

Urbanczyk (2005) extends previous ideas regarding the “enhancement of contrasts” between phonological segments (Stevens et al 1986, Flemming 1995) to the enhancement of contrasts between “duplems” (i.e. reduplicative morphemes —Spaelti 1997). Urbanczyk shows that in various Salish and Austronesian languages reduplicants of identical shape can have different surface realizations depending on their morphological function. For example, Hiligaynon (Austronesian) uses full root reduplication for both repetitive/distributive and diminutive. Whereas the distributive requires an identical stress pattern in reduplicant and base (e.g. *baláy* ‘house’ → *baláy-baláy* ‘every house’), the diminutive requires a stress shift (e.g. *baláy-bálay* ‘dollhouse’). Urbanczyk’s claim is that this stress shift functionally serves to differentiate the two duplems—if there was no difference in stress then the resulting surface forms would be homophonous and therefore ambiguous.

In this paper we provide additional examples that support Urbanczyk’s general thesis. For example, in Kosraean (Micronesian) (Yi 1976, Kennedy 2003), a reduplicant representing ‘iterative’ generally forms a heavy syllable prefix (e.g. *kipat* ‘to break’ → *kip-kipat* ‘breaking’), but the denotative reduplicant creates a heavy syllable suffix (e.g. *kipat* → *kipat-pat* ‘broken’). With CVC bases, however, the denotative appears as predicted (e.g. *ΣIN* ‘itch’ → *ΣIN-ΣIN* ‘slap’), but the iterative reduplicant appears as a light syllable prefix (e.g. *ΣIN* → *ΣI-ΣIN* ‘tattoo’), thus avoiding the otherwise expected homophony.

We also address an issue that Urbanczyk has left open to future research—*viz.* whether this process is primarily synchronic or diachronic. Comparative Uto-Aztecan evidence suggests that the enhancement of morphological contrast is diachronic: certain reduplicants have been phonologically enhanced to serve novel semantic functions. Tohono O’odham has two heavy syllable prefixal duplems. For ‘distributive’, a heavy syllable is formed by gemination (e.g. *ban* ‘coyote’ → *bab.ban* ‘coyotes here and there’). On the other hand, plurals, which are usually formed by short vowel reduplication, have long vowels in a small, semantically-motivated class of nouns (e.g. *ban* → *baa.ban* ‘coyotes’) (Hill and Zepeda 1994). We argue that vowel-lengthening was innovated to enhance the contrast not only between marked and unmarked plurals, but also between marked plurals and distributives. Evidence for this includes the use of gemination in heavy syllable reduplicants to mark other functions in O’odham (e.g. repetitive verbs—Fitzgerald 2003), as well as the appearance of geminating distributives elsewhere in Uto-Aztecan (e.g. Tümpisa Shoshone—Dayley 1989).

Finally, we present evidence that homophony avoidance extends beyond the domain of reduplication. Bauer (2003) claims that certain expected patterns of productive morphology can be blocked if it would result in an “embarrassing homonymy”, e.g. French *voleur* is not used to mean ‘flier’ (*voler* ‘fly’ + *-eur* ‘nominalizer’) because of potential “homonymous clash” with *voleur* ‘thief’. Additionally, Mosel (2003) shows that in Samoan different epenthetic vowels can apply to borrowed words if the regular pattern of phonological adaptation would result in homophones (e.g. English *jam* → Samoan *siamu*; Eng. *germ* → Sam. *siamq*). Thus, we present additional evidence of homophony avoidance in

morphology, and we support recent proposals that morphological function can influence surface phonological form.