

Отримано: 7 лютого 2024 р.

Прорецензовано: 26 лютого 2024 р.

Прийнято до друку: 7 березня 2024 р.

e-mail: svitlana.kohut@lnu.edu.ua

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2570-1415>

DOI: 10.25264/2519-2558-2024-21(89)-89-92

Kohut S. V. Specificity of contrastive focus reduplication (CR) in modern English. *Наукові записки Національного університету «Острозька академія»: серія «Філологія»*. Острог: Вид-во НаУОА, 2024. Вип. 21(89). С. 89–92.

УДК: 811.111'37'367.7

Svitlana Kohut,

*PhD in Philology, Associate Professor of the English Department,
Ivan Franko National University of Lviv*

SPECIFICITY OF CONTRASTIVE FOCUS REDUPLICATION (CR) IN MODERN ENGLISH

The article explores a relatively new and understudied phenomenon of contrastive focus reduplication (CR), its essence and typical features as well as specificity of its use in a language regarding socio-linguistic and socio-cultural aspects. The author clearly distinguishes between the notions of “pure” reduplication and CR, as the latter refers us to a certain “default” category to which an object belongs. In writing CR is represented as one word, reduplicated items can be spelt with a hyphen or capital letters, CR instances can be given in quotation marks, or any of the above-mentioned graphical means can be combined. Structurally, CR targets nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, pronouns and lexicalized expressions or whole phrases.

The paper has determined that the prototypical understanding of the objects mentioned in such constructions may differ in various cultures, bordering with the stereotypical perception of these objects. Sometimes it proves impossible to find out the exact difference between the prototype and stereotype. It has been established that CR gradually transgresses the bounds of usage exceptionally in the colloquial language, and now is more and more used in the written sources. In perspective, it seems promising to single out socio-cultural and structural differences of this phenomenon in English and Ukrainian, as well as to specify its pragmatic potential in both languages.

Key words: reduplication, contrast, prototype, category, subcategory, colloquial English.

Козут Світлана Василівна,

*кандидат філологічних наук, доцент кафедри англійської філології,
Львівський національний університет ім. І. Франка*

ОСОБЛИВОСТІ КОНТРАСТИВНОЇ РЕДУПЛІКАЦІЇ В СУЧАСНІЙ АНГЛІЙСЬКІЙ МОВІ

У статті розглянуто відносно нове й малодосліджене явище контрастивної редуплікації (КР), його суть і характерні риси, а також специфіку його використання в мові з урахуванням соціолінгвістичних та соціокультурних аспектів. Автор чітко розмежовує поняття “чистої” редуплікації і контрастивної редуплікації, оскільки саме остання відсилає до так званої “дефолтної” категорії, до якої належить певний об’єкт. На письмі контрастивна редуплікація представлена одним словом, редуплікованими елементами через дефіс, написана великими літерами, маленькими літерами курсивом, взята в лапки чи використовується комбінація декількох із перелічених графічних засобів. Структурно контрастивна редуплікація охоплює іменники, дієслова, прикметники, прислівники, прийменники, займенники, а також лексикалізовані словосполучення чи цілі фрази.

Встановлено, що прототипне уявлення про об’єкти, які згадуються у цих конструкціях, може відрізнятися в різних культурах, межуючи зі стереотипним уявленням про ці об’єкти. З’ясувати чітку відмінність між прототипом та стереотипом іноді не можливо. Контрастивна редуплікація поступово виходить зі сфери вживання виключно в розмовній мові і зараз все більше застосовується на письмі. У перспективі видається цікавим з’ясувати соціокультурні та структурні відмінності досліджуваного явища в англійській та українській мовах, визначити його прагматичний потенціал в обох мовах.

Ключові слова: редуплікація, контраст, прототип, категорія, субкатегорія, розмовна англійська мова.

Certain phenomena in modern linguistics arise due to constant development of languages as “living organisms” which evolve virtually every day. Some phenomena remain within one language, whereas others spread, growing into language universals. Scholars exploring modern English claim that constructions known as contrastive focus reduplication (CR henceforth) have exceeded the limitations of a single language and can now be found in English, German, Italian, Ukrainian and many other languages.

CR is a relatively new phenomenon since the earliest examples from the corpus with these language units in British and predominantly American English date back to the 1990s (Hohenhaus, 2004; Kajitani, 2005; Widlitzki, 2016), and the term itself was coined in the early 2000s in a Boston university paper appropriately nicknamed “the salad-salad paper” by J. Ghomeshi, R. Jackendoff, N. Rosen and K. Russell (Ghomeshi et al., 2004). Unfortunately, we have no exact data as to when CR appeared in other languages, because there are practically no studies into it, for instance, in the Ukrainian language. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to determine what CR is, to analyze its structure, to examine peculiar cases when CR is applied and the limitations of its use, as well as to explore the pragmatic potential of reduplicated units and socio-cultural implications of using them. In this paper our observations will be exemplified with instances of CR found in contemporary TV series and everyday life conversations, and the Corpus of English contrastive focus reduplications, compiled in 2014.

When it comes to reduplicating certain elements, we have to clarify the difference between ‘pure’ reduplication and CR. Thus, E. Moravcsik defines reduplication as “a pattern where the double or multiple occurrence of a sound string, syllable, morpheme, or word within a larger syntagmatic unit is in systematic contrast with its single occurrence, with the iterated elements filling functionally non-distinct positions” (Moravcsik, 1992: 323). In other words, we can either have a repetition of the whole meaningful constituent (total reduplication) or a repetition of part of a constituent (partial reduplication). Examples of the former include such lexical items as *boo-boo*, *yum-yum*, etc., and the latter can be illustrated with lexemes like *flip-flop*, *zigzag*, *knick-knack* etc. Apparently, the repeated language units perform their primary function of intensity and iteration. Cross-linguistically, reduplication may typically serve to make plurals, to show distributivity, continuous or habitual aspect, to express variety, augmentativity and diminutivity or to convey various other kinds of derivational meaning (e.g. agentive nominal) (Moravcsik, 1992: 323).

Meanwhile, CR (otherwise called “the double construction” by N. Dray, “identical constituent compounds” by P. Hohenhaus, “lexical cloning” by Y. Huang, “CF-reduplication” by M. Song and C. Lee etc.) can be defined as a considerably more complex notion. First and foremost, it does not simply boil down to technical repetition of some elements. Thus, CR is determined as “a phenomenon of colloquial English, denoting the prototypical instance of the new reduplicated expression or singling out a member of subset... that represents a true, real, default or prototypical instance” (Song, Lee, 2011: 444), as illustrated in (1):

(1) I'll make the tuna salad, and you make the *salad-salad*. (Ghomeshi et al., 2004: 308)

In fact, the classical definition of CR associating it predominantly with the colloquial use of a language seems to be rather categorical, since recently we have come across a number of CR examples even in written sources:

(2) Німецька як іноземна викладається тільки в адаптаційних класах, в регулярних це звичайна «німецька-німецька», майже без граматики). [German as a foreign language is taught only in adaptation classes, in regular ones this is common “German-German”, virtually with no grammar] (Спіріна)

The given example (2) provides a rather clear explanation of what “German-German” is about, employing a typical structural CR pattern – “X, not XX”. Thus, by this the author of the blog wants to make sure people understand here that they will learn conversational German, not grammar. Interestingly, another contextual interpretation of “German-German” is eliminated here thanks to this “X, not XX”-model, meaning that the German language spoken, for instance, in Switzerland or Austria is clearly not even to be considered here.

Graphically, CR can be marked in various ways (to collect the examples from TV shows the subtitles were used). The database of examples that we have at our disposal includes a bulk of hyphenated samples (the overwhelming majority of cases) or reduplicated elements spelt as one word. In some cases we can have single words reduplicated, while many others have whole phrases used for CR:

(3) Could you please write it down? But please, use *paper-paper*, not your computers. (from a lesson in the US)

(4) A: It happened just the same, but this time it was dumping rain and there was a lion.

B: Whoa. A *lionlion*?

A: Yes, Dorothy, and it was roaring in my face. (The Manifest, season 3, episode 9)

(5) ...after we had finally *BROKE-IT-OFF-broke-it-off*, I found out he had bought me an engagement ring. (Corpus)

Sometimes phrases containing CR are spelt with capital letters (6), the first element can be even used with inverted commas (7) or we may even have a combination of both (8):

(6) Wait, is that a *CANNON cannon*? (The Resident, season 5, episode 13) [a real cannon is meant]

(7) A: Conrad confessed to everything to Daniel before the interview.

B: “*Everything*” *everything*? (Revenge, season 1, episode 18) [‘everything’ refers to the whole truth]

(8) A: I'm thinking of the beach.

B: OK, a beach. OK, well, what kind of a beach?

A: It's a – you know, the – a *BEACH-beach*. (Corpus) [a typical beach]

Structurally, CR targets virtually every part of speech – nouns (9), verbs (10), adjectives (11), adverbs (12), pronouns (13), proper names (14), lexicalized expressions and even whole phrases (15):

(9) He's my brother. Well, not my *BROTHER-brother*. (Corpus) [a fraternity brother is meant]

(10) A: You should still go rock climbing without me. Because I'll pray you don't fall and shatter every bone in your body.

B: I never fall! I mean ‘*fall-fall*’. (The Resident, season 6, episode 5) [to fall means ‘to break something’]

(11) That's OK. I'm familiar with these young ladies. Well, I'm not *FAMILIAR-familiar*... I know them. (Corpus) [being familiar means to know about someone, not being introduced to them]

(12) A: Take this down to graphics and add it to my chart, all right?

B: After I...

A: Now.

B: What about the...

A: Hey, *NOW-now*, man. (Corpus) [immediately, not later]

(13) Like many, I've fallen into an Internet romance – many compelling e-mails and instant messages exchanged with an attractive, captivating woman.... She confesses to loving the literary me, but not the *ME-me*. (Corpus) [not a real me, someone artificial or embellished]

(14) A: Jared is dating Sarah.

B: *Sarah-the-Major's-daughter-Sarah*?

A: Yeah. (The Manifest, season 3, episode 8) [specifying that it was the woman mentioned previously, dating whom was highly unlikely for Jared]

(15) A: I've come up with a ten-point plan for getting her [A's ex-girlfriend] back.

B: What, like revenge?

A: No, getting her back. Not *GETTING HER BACK-getting her back*. Getting her back. Number one: take her on holiday. (Corpus) [being a couple again]

In some cases we can even come across grammatical changes to the second reduplicated item, for instance the plural (friends) or adding the -s ending in the third person singular (die-dies).

Since the time when the notion of CR was first introduced in the scholarly papers, there has been a debate between scholars with two views on the nature of CR. Some researchers claim that CR forms express the prototypical instance of a property or some individual concepts (‘salad-salad’ referring to a green salad) (Song, Lee, 2011; Ghomeshi et al., 2004; Bross, Fraser, 2020; Lee, Lee, 2007). Meanwhile, the others point out that the prototype-based interpretation of CR can fall short in several aspects. For instance, L. Whitton proves that the same CR items may have different meanings in different contexts (Whitton, 2006). Moreover, this means that the context-related nature of CR makes it inconsistent with the prototype-based analysis. In many cases it proves really challenging to determine which exemplar(s) of a category should be viewed as prototypical. For example, let us analyze a Ukrainian sentence with CR (16):

(16) Вона така *дівчинка-дівчинка!* [She is a *girl-girl!*]

As a matter of fact, this sentence serves as a perfect illustration of another crucial aspect of CR, namely the socio-cultural element of such lexical items. Thus, does the interpretation of what a prototypical girl is differ in various cultures? In our survey, we have asked native American and Ukrainian speakers what their understanding of a prototypical girl was and, surprisingly, the answers differed. In Ukrainian culture, we typically perceive “a girl girl” as someone who likes pink, wears cute dresses and usually plays with dolls. Meanwhile, the Americans would imagine “a girl girl” as the one having typical female romantic interests, someone dating men. In other words, default notions to which the speakers refer by saying “a girl girl” may vary significantly.

Furthermore, here arises an extremely interesting question as to whether contrastive focus reduplication refers us to a prototype or a stereotype, as far as the perception of a typical female is very much culture-bound. All the answers given by the native Ukrainian and American speakers as to their interpretation of this word can hardly lead us to a clear-cut differentiation between a prototype of a girl and a stereotypical perception of a representative of this gender.

Therefore, one can make a logical conclusion that CR cannot refer us to a prototype that is constant and unchangeable, and the interpretation of cases with CR proves to be largely context-dependent. Moreover, according to M. Song and C. Lee, “even without a particular context, CF-reduplications have their own denotation(s) based on common beliefs of the speech community in default contexts, which enables us to analyze the semantics of the phenomenon” (Song, Lee, 2011: 446).

Apart from that, the scholars doubt the dimensions of CR, claiming them to be “ad hoc and weak” (Song, Lee: 446). However, we are not inclined to agree with such generalizations, we would rather specify that the dimensions of CR “in many cases are ad hoc and weak”. In other words, if we compare the following examples we will definitely see that in (17) there must be only one underlying dimension (as far as the place referred to as “here” cannot have multiple interpretations and is available from the context, as shown in curly brackets in (17)), whereas in (18) one could have a number of them (e.g. a building of a bank vs an online bank or a bank vs an ATM machine):

(17) a. {She was here, in this room, in this house.

b. She was here, but not *here-here* exactly. (The Manifest, season 4, ep. 14.)

(18) Do you want to go to the *BANK-bank*? (Corpus)

Analyzing what CR is associated with we can arrive at a conclusion that CR can either refer to a category as a whole or a subcategory of a category. For instance, in this dialogue between a married couple, recently separated and now living apart, ‘COFFEE-coffee’ denotes a category of a ‘beverage brewed from roasted coffee beans’, the context being clear:

(19) A: Maybe you’d like to come in and have some coffee?

B: Yeah, I’d like that.

A: Just *COFFEE-coffee*, no double meanings. (Corpus)

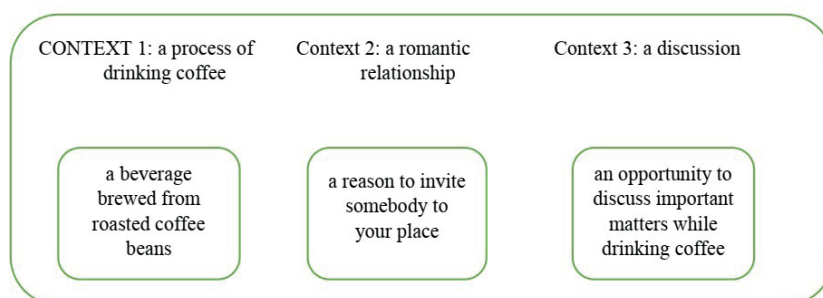


Figure 1. Prototype structure of a ‘COFFEE’ category.

On the contrary, there prove to be numerous examples with CR that refer us to a number of categories of a category, as in (20):

(20) A: Do they have food over there?

B: Sure, they’ve got chocolate over there, but not real *FOOD-food*. (Corpus)

Thus, ‘FOOD-food’ here definitely denotes something you can satisfy your hunger with (a nutritious substance) rather than sweet things that can give you only a short-term relief from hunger.

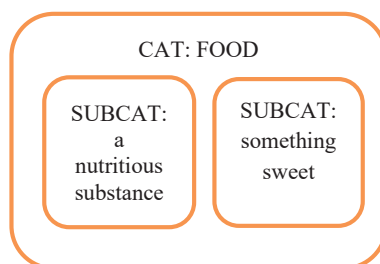


Figure 2. Prototype structure of a “FOOD” category

Therefore, analyzing the nature and representation of the phenomenon of contrastive focus reduplication in English, we have come to a conclusion that it has an enormous potential in the sphere of colloquial language, but at the same time is exceeding its boundaries and spreading into written language, especially blogs or newspaper and magazine articles. Moreover, the use of CR raises a controversial question as to what CR refers to – a prototype or a stereotype. Whereas structural specificity of CR seems to be rather transparent and relatively well-researched, the pragmatic nature as well as its socio-linguistic and socio-cultural implications (especially in contrast with other languages rather than English) are still to be explored.

References:

1. Спіріна Т. Чому українських учнів у Німеччині повертають в адаптаційні класи? URL: <https://osvita.ua/blogs/91465/> / Spirina T. Chomu ukrayins'kykh uchniv u Nimechchyni povertayut' v adaptatsiyni klasy? URL: <https://osvita.ua/blogs/91465/>
2. Bross F., Fraser K.. Contrastive focus reduplication and the modification puzzle. *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics*. 2020. № 5(1): 47. P. 1–18.
3. Corpus of English contrastive focus reduplications // <http://home.cc.umanitoba.ca/~krussll/redup-corpus.html>
4. Ghomeshi L., Jackendoff R., Rosen N., Russell K. Contrastive focus reduplication in English (the salad-salad paper). *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*. 2004. № 22. P. 307–352.
5. Hohenhaus P. Identical constituent compounding – a corpus-based study. *Folia linguistica*. 2004. 38. P. 297–331.
6. Kajitani M. Semantic properties of reduplication among the world's languages. *LSO Working Papers in Linguistics 5: Proceedings of WIGL*. 2005. P. 93-106.
7. Lee B., Lee C. A focus account for contrastive reduplication: prototypicality and contrastivity. *Proceedings of the 21st Pacific Asia Conference on Language, Information and Computation*. 2007. P. 259–267.
8. Moravcsik E. A. Reduplication. *International encyclopedia of linguistics* / ed. by W. Bright. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992. P. 323–324.
9. Song M., Lee C. CF-reduplication in English: dynamic prototypes & contrastive focus effects. *Proceedings of SALT 21*. 2011. P. 444–462.
10. Whitton L. What can be contrasted in contrastive reduplication? URL: <http://web.stanford.edu/dept/linguistics/qp-fest/2006/abstracts/WhittonQPFest2006Abstract.pdf>
11. Widlitzki B. *Talk talk, not just small talk*. Exploring English contrastive focus reduplication with the help of corpora // *ICAME Journal*. 2016. Vol. 40. P. 119–142.