Although the discussion of reduplication is based on extensive typological data, sign languages are not discussed in any major theoretical works on reduplication (Stolz et al. 2011, Inkelas and Zoll 2005). However, sign languages belong to a different modality (Meier 2012), and it is very well possible that reduplication and repetition could work in a way different from what is typically found in spoken languages. For instance, Freywald and Finkbeiner (this volume), based on research by Pfau and Steinbach (2006), discussed one such difference: in German Sign Language morphological reduplication often produces at least three copies without any apparent stylistic effect. Another obvious difference between modalities is that sign languages allow simultaneous expression on many levels (Meier 2012), including simultaneous expression of morphemes, which means that simultaneous (in addition to progressive and regressive) reduplication is possible.³ It is thus beneficial to take sign language data into account in developing a universal theory of reduplication.

There exist some studies of reduplication in several sign languages. Pfau and Steinbach (2005, 2006) analyzed reduplication in German Sign Language, and discussed possible modality effects in this domain. Wilbur (2009) provided an overview of reduplication-related mechanisms in American Sign Language and demonstrated that reduplication in this language has a formal richness beyond

² Inkelas and Zoll (2005) are also more liberal in another aspect of the definition of reduplication: according to them there is no requirement of formal relatedness between the copies as long as they are related semantically; synonym compounds can thus also be analyzed as reduplication. Although this could have some interesting consequences for RSL data (see Kimmelman 2014: chapter 5 for examples), I will not discuss it here for the sake of space.

³ An anonymous reviewer asked why I should even consider simultaneous repetition as a candidate reduplication construction. A simple answer is that a simple repetition (or reduplication) can logically apply sequentially or simultaneously, but that spoken language due to modality constraints only allows for sequential combinations of the copies. Since sign languages are not constrained this way, they also make use of the simultaneous option. This option thus has to be further analyzed in order to come to decide whether it is also functionally similar to sequential reduplication. As I show in Section 2, this seems to be the case.

what is attested in spoken languages. Burkova and Filimonova (2014) reported the results of a corpus-based analysis of different types of (morphological) reduplication in RSL. In this paper I also discuss data from RSL, but in addition to summarizing Burkova and Filimonova's results I also analyze some cases which put into question the rigidity of the boundary between reduplication and repetition, as well as look at some instances of doubling that might be analyzed as reduplication within certain frameworks.

RSL is a natural language used primarily by deaf people in the Russian Federation. According to the 2012 census, it is used by more than 120,000 people in Russia. In contrast to American and German Sign Languages, it is not well described by linguists, although in recent years several researchers have been actively investigating RSL (see Kimmelman 2014: chapter 1 for an overview), and in 2014 the first on-line corpus of RSL appeared (<http://rsl.nstu.ru/site/signlang/language/en>, Burkova 2015) which will hopefully facilitate further research.

In this paper I thus discuss reduplication and repetition in RSL. The paper consists of three main parts. In Section 2 I summarize the results of Burkova and Filimonova (2014) and discuss whether their data fall under the prototypical definition of reduplication. In Section 3 I discuss distributive reduplication in RSL based on novel data and again assess whether it has the properties of reduplication in spoken languages. Section 4 contains a brief discussion of syntactic doubling in RSL (previously reported in Kimmelman 2013, 2014) and its classification as reduplication or repetition. Section 5 presents an overall conclusion of the paper.

2 Reduplication

Burkova and Filimonova (2014) analyzed formal and functional properties of reduplication in RSL based on corpus data. They found that reduplication in RSL, similar to reduplication in other sign languages, has a variety of formal types, some of which have parallels in spoken languages, while others do not. They also found that reduplication has a number of functions, again showing a great deal of overlap with the functions of reduplication in spoken languages. Finally, they found a clear correlation between different formal types of reduplication and different functions, which, according to them, is a clear sign of the iconic nature of RSL reduplication.

The types of reduplication that Burkova and Filimonova (2014) found in RSL are simple manual reduplication, two-handed reduplication (simultaneous

and sequential), and non-manual reduplication. Simple manual reduplication is when the sign is repeated (one or more times). This type of reduplication is very similar to reduplication in spoken languages. Two-handed reduplication by definition involves two hands, so it is a modality-specific phenomenon. Two hands can be used simultaneously to produce a sign which would normally be one-handed. Another option is that two hands are used to produce the one-handed sign sequentially; in this case, the sign may be produced multiple times by each hand. Finally, manual reduplication is often accompanied with non-manual reduplication, that is, with repeated head or body movements (which can be forward–backward or sideward). Importantly, these non-manual reduplicated markers can also accompany a sign which does not contain manual reduplication, which makes it possible to isolate non-manual reduplication as a separate subtype.⁴

As for the meanings of reduplication in RSL, they appear to be very similar to the pool of meanings expressed by reduplication in spoken languages. Simple manual reduplication is applied to verbs to express different types as verbal plurality, such as iterative, habitual, and durative (2). These aspectual meanings are differentiated by the speed of movement. When it applies to nouns, reduplication expresses additive nominal plurality. In addition, it can be used (in combination with other prosodic modifications) to derive nouns from verbs (see also Kimmelman 2009).

Two-handed simultaneous reduplication is used to express nominal plurality (3),⁵ to derive indefinite pronouns from question words, and, when applied to signs with adjectival semantics, to express intensity. Two-handed sequential reduplication is primarily used to express different types of distributivity. For instance, in (4) the sign COME is marked with two-handed sequential reduplication to mark the fact that different people were coming at different times.

⁴ An anonymous reviewer also asked why I should consider nonmanual repetition as a candidate reduplication construction. However, non-manual reduplication seems to follow a typical reduplication pattern: a linguistic unit (in this case, head or body movement), which has a clear form and function, undergoes repetition, and whose repetition is meaningful. It is thus not clear why this should not be analyzed as reduplication, apart from the fact that no parallels seem to be found in spoken languages.

⁵ For simultaneous two-handed reduplication it is important to distinguish between signs that are lexically one- and two-handed, which is not always a simple matter. However, some signs such as BAG are clearly one-handed, and the meanings of the one-handed and two-handed usages are clearly different.

(2) RSL⁶

SPEECH.THERAPIST BRING+ PAST

'She was regularly bringing me to the speech therapist.'

<http://rsl.nstu.ru/data/view/id/230/t/442640/d/444570>)

(3) RSL

GO BAG-2r PLACE

'Leave the bags here!'

<http://rsl.nstu.ru/data/view/id/198/t/282565/d/283515>)

(4) RSL

THEN START PEOPLE COME-2rs LIVE

'Then people started coming to live there.'

<http://rsl.nstu.ru/data/view/id/224/t/60000/d/64410>)

(5) RSL

rbl+lbl

WALK

'He is walking around.'

⁶ Glossing conventions: signs are glossed in SMALL.CAPS. If a sign is translated with more than one word, the words are separated with a full stop. Fingerspelled words are glossed with dashes between letters: P-E-A-R-S. IX stands for index, that is, a pointing sign; 1 and 2 refer to the speaker and the addressee, and lowercase letters a, b, c etc. to locations in the signing space. Simple reduplication is marked as +; triplication and multiplication as ++, -2r means two-handed simultaneous reduplication, and -2rs – two-handed sequential reduplication, DISTR is the distributive marker (reduplication combined with sideward movement), PAST is past tense marker. Non-manuals are marked above the gloss line, and their scope is marked with underlining; rbl – right body lean, lbl – left body lean. Whenever the example is taken from the RSL corpus, a link to the relevant part of the corpus is given. Note that one needs to register to be able to access the corpus data. Some examples do not come from the corpus, but from my own data (examples elicited for a study of quantifiers in RSL); in this case no link is given.

Finally, non-manual reduplication is used to express intensive durative, usually in combination with simple manual reduplication, but also sometimes in isolation (5). As should be clear from this overview, different formal types of reduplication have different largely non-overlapping functions.

Burkova and Filimonova (2014) also showed that reduplication can be combined with other markers, such as sideward movement or modification of the amplitude or speed of the sign. They argue that these markers are independent of reduplication as they express isolatable meaning components. For instance, simple sideward movement without reduplication is used to express (collective) nominal plurality. When this movement is combined with reduplication, the meaning of distributive plurality emerges. I will discuss this type of marking further in the next section.

Let's consider the question whether reduplication in RSL follows the patterns of reduplication identified for spoken languages. First, reduplication clearly produces one prosodic word. Second, the meanings expressed by reduplication are very consistent with the ones found in spoken languages; the contribution of reduplication is semantic, not pragmatic or emotional. Third, with this type of reduplication the copies are adjacent (Burkova and Filimonova explicitly excluded non-adjacent reduplication from consideration). Finally, Burkova and Filimonova demonstrated that reduplication is phonologically restricted. For instance, simple reduplication expressing nominal plurality only applies to one-handed signs that have contact with the body or two-handed signs with contact between the hands. In contrast, two-handed simultaneous reduplication only applies to signs without contact with the body.⁷

In the previous section I discussed the fact that in some sign languages, such as German Sign Language, reduplication actually typically produces three copies (i.e., iterations) rather than two, so triplication is the default option (Pfau and Steinbach 2006). This is not compatible with the prototype of reduplication in Stolz et al. (2011). Pfau and Steinbach (2006: 156–158) hypothesize that the preference for triplication⁸ in German Sign Language might have a modality basis. They offer at least two reasons for triplication. First, triplication enhances the visual saliency of the sign, and this is beneficial due to the fact that visual attention

⁷ In addition, restrictions are different for verbal and nominal signs, so they are in fact morphophonological. For further details, see Burkova and Filimonova (2014).

⁸ In fact, Pfau and Steinbach (2006) discuss triplication together with the addition of sideward movement as a complex phenomenon of hyperdetermination, where the same semantic element (in this case, the plural meaning) is expressed by three separate formal elements (in this case: two times by triplication, and once by sideward movement).

of signers is focused on the face, rather than on the hands. Second, many signs contain intrinsic repetition of movement, which means that in order to distinguish morphological reduplication from lexical repetition of movement, triplication is necessary. In other words, since many signs contain lexical repetition, simple reduplication of signs without repetition creates forms that are formally similar to signs with lexical repetition, thus making repetition in general highly ambiguous.

However, the second argument is controversial. If a sign contains no lexical repetition, simple reduplication is clearly enough to distinguish the reduplicated form from the non-reduplicated form; it is less clear why it should matter that in other signs repetition might have a different functions (such as being lexical). Neither is triplication necessary for signs with lexical repetition: if a nominal sign in its single form contains a repeated movement, and in its plural form it contains three movements of this kind, then only a part of the sign is actually reduplicated, and one can speak of partial reduplication, rather than triplication.

In fact, this is exactly what Burkova and Filimonova (2014) found in RSL. Signs with inherent repetition in their reduplicated form usually contained three repetitions of the movement which can be analyzed as partial reduplication. For instance, the verbal sign SICK has lexical repetition (i.e two iterations of the movement), and the nominal sign SICKNESS has three iterations of the same movement, thus qualifying as partial reduplication. For signs without inherent repetition, reduplication rather than triplication has been found to be the most frequent option. Triplication is also attested, but it is usually associated with specific semantics. Consider (6), in which triplication is used to focus on a particularly large number of events (a similar effect is obtained with repetition in the English translation).

(6) RSL

DRIVE++

‘They are driving and driving for a long time.’

(<http://rsl.nstu.ru/data/view/id/222/t/72326/d/74938>)

Such cases can be analyzed similar to Stolz and Levkovych’s (this volume) analysis of Angolar as a combination of reduplication and (word-internal) repetition. Reduplication would then produce the aspectual marking, while repetition would produce additional emphasis on the duration of the described event.

Thus, RSL seems to pattern with spoken languages in restricting the number of copies in reduplication proper. Of course, one should still offer an explanation for the fact that in German Sign Language triplication seems to be the default

option.⁹ However, such an explanation should not imply that triplication is default in all sign languages.

To sum up, reduplication in RSL as described by Burkova and Filimonova (2014) seems to fit perfectly with the definition of reduplication based on spoken languages. There are also obvious modality effects in this domain. Two-handed reduplication and non-manual reduplication do not have direct parallels in spoken languages. However, if I abstract away from the purely articulatory facts, these types of reduplication are also well-behaved. They express a semantics that is normally associated with reduplication, and they are formally restricted. In the next section I will consider a more complex case, which is also mentioned in Burkova and Filimonova (2014): distributive marking realized as a combination of reduplication and spatial localization.

3 Distributive marking

Distributivity in RSL, as mentioned in the previous section, can also be expressed with reduplication. One type of reduplication that applies to verbs to describe distributive events is two-handed reduplication, as in (4). However, a more typical form of reduplication that expresses distributivity is simple reduplication combined with sideward or arc movement.

In order to understand how distributive marking works in RSL, I need to briefly introduce the use of space in this language. RSL uses space to localize referents, to refer back to them with the help of pointing signs (pronouns, glossed as IX for index); space is also used for verbal agreement.¹⁰ For first and second person, the pointing to the signer (IX-1) and the addressee (IX-2) are used, as in (7a); other referents are assigned locations in the signing space, which I will gloss as *a*, *b*, etc., as in (7b).

- (7) RSL
- a. IX-1 IX-2 SEE-2 SELDOM
'I seldom see you.'
 - b. IX-a IX-b a-SEE-b
'He sees him.'
 - c. IX-1 IX-b LOVE
'I love him.'

⁹ A corpus-based investigation of German Sign Language might be useful to confirm this preference.

¹⁰ Not all researchers agree that verbal agreement in sign languages should be analyzed as agreement, but this is not crucial for this paper (see Lillo-Martin and Meier 2011 for a recent discussion).

Examples (7a) and (7b) also demonstrate that verbs can agree with these locations, which means that the verbal sign either moves from the location of the subject to the location of the object, or it is oriented towards the object. However, not all verbs are agreeing: plain verbs, such as the RSL sign LOVE, do not change the form depending on the locations associated with their arguments (7c).

Agreeing verbs can be marked specifically to express distribution of events over their arguments. In this case the verb moves towards several locations, so it is reduplicated, but the copies are not exact: each copy has a different movement and a different final location (8). Note that in (8) the number of locations does not exactly represent the number of objects or subjects: (8a) does not mean ‘I gave each of the four people a present’, but ‘I gave everyone a present’.

(8) RSL



a. 1-GIVE.PRESENT-DISTR

‘I gave everyone a present.’ (the hand moves to four locations, the pictures show three of the four locations)



b. DISTR-GIVE.PRESENT-1

‘Everyone gave me a present.’ (the hand moves from four locations to the signer, pictures show two of the four locations)

Interestingly, it is not just the verbs that can be marked this way to express distributivity. The same type of reduplication applies to numerals (9a), nouns (9b), pronouns, and even to the quantifier sign EVERY (9c). As (9b) shows, when this type of reduplication is applied to non-verbal signs, then the copies differ from each other in location, but not in movement.¹¹

(9) RSL

a. MAN BUY BEER ONE-DISTR

‘Every man bought a beer.’



b. 1-GIVE.PRESENT FLOWER-DISTR

‘I gave them one flower each as a present.’

c. EVERY-DISTR

‘each one’

In principle, expressing distributivity is one of the common functions of reduplication in spoken languages. For instance, in Hungarian, numerals are reduplicated to create distributivity (10).

(10) Hungarian

a gyerekek két-két majmot láttak
 the children two-two monkey.ACC saw.3PL
 ‘The children saw two monkeys each.’
 (Szabolcsi 2010: 138)

However, on the formal side, a problem emerges. Reduplication for distribution in RSL is in fact triplication or multiplication; my impression is that it

¹¹ The non-verbal signs that in RSL can be marked by distributive reduplication can thus be described as locatable signs in the terminology of de Beuzeville et al. (2009).

usually results in three or four iterations of the original sign. Moreover, an explanation similar to the one proposed for triplication in RLS in the previous section would not work: not only does there not seem to be an emotional/pragmatic effect associated with extra iterations, but simple reduplication producing just two iterations cannot have a general distributive meaning. It can only express dual semantics, that is, that the event is distributed over exactly two participants (11).

(11) RSL

MAN BUY BEER ONE+

‘The two men each bought a beer. *Every man bought a beer.’

So multiplication is necessary to avoid the interpretation in which the number of iterations is interpreted as exactly reflecting the number of repetitions of the event. Note that when distributive multiplication applies, as in examples (8) and (9) above, there is no direct relation between the number of iterations and the number of events.

This phenomenon seems to be a modality effect. Distributivity is expressed through the use of space. In addition, since points in space can be associated with specific referents, distributive marking that uses the same points in space can be interpreted iconically and directly, for instance, reflecting that the action has been applied to exactly 2 or 3 participants previously established in space. Therefore, the non-iconically interpreted distributive form has to contain more than two iterations. I do not think, though, that this modality effect excludes distributive marking in RSL from qualifying as grammatical reduplication. If I analyze examples like (8) and (9) as repetition, the quantificational meaning becomes unexpected.

However, there are some examples that are even more surprising if we are looking from the perspective of spoken languages. For instance, in an experiment to elicit quantificational strategies in RSL, Zajtseva (1987) found out that the distributive marking can apply to clauses. Consider the following example:

(12) RSL



SQUARE-a CIRCLE-a TWO-a / SQUARE-b CIRCLE-b TWO-b / SQUARE-c CIRCLE-c
TWO-c

‘There are a couple of circles in every square.’

(Zajtseva 1987: 10–11)¹²

The signer was describing the meaning ‘there are a couple of circles in every square’, and to express it she produced the statement SQUARE CIRCLE TWO in three different locations (a, b, and c), where the sign for CIRCLE was localized above the sign for SQUARE to reflect their relative positions. Note that the experimental procedure was such that the utterance could not have been used exactly, that is, to describe a situation in which there were exactly three squares with circles in them. The signers were not asked to describe one spatial arrangement, but instead to find a description that would be applicable to several different spatial arrangements, thus expressing a truly quantificational meaning similar to the meaning of the English translation in (12).

This example presents a serious puzzle. On the one hand, (12) is clearly related to the other examples discussed in this section. The meaning expressed in (12) is distributive quantification, and this meaning is achieved through the use of triplication and sideward movement, as in the other examples. However, this triplication and sideward movement is applied to a full clause consisting of three independent signs.

As I discussed in Section 1, the possibility of reduplication applying beyond morphology is already open according to most researchers. Thus, in principle, (12) does not defy any constraints on reduplication formulated above, except for the constraint on the number of copies (which I have already explained using modality effects). This leads us to conclude that (12) is indeed reduplication and that RSL data clearly show that reduplication can apply to entities larger than words, namely to full clauses. The question that I cannot answer at the moment is whether similar examples can be found in spoken languages, and if not, what prevents such examples from occurring.

4 Doubling

In the previous section I discussed distributive reduplication in RSL which is somewhat different from prototypical reduplication in spoken languages, but

¹² Zajtseva (1987) did not provide illustrations, so the pictures used above come from an example elicited by me to replicate Zajtseva’s findings. Only the sign CIRCLE in three locations is depicted.

still qualifies as such. In this section I discuss syntactic doubling that would not normally be analyzed as reduplication. After introducing the data, I address the question whether the boundary between reduplication and doubling is clear-cut.

Verbal doubling, whereby a verb appears twice in one sentence, is attested in many spoken languages (Kandybowicz 2007). It has also been shown that doubling is also attested in several sign languages, such as American, Brazilian, Hong Kong, Quebec, Croatian, Austrian, Polish Sign Language, and in RSL (Kimmelman 2013).

There are different syntactic analyses of doubling, some of which connect doubling to morphosyntactic restrictions (Fischer and Janis 1990), while others analyze doubling as a manifestation of the copy theory of movement, where the realization of two copies is triggered by emphasis (Nunes and de Quadros 2008). Most researchers of sign languages connect doubling to certain pragmatic functions, such as emphasis, or focus in general. Doubling attested in spoken languages is also often related to focus, emphasis, or affirmation.

Kimmelman (2013, 2014) demonstrated that doubling in RSL is a very common phenomenon. It turns out that doubling in RSL concerns not only verbal signs (13a), but also nouns (13b), adjectives, and other constituents. Furthermore, even full clauses can be repeated in a similar fashion (13c).

(13) RSL

a. LOOK P-E-A-R LOOK

‘He looks at the pears.’

(Kimmelman 2014: 139)

b. BOY OTHER BOY

‘Another boy ...’

(Kimmelman 2014: 139)

c. IX CARRY. COME.DOWN. CARRY

‘He comes down carrying [the cage].’

(Kimmelman 2014: 141)

Kimmelman (2013, 2014) argued that the function of doubling in RSL could not be emphasis because it is used in clearly non-emphatic contexts, but it could not be focus in general, because it is not used regularly enough. He suggested that the function of doubling might be foregrounding, that is, highlighting only a part of new information as being more relevant for the following discourse. This is confirmed by the fact that usually the doubled constituent is mentioned in the following discourse, while the constituent placed between the copies of the doubled one would not be mentioned. Furthermore, repetition of clauses (as in (13c)) might be a precursor to clause-internal doubling, as the function of the former is

to return to the main storyline after a digression that is related to the function of the latter, that is, foregrounding. Note that for these reasons Kimmelman (2013, 2014) did not claim that repetition of clauses is doubling strictly speaking, but rather that it is a related construction.

Should we analyze doubling in RSL as an instance of reduplication? As discussed in Section 1, adjacency is often used as a criterion for reduplication, and only the smallest digressions from it are deemed acceptable (Stolz et al. 2011), while doubling is by definition non-adjacent. However, for other researchers (Inkelas and Zoll 2005) adjacency is not a necessary requirement. I therefore need to discuss other arguments for and against the reduplication analysis of doubling.

One argument in favour of analyzing doubling as reduplication rather than as repetition is that most researchers agree that doubling (in sign languages at least) is a grammatical phenomenon. For instance, Nunes and de Quadros (2008) provide an elaborate syntactic analysis of doubling in Brazilian Sign Language involving the copy theory of movement and the explicit rules of linearization and spell-out.

A grammatical analysis of doubling can be also applied to RSL. Doubling is very frequent (thus regular); however, it is also restricted. For instance, if I leave clause repetition out of the picture, in RSL, as in other sign languages, only single signs but not larger constituents can be doubled. Furthermore, sometimes doubling is non-identical, that is, the copies are different in morphological marking. In such cases, it is always the second copy that is more marked (14).

(14) RSL

CLOSE / **GO THERE GO-ASP:CONT**

‘He is going there now.’ Second copy marked with continuous aspect marker.
(Kimmelman 2014: 143)

Stolz et al. (2011) provide several arguments against analyzing syntactic doubling as reduplication. For instance, they discuss an example of syntactic doubling in Fongbe (15), after Inkelas and Zoll (2005), and argue that the sentence consists of two separate clauses to which the “copies” of the verb in fact belong. If one is to analyze this as reduplication, Stolz et al. warn, the notion of reduplication would disintegrate due to the lack of constraints. However, in the previous section we have seen that for RSL one should probably allow reduplication to apply to units as large as clauses; then maybe it is also acceptable to allow the intervening material for non-adjacent reduplication to be of any size, and not to limit it to syllables as Stolz et al. suggested. Furthermore, the claim that the copies of the verbs belong to different clauses might have some grounds in Fongbe, where there is also a prosodic boundary separating the two copies. In RSL, however, quite often

no prosodic boundary can be found between the copies, as argued by Kimmelman (2014) for (16).

(15) Fongbe

sí(sɔ) wɛ, Kɔkú **sísɔ**
 tremble it.is Koku tremble
 ‘It was tremble that Koku did.’
 (Stolz, Stroh & Urdze 2011: 48)

(16) RSL

LEAVE SHOP LEAVE
 ‘He left the shop.’
 (Kimmelman 2014: 147)

In addition, Stolz et al. (2011) claim that the two instances of the doubled verb in Fongbe did not form a construction *stricto sensu*. It seems unclear why this must be the case, unless we include adjacency in the definition of a construction.

Stolz et al. (2011) also discuss other phenomena that are somewhat similar to syntactic doubling that they did not want to analyze as reduplication. One such phenomenon is correlatives (such as Dutch *of X of Y* ‘either X or Y’). The reasons not to analyze those as reduplication are as threefold. First, the copies of the word are never adjacent; however, I have already discussed this issue. Second, correlatives show infinite recursion and can be extended to as many copies as necessary, unlike true reduplication. However, this does not at all apply to syntactic doubling in RSL, where more than two copies hardly ever appear (Kimmelman 2013, 2014). Finally, correlatives in general are optional, and the single instance of the conjunction can usually fulfill the same function. It is not exactly clear whether doubling is optional. On the one hand, turning an RSL sentence with doubling into a sentence without doubling is usually possible (but see some counterexamples for other sign languages discussed in Kimmelman 2014). On the other hand, the pragmatic function of foregrounding disappears if doubling is not used, so if optionality is assessed with respect to expressing the exact same semantics and pragmatics, then doubling is not optional.

The main argument against analyzing doubling as reduplication is its function. Doubling in RSL has a clearly pragmatic function: foregrounding, which is somewhat related to focus and emphasis. Stolz et al. (2011) together with many other researchers consider the semantics/pragmatics distinction crucial in differentiating between reduplication and repetition. One could question the major role of this criterion since pragmatic functions, such as marking topic and focus, can clearly also be fulfilled by grammatical (including morphological) markers in

some languages (Aboh 2010), and if so, it is not exactly clear why reduplication should be prohibited from having pragmatic functions. However, this issue is far beyond the scope of this paper, and data from RSL doubling, although interesting, are not unique, and thus cannot form a crucial argument one way or the other.

5 Conclusion

In this paper I discussed three phenomena in Russian Sign Language: reduplication, which generally conforms to the prototype of reduplication in spoken languages; distributive marking, which shows some surprising properties; and syntactic doubling, which may or may not be a related phenomenon. It seems that while each of these phenomena are more or less close to the prototype of reduplication, none of them can be characterized as classical repetition.

It seems that, in general, reduplication in RSL (and probably in some other sign languages) fits the patterns found in spoken languages rather well. Functionally, as demonstrated by Burkova and Filimonova (2014), reduplication in RSL has the same semantics as reduplication in many spoken languages: it is used to mark verbal aspect, nominal plurality, nominalization, intensity for adjectives, and distributive semantics. Formally, reduplication can sometimes take form of triplication or multiplication, but at least for RSL, outside of the domain of distributive marking, the preferred form is reduplication, so again RSL does not diverge from the prototype.

Another feature of RSL that does not look very different from phenomena found in spoken languages is syntactic doubling. It is used to convey a function related to Information Structure, namely, foregrounding. Similar constructions have been found in other sign languages, as well as in spoken languages, with similar functions. The question whether doubling in RSL can be analyzed as reduplication or repetition is very controversial, but the same question can be stated for verbal doubling in American Sign Language or in spoken languages like Fongbe, and the answer should probably be the same for all these languages.

I did observe some obvious modality differences between sign languages (which RSL is an example of) and spoken languages. Due to the presence of the second articulator (the second hand), reduplication in RSL can formally be realized as the involvement of this articulator. Furthermore, due to the fact that sign languages actively used non-manual signals simultaneously with manual signs, reduplication can also be realized through this channel. However, those are surface-level differences, which do not make reduplication in RSL special in any fundamental way.

A more serious modality effect can probably be observed in the domain of distributive marking. As I demonstrated, distributive reduplication (combined with sideward movement) is in fact triplication or multiplication, and it can apply to full clauses. Both these facts seem to blur the boundary between prototypical reduplication and repetition. It seems that in distributive contexts in RSL reduplication is not restricted to two copies (and no repetition-style analysis of it can be involved), and also that reduplication can apply to large syntactic units.

I argued that these facts might be modality effects, and that at least triplication might be explained with a reference to iconicity, but I do not have a crystal-clear analysis of why spoken languages could not use similar constructions as well. If this is a modality-specific phenomenon, then the significance of these findings for the theory of reduplication in spoken languages is not very high. However, if a cross-modal (= modality-independent) theory of reduplication is to be developed, these facts have to be addressed. In addition, one might also wonder whether some spoken languages have similar phenomena, and whether the strict definition of reduplication as distinct from repetition can be maintained.

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