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: $\sqrt{}C_1(C_2)V\text{-} \rightarrow \underline{C_1V}\text{-}C_1(C_2)V\text{-}$. 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:
  $\sqrt{}st^hā$ 'stand' → perfect *ta-st^{h}āu* (not ^{x}*sa-st^{h}āu*)
- Ancient Greek *sT-* and non-rising-sonority roots:
  √stel 'prepare' → *e-stal-ka* (not ^{x}*se-stal-ka*)
- Gothic *sT-* roots:
  √*stald* 'possess' → preterite *stai-stald* (not ^{x}*sai-stald*)
- Latin *sT-* roots:
  √*spond* 'promise' → perfect *spo-pond-ī* (not ^{x}*so-spond-ī*)

(2)

- Sanskrit CaC roots:
  √*pat* 'fly' → perf. *pēt-ur* (beside older *pa-pt-ur*)
  √*sap* 'serve' → perf. *sēp-ur* (not ^{x}*sa-sp-ur*)
- Gothic Class IV-V preterites:
  √*gib* 'give' → preterite *gēb-um* (as if from **ge-gb-um*)
- Ancient Greek "Attic Reduplication":
  √*ag* 'lead'→ perfect *agēger-mai* (< **h$_2$əge-h$_2$ger-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 $\underline{C_1V}\text{-}C_1C_2$ 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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