ON THE *NITTY-GRITTY* OF THE MAIN PATTERNS OF REDUPLICATION AS A WORD-FORMATION DEVICE IN ENGLISH AND THEIR BULGARIAN COUNTERPARTS

Maria Kolarova
St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia

In English and Bulgarian, reduplication is a widespread word-formation mechanism whose resultant constructions display a high degree of expressivity and in some cases, a full degree of lexicalization. In both languages, reduplicatives can be classified in different ways in terms of their form and meaning but there are also formations whose nature remains ambiguous. This study is an attempt to identify the similarities and differences between English and Bulgarian regarding reduplication as a word-formation device.

Key words: reduplicatives, word-formation, reduplication types, English, Bulgarian

I. Reduplication in English and Bulgarian – definition, terminology and research. The aim of the present study.

In simple terms, reduplication is a morphological process that involves full repetition of a sound, a word (e.g. *bye-bye*, *goody-goody*, *pip-pip*; *бързо-бързо* [barzo-barzo], *много-много* [mnogo-mnogo], *цър-цър* [tsar-tsar]) or portion of a word (e.g. *criss-cross*, *teeny-weeny*; *миш-маш* [mish-mash], *сегиз-тогиз* [segiz-togiz]) to create a new formation with a modified meaning (see Mattiello 2013: 148–149).

Apart from the term reduplication, this phenomenon has also been referred to by other terms such as duplication, gemination, (re-)iteration, (morphological) doubling, repetition and replication (Mattiello 2013: 144; Schwaiger 2015: 468), which are sometimes attached to other similar, but still distinct, phenomena (Schwaiger 2015: 468).

The scope of reduplication seems to be difficult to delineate due to the large variety of opinions as to whether this phenomenon is inflectional, derivational or compositional, and whether it should include both syllabic

repetition (e.g. *bozo*, *kiwi*[1]) and syntactic repetition (e.g. *here here* (precisely here), or should be confined only to repetition of nonsense bases as in *hubba hubba* (Mattiello 2013: 144). Instances of syllabic repetition in Bulgarian would be *бебе* [bebe] or *джаджа* [dzhadzha][2], and syntactic repetition can be seen in *Зелен, зелен Гергьовден* [Zelen, zelen Gergyovden][3].

Schwaiger (2015: 478–479) indicates that "productive reduplication of whatever kind seems to be rare" in European languages and adds that *The World Atlas of Language Structures* (Haspelmath et al. 2005) "portrays Europe as a more or less blank spot concerning this feature". The author relates this situation to the fact that reduplication is generally seen as a rare phenomenon in Indo-European languages (Schwaiger 2015: 478). As to the Slavic languages in particular, Kryuchkova (2000 cited in Koleva-Zlateva 2009: 59) regards them as languages where reduplication is rarely used.

Reduplication is "indexical of the user's emotional states, or, at least of his 'non-serious' attitude" (Merlini Barbaresi 2008: 235 cited in Mattiello 2013: 142), which may largely explain why reduplicatives are frequently used in English slang or baby talk[4]. The attitudinal function of reduplication in English, alongside its word-formative function, is also indicated by Bauer et al. (2013: 411), whereas Burov and Petrov (2018: 38) emphasize the extensive use of reduplication as a means of forming emotionally expressive vocabulary in the Turkic languages, including Turkish. The two authors specify that it is namely Turkish that is considered to have played a major role in the wide distribution of reduplication in Bulgarian and the rest of the Balkan languages (Burov and Petrov 2018: 38). As to the creative effect of reduplicatives, in the sense of stylistic embellishment, Kovatcheva (2012: 40) argues that "it may still be *in the eye of the beholder*".

As already suggested above, English differs from the other Western European languages in that it extensively employs reduplication as a mechanism of creating new words and expressing a certain attitude (Mattiello 2013: 141; Bauer et al. 2013: 411). Hence, it comes as no surprise that reduplication in English has long attracted the attention of linguists and some of the scholarly accounts of English reduplicatives include those provided by Jespersen (1942: 173–183), Thun (1963), Marchand (1969: 429–439), Minkova (2002: 133–169), Merlini Barbaresi (2008: 228–241),

---

[1] The cited examples illustrate partial syllabic repetition.

[2] *Бебе* [bebe] and *джаджа* [dzhadzha] have been taken from Koleva-Zlateva (2009: 250; 2005: 268).

[3] This example has been taken from Bondzholova (2019: 654).

[4] See Mattiello (2008: 134; 2013: 148), Kovatcheva (2012: 40) and Thun (1963) regarding the use of reduplication as a word-formation device in English slang and baby talk.

Mattiello (2013: 141–168) and Bauer et al. (2013: 411–413) among others. Yet, referring to Zwicky and Pullum (1987) and Baldi (2000), Mattiello (2013: 143) points out, that despite the frequent and productive use of reduplication as a word-formation device in English, it is "still neglected by morphologists dealing with the English system, mainly because of its irregular mechanism of formation, which marginalizes it to extra-grammatical morphology or else to expressive morphology".

Regarding the feature 'reduplication', Bulgarian is not registered at all on the typological map of *The World Atlas of Language Structures* online (https://wals.info/feature/27A#2/28.3/149.2), whereas Turkish is portrayed as a language with productive full and partial reduplication (https://wals.info/valuesets/27A-tur). Yet, it has already been made clear that reduplication is frequently employed in Bulgarian as well, but our attempts to find a recent comprehensive study of the various patterns of reduplication as a word-formation device in Bulgarian failed. Nevertheless, reduplication has undoubtedly stirred up academic interest among Bulgarian scholars, as evidenced by a number of linguistic descriptions that touch upon one aspect or another of the phenomenon in question such as those provided by Asenova (1984: 243–261), Koleva-Zlateva (2005: 264–272), Choroleeva (2007: 75–125), Bondzholova (2007: 112–114; 2019: 654–666), Radeva (2018: 331–343), and Burov and Petrov (2018: 37–83) among others.

That determining the scope of reduplication often poses some problems is also substantiated by the fact that the resultant formations have been referred to by a variety of labels. Some of the terms used in the English linguistic literature are "reduplicative compounds" (Jespersen 1942), "pseudo compounds" (Marchand 1969), "rhyme-motivated" and "ablaut-motivated compounds" (Bauer 1983: 212–213) or "compounds [that] have two or more constituents which are either identical or only slightly different" (Quirk et al. 1985: 1579) (see Mattiello 2013: 143–144). The terms used in the Bulgarian linguistic literature include "повторително-отзвучни думи" (repetition-based echo words) (Videnov 1993: 34 cited in Bondzholova (2007: 112), translation MK), "сложни думи за означаване на по-висока степен на това, което се изразява от съответната произвеждаща дума" (composite words expressing a higher degree of what is denoted by the motivating word) (Boyadzhiev et al. 1999: 270, translation MK), "повторителни конструкции, с които се изразява множественост и интензитет" (reduplication constructions expressing multiplicity and

intensity) or "(синтактични) редупликати" ((syntactic) reduplicatives[5]) (Burov and Petrov 2018: 37, 47).

The aim of the present study is to ascertain whether the main patterns of reduplication as a word-formation device in English are also represented in Bulgarian, and identify the similarities and differences between the two languages regarding this phenomenon. We have used as a starting point Mattiello's (2013: 141–168) classification of the reduplication categories in English and then have looked at the corresponding Bulgarian reduplication patterns, where they are available. The study is focused on reduplication as a word-formation device, and hence structures that have the features of syntactic repetitions are excluded. Yet, in some cases, it is not easy to differentiate a genuine reduplicative from a syntactic repetition.

In addition, English formations like *brain-drain*, *cookbook*, *grandstand*, *payday* or *snail mail* that undeniably have the rhyming effect characteristic of reduplicatives, but meet the criteria of endocentric compounds in that they denote a subtype of what is denoted by the head, e.g. *payday* is 'a kind of day' and *snail mail* is 'a kind of mail', fall outside the category of genuine reduplicatives (Mattiello 2013: 147) and hence, are referred to as "false reduplicatives" (Thun 1963: 12–16 cited in Mattiello 2013: 147). These are clear examples of ordinary noun-centred compounds.

Another group of formations that fall outside the category of true reduplicatives despite their rhyming effect are some clipped compounds of the type *fro-yo* (*frozen yogurt*), *hi-fi* (*high fidelity*), *sci-fi* (*science fiction*) or *wi-fi* (*wireless fidelity*) (Mattiello 2013: 147–148). As Mattiello (2013: 147–148) points out, "it is their opaque morphotactics, more than their rhyming nature, that confines them to extra-grammatical morphology". As to constructions of the type *face-to-face*, *step-by-step*, *word-for-word*, we support Mattiello's (2013: 149) view that their formation does not seem to be based on purposeful reduplication.

The comparative analysis provided in section III confirms Schwaiger's (2015: 478) observation that reduplication normally occurs with onomatopoeia in European languages, which is in line with Koleva-Zlateva's (2005: 264–272) view that reduplication is essential in the formation of phonetically motivated words, especially sound-symbolic ones, in Bulgarian (*джаджа* [dzhadzha], *джудже* [dzhudzhe]) and other languages as well[6]. According to Mattiello (2013: 147), monomorphemic

---

[5] The translation 'syntactic reduplicatives' is mine.
[6] In a later study, Koleva-Zlateva (2009: 249, translation MK) observes that in Bulgarian and other Slavic languages, when a sound-symbolic word based on reduplication is

words like *baby*, *bozo*, *khaki*, *kiwi* or *puppy*, labelled "syllable rhymes"[7], differ from genuine reduplicatives of the types *go-go* and *click-clack* in that they are made up of only one component and the syllabic similarity they display does not seem to be a result of intentional reduplication but is rather "due to phonological accident". Yet, we believe that the analysis of reduplication in certain English and Bulgarian words of this type would inevitably entail looking deeper into their etymology, which is outside the scope of the present research. Thus, English and Bulgarian one-morpheme words based on full or partial syllabic repetition (e.g. *baby*, *bozo*, *cuckoo*; *бебе* [bebe], *джаджа* [dzhadzha], *джудже* [dzhudzhe]), as well as some Bulgarian verbs displaying syllabic similarity (e.g. *бърборя* [barborya], *дърдоря* [dardorya], *къркоря* [karkorya]) will not be included in our comparative study.

II. Distinguishing between reduplication and syntactic repetition in English and Bulgarian.

As already mentioned in section I, it is often difficult to differentiate full reduplicatives of the type *chuff-chuff* and *my-my* from syntactic repetitions as in *very, very nice* or *fun, fun friends*. According to Merlini Barbaresi (2008: 234 cited in Mattiello 2013: 146), syntactic repetition may be used to emphasise the identity of an item, e.g. *fur, fur* meaning 'real fur', the certainty of an action, e.g. *Are you leaving, leaving* 'really leaving' *now?*, or as a means of intensification, e.g. *here, here* 'precisely here'.

Drawing on Thun (1963: 8–9), Mattiello (2013: 146) outlines the following criteria for distinguishing reduplicatives from syntactic repetitions in English:

a) Reduplicatives acquire the left-hand stress pattern characteristic of English compounds (*býe-bye*, *prétty-pretty*), whereas simple repetitions preserve stress on each word repeated (*býe býe*, *prétty prétty*).

b) Only reduplicatives can be pluralized (*bye byes*, *pretty-pretties* 'useless ornaments'), or used as a base for derivation (*pretty-prettiness*).

c) In a simple repetition such as *pretty pretty*, the repeated word retains its basic meaning, whereas the reduplicative form *pretty-*

---

being formed, reduplication and sound symbolism are the two factors that shape the semantics of this word.

[7] Mattiello (2013: 147, 266) specifies that the term "syllable rhymes" is used by Dienhart (1999: 12) and adds that some of his examples do not involve proper rhyme (e.g. *khaki*).

pretty acquires a derogatory connotation when it occurs as an adjective ('inanely or inappropriately pretty'), and a completely new meaning, but again with a derogatory nuance, when it occurs as a plural noun ('useless ornaments').

As regards Bulgarian, Burov and Petrov (2018: 37–38) indicate in their paper's descriptive abstract that examples such as *бавно-бавно* [bavno-bavno], *рано-рано* [rano-rano] and *на вълни, на вълни* [na valni, na valni] are reduplication constructions that express multiplicity and intensity, and refer to them as word-formation patterns. At this point, the two authors do not make a distinction between reduplication as a word-formation device and syntactic repetition – even a construction involving the repetition of a prepositional phrase, i.e. *на вълни, на вълни* [na valni, na valni], is said to exemplify a word-formation pattern. Yet, later on in their paper, Burov and Petrov (2018: 46–47) point out that single and multiple repetitions, characteristic of all languages in cases of emphasis, are not instances of reduplication, because they express the speaker's emotional state, but do not change the meaning of the source word, and do not express the speaker's attitude to the referent. The authors illustrate the difference between reduplication and ordinary syntactic repetition with the following example: in *Рано, рано си дошъл* [Rano, rano si doshal], the repetition of the adverb *рано* (*early*) simply puts emphasis on the person's early arrival, whereas in *Дошъл си рано-рано* [Doshal si rano-rano], the reduplicative *рано-рано* (*early-early*) expresses the speaker's attitude and the whole structure means 'I think you have come very early indeed, perhaps even too early' (Burov and Petrov 2018: 46, translation MK).

Kovatcheva (2012: 41) offers a comparative degree test that can "show which reduplications are lexicalized and which remain on the syntactic level". Thus, according to Kovatcheva (2012: 41), while *отгоре-отгоре* [otgore-otgore] can easily be used in the comparative, e.g. *Карай по́ отгоре-отгоре* [Karaj po otgore-otgore], the structure "*по́ рано-рано* [po rano-rano] does not make sense". In our view, what transpires from the proposed comparative degree test is that reduplicatives vary in terms of their degree of lexicalization – some appear to be more lexicalized than others and there are also forms that are fully lexicalized (see section III).

As a whole, in the Bulgarian linguistic literature, the discussion of reduplication as a word-formation method is not without confusion or vagueness. For instance, in Boyadzhiev et al. (1999: 270), adverbs like *много-много* [mnogo-mnogo] and *тихо-тихо* [tiho-tiho] are regarded as examples of word-formation by reduplication but the form *много-много* [mnogo-mnogo] is also cited as an instance of syntactic repetition

(Boyadzhiev et al. 1999: 645). This contradiction has been first discussed by Kovatcheva (2012: 40–41), who specifies that *много-много* [mnogo-mnogo] occurs in negative sentences only. She adds that the example *Той с нас много-много не приказва* [Toj s nas mnogo-mnogo ne prikazva], provided by Boyadzhiev et al. (1999: 645), "does not illustrate "degree of intensity" of the meaning of the derivational(?) base" and "the repetition, if anything, seems to weaken the meaning of the "base". Cf. *без много-много приказки* [bez mnogo-mnogo prikazki] = *с малко приказки* [s malko prikazki]" (Kovatcheva 2012: 40–41).

Having detected the same problem regarding the nature of *много-много* [mnogo-mnogo] as used in *Той с нас много-много не приказва* [Toj s nas mnogo-mnogo ne prikazva], Burov and Petrov (2018: 48) explicitly indicate that in the given example, *много-много* [mnogo-mnogo] is a lexicalized and specialized reduplicative, meaning '(not) much indeed'[8]. The two authors also emphasize that true reduplicatives in Bulgarian are often difficult to identify (Burov and Petrov 2018: 47–48).

On the basis of the above-outlined ways of differentiating reduplicatives from ordinary syntactic repetitions in English and Bulgarian we can draw the conclusion that in both languages, important features of true reduplicatives are, on the one hand, their attitudinal function, and, on the other hand, their degree of lexicalization, which varies across the different patterns. Yet, offering a precise differentiation of true reduplicatives in both English and Bulgarian is a challenging task and certainly a matter for a separate study.

III. The main reduplication patterns in English and their corresponding patterns in Bulgarian.

As mentioned in section I, our comparative analysis draws on Mattiello's (2013: 141–168) classification of the reduplication patterns in English. Thus, a distinction is made between total reduplication, which is based on the full repetition of a word and gives rise to copy/exact reduplicatives (*goody-goody*, *win-win*), and partial reduplication, which involves the repetition of a portion of a word and results in ablaut reduplicatives (*dillay-dally*), rhyming reduplicatives (*hubble-bubble*) and rhyming compounds (*clap-trap*, *nitwit*) (Mattiello 2013: 148–154).

In ablaut reduplicatives, there is vowel alternation between the two elements, which are either obscure bases (*shilly-shally*) or one of them (left

---

[8] '(Not) much indeed' is my translation of the Bulgarian original 'действително (не) много'.

or right) is meaningful (*wibble-wobble*) and sometimes both are meaningful (*sing-song*), whereas in rhyming reduplicatives, the onset of the copy is not identical with the onset of the original, there is a rhyming effect and only one of the two components is meaningful[9] (*child-schmild*, *hurly-burly*, *killer-diller*) (Mattiello 2013: 149–151).

A term commonly used in various language-contact oriented studies to refer to reduplicatives such as *child-schmild*, *killer-diller* or *паяци-маяци* [payatsi-mayatsi], where the onset of the copy is not identical with the onset of the original and the copy itself exists only in combination with the original element, is echo-word formation (Stoltz 2008: 108–109, 115). This includes *shm*-reduplication, *m*-reduplication, and reduplication involving a variety of options concerning the segmental variation on the copy (Stoltz 2008: 115–122). Thus, echo-word formation is in essence partial reduplication, although Stoltz (2008: 107–109) describes it as "a marked sub-species of total reduplication" or "total-reduplication-cum-variation (TRCV)".

In both English and Bulgarian, there are reduplicatives that are fully lexicalized such as *yo-yo* (a type of toy), *brown-brown* (a mixture of cocaine and gunpowder), *knick-knack* (a cheap ornament), *flip-flops* (open shoes with a strap going between the toes), *nitty-gritty* (essence), *tussie-mussie* (a small bouquet of flowers); *врели-некипели* [vreli-nekipeli] (nonsense), *тинтири-минтири* [tintiri-mintiri] (nonsense), *ципи-рипи* [tsipi-ripi] (a crazy person), *цък-цък* [tsak-tsak] (a type of boys' game), etc. In addition, many of the exact reduplicatives in English are foreign borrowings (Mattiello 2013: 148) and some of them are also used in Bulgarian, e.g. *beri-beri*/*бери-бери* [beri-beri], *bonbon*/*бонбон* [bonbon], *chow-chow*/*чау-чау* [chau-chau], *couscous*/*кускус* [kuskus]. On the other hand, Bulgarian contains some rhyming reduplicatives that are Turkish borrowings, not characteristic of English, e.g. *аман-заман* [aman-zaman], *чат-пат* [chat-pat].

So, English exact reduplicatives of the type *bye-bye*, *goody-goody*, *girly-girly*, *pretty-pretty*, *win-win*, etc., where the repeated element is an existing word, correspond to Bulgarian forms such as *бързо-бързо* [barzo-barzo], *далече-далече* [daleche-daleche], *едва-едва* [edva-edva], *къде-къде* [kade-kade], *много-много* [mnogo-mnogo], *рано-рано* [rano-rano], etc.

English reduplicatives containing extra material added to the first element such as *bumpety-bump*, *clankety-clank* or *cloppety-clop* are seen as

---

[9] The meaningful element generally occupies the left slot (*super-duper*) but in some rhyming reduplicatives, it is positioned in the right slot (*hubble-bubble*), in others, both units are meaningful, though based on some alteration (*teeny-weeny*), and in still others, both elements are unmotivated (*hocus-pocus*) (Mattiello 2013: 151). See also footnote 16 for more information on *teeny-weeny*.

"a slight variant of the exact pattern" (Mattiello 2013: 149). Such English reduplicatives do not have a one-to-one corresponding pattern in Bulgarian but they are very similar to two types of Bulgarian reduplicatives whose second component contains an additional segment.

In one type, the second element is with a prefix, as in *бит-пребит* [bit-prebit], *дълъг-предълъг* [dalag-predalag], *скъп-прескъп* [skap-preskap], *ял-преял* [yal-preyal], etc. (the prefix *пре-* [pre-] has an intensifying function); *дочакали-недочакали* [dochakali-nedochakali], *влязъл-невлязъл* [vlyazal-nevlyazal], *облечен-необлечен* [oblechen-neoblechen][10], etc. (the prefix *не-* [ne-] indicates negation); *питат-разпитват* [pitat-razpitvat] or *лика-прилика* [lika-prilika]. Here we can also include *лека-полека* [leka-poleka] and its variant *полека-лека* [poleka-leka] – the prefixed component may occur first or second within the formation.

In another type, the second element is with a suffix[11] as in *гол-голеничък* [gol-golenichak], *див-дивеничък* [div-divenichak], *здрав-здравеничък* [zdrav-zdravenichak], *сам-самичък* [sam-samichak], *цял-целеничък* [tsyal-tselenichak] or *един-единствен* [edin-edinstven], where the second component is with the complex formative[12] *-ствен* [-stven].

Among the exact reduplicatives in English, Mattiello (2013: 149) has also identified a pattern where the repeated element is a result of shortening, as in *ju-ju* (from *marijuana*), *nonny-nonny* (from *nonsense*) or *rah-rah* (from *hurrah*). Such English reduplicatives seem to bear some formal similarity to Bulgarian formations where the repeated element, described by Kovatcheva (2014, 2017) as a deverbal ideophone, has predictably resulted from truncating the inflectional suffix(es) of a verbal form[13], e.g. *миг-миг* [mig-mig] < *мигам* [migam]/*мигвам* [migvam]/*мигна* [migna], *примък-примък* [primak-primak] < *примъквам* [primakvam]/*примъкна* [primakna], *тич-тич* [tich-tich] < *тичам* [ticham], *хвър-хвър* [hvar-hvar] < *хвърча* [hvarcha]/*хвръквам* [hvrakvam]/*хвръкна* [hvrakna]/*хвъркам* [hvarkam],

---

[10] Constructions of the type *облечен-необлечен* [oblechen-neoblechen] are described by Mladenov (1975/2008 cited in Burov and Petrov 2018: 61) as reduplicated forms of participles and adjectives of which the second element is negative.

[11] Mladenov (1975/2008 cited in Burov and Petrov 2018: 61) describes formations of the type *здрав-здравеничък* [zdrav-zdravenichak] as етимологическо-деривационни повторения (etymological derivative reduplicatives) (translation MK).

[12] As regards complex formatives, see Radeva (2007: 71–72).

[13] According to Nitsolova (2008: 484), items like *блъс* [blas], *греб* [greb], *дръп* [drap], *лап* [lap], *мън* [man], etc. have been formed from verbs by clipping, whereas Kovatcheva (2014: 192–194; 2017: 39) provides arguments against describing their formation in terms of clipping and treats them as a type of ideophones formed by back-formation.

щип-щип [shtip-shtip] < *щипя* [shtipya] (see Kovatcheva 2014: 183, 190–191). Kovatcheva (2014, 2017) distinguishes deverbal ideophones formed by back-formation (*муш* [mush], *плис* [plis], *тич* [tich], *хвър* [hvar], *щип* [shtip]) from onomatopoeic ideophones (*бух* [buh], *друс* [drus], *пльос* [plyos], *фрас* [fras]) that can give rise to verbs (*бухна* [buhna], *друсна* [drusna], *пльосна* [plyosna], *фрасна* [frasna]). Both types of ideophones can be easily used to form exact reduplicatives in Bulgarian.

The type of ablaut reduplicatives in English such as *knick-knack*, *sing-song* or *see-saw* is represented in Bulgarian by examples like *миш-маш* [mish-mash] (a type of dish; confusion, disorder), *пинг-понг* [ping-pong] (table tennis), *тип-топ* [tip-top] (extremely good) or *хип-хоп* [hip-hop] (a type of music), which are, in fact, foreign borrowings in our language. It appears that most of the formations in Bulgarian that correspond to this reduplication type in English are onomatopoeic reduplicatives expressing various sounds, e.g. *бум-бам* [bum-bam], *бим-бам* [bim-bam], *пуф-паф* [puf-paf], *тик-так* [tik-tak], *тин-тан* [tin-tan], etc.

The English rhyming patterns *child-schmild* and *hurly-burly* are structurally similar to the Bulgarian *вафли-мафли* [vafli-mafli] and *охльо-бохльо* [ohlyo-bohlyo] in that the onset of the copy is different from the onset of the original.

Formations like *вафли-мафли* [vafli-mafli], *кафе-мафе* [kafe-mafe], *овце-мовце* [ovtse-movtse], *понички-монички* [ponichki-monichki], *скайп-майп* [skayp-mayp], *студенти-муденти* [studenti-mudenti], *спирки-мирки* [spirki-mirki], *торти-морти* [torti-morti], etc. exemplify the so-called *m*-reduplication, which is considered to have been copied into Bulgarian under the influence of Turkish; they occur mainly in the plural and express a dismissive attitude to the referent (Burov and Petrov 2018: 58, 67). English, by contrast, does not seem to utilize this particular reduplication pattern, except for some isolated examples[14].

---

[14] We did find some English rhyming formations whose second element starts with /m/ but it is either an independent meaningful item (e.g. *prissy-missy* as in *prissy-missy girls*) or etymologically related to a meaning-bearing unit (e.g. *pell-mell*, 'confusedly, in an impetuous rush', from the Old French *pesle mesle*, where *mesle* is derived from the verb *mesler* 'to mix, mingle' or *hugger-mugger*, 'secretly, privately', probably from *hucker-mucker*, where *mucker* is thought to have originated from the Middle English *mukre* 'to hoard up, conceal') or based on some alteration of a meaningful element (e.g. *holy-moly*, a euphemism for *holy Moses*) (www.etymonline.com). Benczes (2012) gives the example *hudder-mudder*, 'concealment, secrecy, privacy', specifying that the meaningful element here is the first one, whereas the second element, *mudder*, is of obscure origin but it has been most probably based on its rhyme with *hudder*, meaning 'to huddle'.

On the other hand, the pattern of rhyming reduplicatives whose second element starts with the cluster *s(c)hm-* as in *apple-shmapple* and *child-schmild* is very rare in Bulgarian (Burov and Petrov 2018: 57), but it is frequently used in American English (Stoltz 2008: 115; Burov and Petrov 2018: 73–74). Similar to the *m-*pattern, *s(c)hm-*reduplication expresses irony or disparagement but it is considered to have been transferred to English from Yiddish (Burov and Petrov 2018: 73; Mattiello 2013: 153; Stoltz 2008: 115). A single example of this pattern in Bulgarian is *Марици-Шмарици* [Maritsi-Shmaritsi], provided by Burov and Petrov (2018: 57).

The English rhyming reduplicatives whose second element starts with /b/ as in *argy-bargy*, *hubble-bubble*, *hurly-burly*, *holus-bolus* or *itty-bitty* bear some formal resemblance to Bulgarian formations like *агънца-багънца* [agantsa-bagantsa], *ангел-бангел* [angel-bangel], *ежко-бежко* [ezhko-bezhko], *зайо-байо* [zayo-bayo], *охльо-бохльо* [ohlyo-bohlyo], where the second component also starts with /b/. In both languages, the meaningful element is normally the left one (*argy-bargy*, *ангел-бангел* [angel-bangel]); in English, it may rarely be the right one (*hubble-bubble*, *holus-bolus*) and sometimes, in both languages, the two components may be meaningful (*itty-bitty*[15], *зайо-байо* [zayo-bayo]). Burov and Petrov (2018: 58–59) point out that such *b-*reduplicatives in Bulgarian are characteristic mainly of children's speech but are also used to imitate children's speech, rarely as vocatives (*Анче Банче* [Anche-Banche]) or as a model on which some spontaneous formations are created (*АЕЦ-БАЕЦ* [AETS-BAETS]).

The class of the so-called rhyming compounds in English, as proposed by Merlini Barbaresi (2008), includes formations that are based on rhyme like rhyming reduplicatives but are motivated by two meaningful components like canonical compounds (Mattiello 2013: 154). In Mattiello's (2013: 154) words, rhyming compounds are "semantically non-compositional, and the overall meaning is neither literally nor metaphorically suggested by the two bases", e.g. *artsy-craftsy* (frequently depreciative), *clap-trap* (pretentious nonsense), *nitwit* (a stupid person), *rumble-tumble* (a chaotic activity), *stinky pinky* (a type of word game). We found very few Bulgarian formations that bear some resemblance to the rhyming compounds in English in that they are made up of two rhyming and meaningful components but, unlike the English examples, they seem to display a somewhat higher degree of semantic transparency, e.g. *търчи-лъжи* [tarchi-lazhi] (deceiver), *чупи-*

---

[15] *Itty-bitty* is a baby talk form of *little bit* (www.etymonline.com). See also footnote 16 for more information on *itty-bitty*.

купи [chupi-kupi] (compensation for caused damage) and, perhaps, the less transparent *чупница-мелница* [chupnitsa-melnitsa] (devastating party, concert, etc.).

Another reduplication category in English, identified and discussed by Mattiello (2013: 155–157), is that of onomatopoeic reduplicatives, arranged in different semantic groups depending on the type of sound they denote, e.g. animal or human sounds, musical instruments, objects in movement, etc. On the basis of their phonological features, Mattiello (2013: 155–157) distinguishes copy, e.g. *woof-woof* (dog), *blah-blah* (chatting), *glug-glug* (liquid pouring from a bottle), *pip-pip* (motor car horn); ablaut, e.g. *trit-trot* (horse trotting), *hee-haw* (the bray of a donkey), *snip-snap* (shears), *twingle-twangle* (harp), *ding-dong* (bells), etc.; and rhyming onomatopoeic reduplicatives, e.g. *bow-wow* (the bark of a dog), *curmur* (cat purring), *yaw-haw* (noisy laughter), *hummel-bummel* (an imitation of mumbling), etc.

These three phonological types of onomatopoeic reduplicatives in English are also represented in Bulgarian. Thus, the copy type includes examples such as *га-га* [ga-ga], *грух-грух* [gruh-gruh], *кви-кви* [kvi-kvi], *мяу-мяу* [myau-myau], *цър-цър* [tsar-tsar], etc. (animal sounds); *мрън-мрън* [mran-mran], *ха-ха* [ha-ha], *хи-хи* [hi-hi], etc. (human sounds); *кръц-кръц* [krats-krats], *пляс-пляс* [plyas-plyas], etc. (objects in movement); *дум-дум* [dum-dum], *хрус-хрус* [hrus-hrus], etc. (general sounds). In some constructions, e.g. *чик-чирик* [chik-chirik], *цап-царап* [tsap-tsarap], there is an additional segment (*-ри-* [-ri-] or *-ра-* [-ra-]) inserted inside the second element.

Examples of ablaut onomatopoeic reduplicatives in Bulgarian are *бум-бам* [bum-bam], *бим-бам* [bim-bam], *пуф-паф* [puf-paf], *тик-так* [tik-tak], *тин-тан* [tin-tan], etc. and the rhyming type is represented by forms that exhibit a higher degree of lexicalization such as *цигу-мигу* [tsigu-migu] (playing a musical instrument unskillfully), *шушу-мушу* [shushu-mushu] (talking behind someone's back; gossip), *фрас-прас* [fras-pras] (quickly and easily), *хър-мър* [har-mar] (discord, disagreement), *цър-пър* [tsar-par] (fried food or grilled fatty meat) and others.

According to Mladenov (1975/2008 cited in Burov and Petrov 2018: 61), there are two other reduplication patterns in Bulgarian: a) pairs of synonymous imperative forms, e.g. *иди-ела/иди-дойди* [idi-ela/idi-doydi], *кажи-речи* [kazhi-rechi], *прави-струвай* [pravi-struvaj] and b) pairs of words of opposite meaning, e.g. *горе-долу* [gore-dolu], *има-няма* [ima-nyama], *насам-натам* [nasam-natam], *нищо-нещо* [nishto-neshto], *тук-там* [tuk-tam]. The first pattern (*иди-ела/иди-дойди* [idi-ela/idi-doydi]) could be compared to a group of English formations like *hustle-bustle*,

crack-rack or *huff-puff*, described by Benczes (2014: 441–442) as rhyming compounds made up of two meaningful and synonymous units, "semantically related to the overall meaning of the compound as well"[16], whereas the second pattern (*има-няма* [ima-nyama]) seems to correspond to what Bauer et al. (2013: 481) call disjunctive coordinative compounds in English like *true-false* (*question*) or *push-pull* (*gizmo*), made up of two mutually exclusive elements. A detailed comparison between these two Bulgarian reduplication patterns and their English counterparts is in itself another research topic.

IV. Conclusions

On the basis of the conducted comparative analysis we can draw the following conclusions:

▷ Reduplication is frequently employed as a word-formation mechanism both in English and in Bulgarian but the classification of reduplicatives in both languages is not an easy task, given the divergent opinions regarding the scope of reduplication.

▷ Total and partial reduplication are manifested in both languages but there is not always a one-to-one correspondence between the various patterns.

▷ Bulgarian, unlike English, seems to have a wide variety of exact reduplicatives whose second component contains a prefix or a suffix (*бит-пребит* [bit-prebit], *дълъг-предълъг* [dalag-predalag], *лика-прилика* [lika-prilika], *сам-самичък* [sam-samichak], *цял-целеничък* [tsyal-tselenichak]). This pattern is not characteristic of English, but it bears some structural resemblance to English reduplicatives whose first element ends in *-ety* (*bumpety-bump*, *clickety-click*, *cloppety-clop*).

▷ The English exact reduplicatives in which the repeated element has resulted from shortening (*rah-rah* < *hurrah*) are formally similar to Bulgarian formations in which the repeated element is a deverbal ideophone (*тич-тич* [tich-tich] < *тичам* [ticham]).

▷ Ablaut and rhyming reduplicatives occur in both languages (*dilly-dally*, *roly-poly*, *killer-diller*; *бим-бам* [bim-bam], *ангел-бангел* [angel-bangel], *вафли-мафли* [vafli-mafli]). Copied from Turkish, *m*-reduplication

---

[16] The forms *itty-bitty* and *teeny-weeny*, cited above as examples of rhyming reduplicatives, can arguably be included in the class of rhyming compounds of the type *hustle-bustle*, described by Benczes (2014: 441–442), on the grounds that both their rhyming components are meaningful and synonymous. Yet, what makes them different from the *hustle-bustle* type is that their constituents have undergone some alteration.

(*вафли-мафли* [vafli-mafli], *ефир-мефир* [efir-mefir], *кафе-мафе* [kafe-mafe]) has widespread use in Bulgarian but it is rather sporadic in English. By contrast, *s(c)hm*-reduplication (*apple-shmapple*, *child-schmild*, *table-shmable*) is very rare in Bulgarian, but it is used extensively in English, where it has been copied from Yiddish.

▷ Both English and Bulgarian contain instances of fully lexicalized reduplicatives (e.g. *knick-knack*, *flip-flops*, *nitty-gritty*; *тинтири-минтири* [tintiri-mintiri], *хър-мър* [har-mar], *цък-цък* [tsak-tsak]).

▷ Ultimately, this study has posed some questions for further research.

REFERENCES

Asenova 1984 : Asenova, P. Fonctions de la répétition des mots en bulgare et en grec. // *Balkan Studies*, vol. 25, No 2. Thessaloniki, 1984, 243 – 261.

Bauer 1983: Bauer, L. *English Word-formation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Bauer et al. 2013: Bauer, L., Lieber, R., Plag, I. *The Oxford Reference Guide to English Morphology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Benczes 2012: Benczes, R. Just a load of *hibber-gibber*? Making sense of English rhyming compounds. // *Australian Journal of Linguistics* 32/3. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2012, 299 – 326. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07268602.2012.705577> (12.04.2024).

Benczes 2014: Benczes, R. Repetitions which are not repetitions: The non-redundant nature of tautological compounds. // *English Language and Linguistics* 18/3. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014, 431 – 447.

Bondzholova 2007: Бонджолова, В. *(Не)съществуващи думи: оказионалното словотворчество.* [Bondzholova, V. (Ne)sashtestvuvashti dumi: okazionalnoto slovotvorchestvo.] Велико Търново: УИ „Св. св. Кирил и Методий“, 2007.

Bondzholova 2019: Бонджолова, В. Повторението в рекламния текст: структурни и лексикални особености. [Bondzholova, V. Povtorenieto v reklamniya tekst: strukturni i leksikalni osobenosti.] // *Aut Inveniam Viam, Aut Faciam: Сборник в чест на чл.-кор. проф. д.ф.н. Стоян Буров.* Велико Търново: УИ „Св. св. Кирил и Методий“, 2019, 654 – 666.

Boyadzhiev et al. 1999: Бояджиев, Т., Куцаров, Ив., Пенчев, Й. *Съвременен български език.* [Boyadzhiev, T., Kutsarov, Iv., Penchev, Y. Savremenen balgarski ezik.] София: Петър Берон, 1999.

Burov, Petrov 2018: Буров, С., Петров, В. М-повторенията в българската реч. [Burov, S., Petrov, V. M-povtoreniyata v balgarskata rech.] // *Проблеми на устната комуникация,* кн. 11. Велико Търново: УИ „Св. св. Кирил и Методий“, 2018, 37 – 83.

Choroleeva 2007: Чоролеева, М. *Семантичната категория степен и нейното изразяване в българския език.* [Choroleeva, M. Semantichnata kategoriya stepen i neynoto izrazyavane v balgarskiya ezik.] София: Академично издателство „Марин Дринов“, 2007.

Dienhart 1999: Dienhart, J. M. Stress in reduplicative compounds: *mish-mash* or *hocuspocus*? // *American Speech* 74 (1). Durham: Duke University Press, 1999, 3 – 37.

Haspelmath et al. 2005: Haspelmath, M., Matthew, S. D., David, G., Comrie, B. *The World Atlas of Language Structures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Jespersen 1942: Jespersen, O. *A Modern English Grammar on Historical Principles, Part IV: Morphology*. Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1942.

Koleva-Zlateva 2005: Колева-Златева, Ж. За редупликацията като словообразувателен начин. [Koleva-Zlateva, Zh. Za reduplikatsiyata kato slovoobrazuvatelen nachin.] // Тодоров, Т. А. (отг. ред.) *Езиковедски проучвания в памет на проф. Йордан Заимов (1921–1987).* София: Академично издателство „Марин Дринов“, 2005, 264 – 272.

Koleva-Zlateva 2009: Колева-Златева, Ж. *Лексиката от звукосимволичен (образоподражателен) произход в етимологичния анализ (върху славянски езиков материал).* [Koleva-Zlateva, Zh. Leksikata ot zvukosimvolichen (obrazopodrazhatelen) proizhod v etimologichniya analiz (varhu slavyanski ezikov material).] Дисертация за присъждане на научната степен „доктор на филологическите науки”, 2009.

Kovatcheva 2012: Kovatcheva, M. *Spontaneous spoken language and linguistic theory*. София: УИ „Св. Климент Охридски“, 2012.

Kovatcheva 2014: Kovatcheva, M. An unrecognized class of words in Bulgarian and their word formation. // *Italian Journal of Linguistics/Rivista di Linguistica* 26.2. Pisa: Pacini, 2014, 183 – 208.

Kovatcheva 2017: Ковачева, М. Звукоизображение – комуникативно приспособяване на българските идеофони. [Kovatcheva, M. Zvukoizobrazhenie – komunikativno prisposobyavane na balgarskite ideofoni.] // Търпоманова, Е., Алексова, К. (ред.) *Надмощие и приспособяване: Сборник доклади от Международната научна конференция на Факултета по славянски филологии: Езиковедски*

четения, том 2. София: Факултет по славянски филологии, СУ „Св. Климент Охридски“, 2017, 35 – 43.

Kryuchkova 2000: Крючкова, О. Ю. Редупликация в аспекте языковой типологии [Kryuchkova, O. Yu. Reduplikatsiya v aspekte yazykovoj tipologii] // *Вопросы языкознания* №4. Москва, 2000, 68–84.

Marchand 1969: Marchand, H. *The Categories and Types of Present-day English Word-formation: A Synchronic-Diachronic Approach.* 2nd ed. München: Beck, 1969.

Mattiello 2008: Mattiello, E. *An Introduction to English Slang: A Description of its Morphology, Semantics and Sociology.* Monza: Polimetrica International Scientific Publisher, 2008.

Mattiello 2013: Mattiello, E. *Extra-grammatical Morphology in English: Abbreviations, Blends, Reduplicatives, and Related Phenomena.* Berlin/ Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 2013.

Merlini Barbaresi 2008: Merlini Barbaresi, L. Extra-grammatical morphology: English reduplicatives. // Douthwaite, J., Pezzini, D. (eds.) *Words in Action: Diachronic and Synchronic Approaches to English Discourse. Studies in Honour of Ermanno Barisone.* Genova: ECIG, 2008, 228 – 241.

Minkova 2002: Minkova, D. Ablaut reduplication in English: The criss-crossing of prosody and verbal art. // *English Language and Linguistics* 6 (1). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, 133 – 169.

Nitsolova 2008: Ницолова, Р. *Българска граматика. Морфология.* [Nitsolova, R. Balgarska gramatika. Morfologiya.] София: УИ „Св. Климент Охридски“, 2008.

Radeva 2007: Радева, В. *В света на думите: структура и значение на производните думи.* [Radeva, V. V sveta na dumite: struktura i znachenie na proizvodnite dumi.] София: УИ „Св. Климент Охридски“, 2007.

Radeva 2018: Радева, Н. Случай на редупликация в съвременната речева практика. Семантика, форма, произход. [Radeva, N. Sluchaj na reduplikatsiya v savremennata recheva praktika. Semantika, forma, proizhod.] // *Проблеми на устната комуникация*, кн. 11. Велико Търново: УИ „Св. св. Кирил и Методий“, 2018, 331 – 343.

Schwaiger 2015: Schwaiger, T. Reduplication. // Müller, P. et al. (eds.) *Volume 1 Word-formation: An International Handbook of the Languages of Europe.* Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 2015, 467– 484.

Stoltz 2008: Stoltz, Th. Total reduplication vs. echo-word formation in language contact situations. // Siemund, P., Kintana, N., (eds.) *Language Contact and Contact Languages.* Hamburg Studies on

Multilingualism 7. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2008, 107 – 132.

Thun 1963: Thun, N. *Reduplicative Words in English: A Study of Formations of the Types Tick-tick, Hurly-burly and Shilly-shally.* Uppsala: Carl Bloms, 1963.

Videnov 1993: Виденов, М. Една неописана особеност на българската разговорна реч (Повторително-отзвучни думи). [Videnov, M. Edna neopisana osobenost na balgarskata razgovorna rech.] // *Език и литература*, № 3-4. София: Съюз на филолозите българисти, 1993, 34 – 37.

ONLINE DICTIONARIES AND SOURCES

Български етимологичен речник [Balgarski etimologichen rechnik] <https://ibl.bas.bg/ber/> (11.12.2023).

Merriam-Webster <www.merriam-webster.com> (20.12.2023).

Online Etymology Dictionary <https://www.etymonline.com> (22.12.2023).

Речник на българския език [Rechnik na balgarskiya ezik] <https://ibl.bas.bg/rbe/lang/bg/> (21.12.2023).

Речникът на улицата [Rechnikat na ulitsata] <https://www.bgjargon.com/> (20.12.2023).

The Free Dictionary <www.thefreedictionary.com> (23.12.2023).

The World Atlas of Language Structures online:
<https://wals.info/feature/27A#2/28.3/149.2> (12.12.2023).

Urban Dictionary <https://www.urbandictionary.com/> (23.12.2023).