

Roman Reduplication Abstract

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This paper examines Roman Reduplication (henceforth RR), a phenomenon found in the Roman variety of Italian and some other, central Italian dialects. The aim of the paper is to describe the phenomenon and to provide a cartographic (Belletti 2004; Cinque 2002; Rizzi 2004) account of the same. RR is found in spoken Roman and is very rare in writing. The phenomenon consists of a partial reduplication of the verbal projection, including negation (if present) and clitics. The reduplication is partial, given that arguments (and other material) occurring after the verb are never reduplicated. Below an example of RR (1) is given, along with its Standard Italian counterpart (1).

- Roman*
- (1) a. M' hanno fregato 'r motorino, m' hanno fregato!
to.me have.3pl stolen the scooter to.me have.3pl stolen
'They stole my scooter!'

- Standard Italian*
- b. M' hanno fregato il motorino (*m' hanno fregato)!
to.me have.3pl stolen the scooter to.me have.3pl stolen
'They stole my scooter!'

Unlike other cases of reduplication (Marantz 1982; Travis 1999), RR has no effect on the semantics of the verb, but rather expresses surprise, anger or chagrin. In this respect, it resembles echo questions, such as that in (2), which echoes the utterance in (2), expressing amazement or dismay. Unlike English echo questions, however, RR requires no antecedent.

- (2) a. John said [he's leaving].
b. John said *what?!*

RR is also compatible with Clitic Left-Dislocation (3) and, marginally, with Clitic Right Dislocation (3).

- Roman*
- (3) a. Er motorino, me l'hanno fregato, me l'hanno!
the scooter to.me it have.3pl stolen to.me it have.3pl
'My scooter, they stole it!'
- b. ?Me l'hanno fregato, me l'hanno, er motorino!
to.me it have.3pl stolen to.me it have.3pl the scooter
'They stole it, my scooter!'

There are further restrictions on what RR can target: the copied strings cannot be adjacent and they must be identical. The latter condition means that not only clitics, but also the negation must be faithfully reproduced. There are also conditions on what the targeted strings may contain: complements, such as the direct object or a post-verbal subject, and adverbials cannot be reproduced.

- Roman*
- (4) a. *Hanno fregato 'r motorino a Pietro, hanno fregato 'r motorino!
have.3pl stolen the scooter to Pietro have.3pl stolen the scooter
'They stole Pietro's scooter!'

- b. Me l'hanno proprio fregato, me l'hanno (*proprio)!
to.me it have.3pl really stolen to.me it have.3pl really
 'They really stole it!'

The possibility of combining RR with Focus Fronting shows that an overt Focus is not required between the two strings for RR to take place (a focus is the element most typically found between the RR strings). Some non-reduplicated element in this position is nonetheless necessary.

Roman

- (5) a. **Er motorino**_i, me l'hanno fregato *ti*, me l'hanno!
the scooter to.me it have.3pl stolen to.me it have.3pl
 'My scooter, they stole it!'

RR is compatible with declarative clauses, *wh*-questions, imperative clauses. The reduplicated string may vary in length and can include verbal projections untensed embedded clauses, but cannot commence from an embedded verbal projection. Minimally, RR requires the highest auxiliary (or verb, if there is no auxiliary) to be targeted, along with the negation, when present, and any clitics.

Roman

- (6) a. Me vojono frega' r motorino, me vojono (frega')!
to.me want.3pl steal the scooter to.me want.3pl steal
 'They want to steal my scooter!'
- b. *Pietro t'ha avvertito che te vojono frega' r motorino, te vojono (frega').
Pietro you has warned that to.you want.3pl steal the scooter to.you want.3pl steal
 'Pietro warned you that they want to steal your scooter.'

This paper maps the phenomenon using the cartographic framework, associating RR with a position in the Left Periphery below the low Topic positions. Lastly, it discusses the bearing this new data may have on open debates on the composition and ordering of the Left (and, allegedly, the Right) Periphery.

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