## Diminutivizing L-reduplication in Norwegian Henrik Torgersen, University of Oslo, hatorger@uio.no

Main topic: Norwegian, untypically among Indo-European languages, has been described as having no productive morphological diminutive (Faarlund et al. 1997; Skommer 2016; Fløgstad & Eiesland 2019). This work, however, attests the existence of one such process. A reduplicative process is described for Norwegian where a base form is suffixed by -el and the reduplicate morpheme  $-\acute{V}C_0+$  (copy stressed vowel and all following consonants until next morpheme boundary). The derived form elicits a diminutive reading. For the base form gutt 'boy', the rule yields the derived L-diminutive gutt-el-utt 'boy.DIM' (1). The phenomenon is named L-reduplication after the characteristic consonant /l/ that intercedes between the base form gutt and the reduplicate utt and appears to replace of the original onset g.

(1) Gutt → Gutt-el-utt det blir ei lita frøken og en liten **guttelutt**it will.be a little misses and a little **boy.DIM**'we're getting a little misses and a little boy' (foreldreportalen.no)

I give a broad overview of Norwegian L-reduplication, as a process that applies productively across the Norwegian lexicon. Using internet fora as a written corpus, I show that L-reduplicate forms are used in the same way that diminutives are used crosslinguistically. Importantly, I demonstrate that L-reduplication is **uniquely** productive among other phonologically similar processes: no other reduplicative strategy (e.g. F-reduplication, T-reduplication) is productive across the lexicon. I outline the phonological restrictions and regularity of L-reduplication and derive the reduplicative rule COPY - $\hat{V}$ C<sub>0</sub>+ from a varied dataset.

Background: Norwegian L-reduplication is (following Velupillai 2021) best characterised as an instance of complex (only parts of the base form is copied) and discontinuous (-el intercedes between the root and the copied content) reduplication. Reduplication as a productive diminutivizing process is documented for several languages: Lushotseed (Salishan; see Bates 1986); Patwa (English-based creole; see Kouwenberg & LaCharité 2015); Tuvan (Turkic; see Harrison 2000). To a certain extent, reduplication is used to form diminutive forms of English adjectives (2a–2b). In contemporary North-Germanic languages, no reduplicative phenomena are previously known to be productive.

- (2) a. They speak to the scientists and engineers behind the **teeny weeny** cars (bbc.co.uk)
  - b. Now have a nice fuzzy wuzzy feeling and might just donate something (bbc.co.uk)

Historically, Norwegian diminutivizing L-reduplication is found going back to the late 19th century. I theorize that the phenomenon originates as a rhyming strategy used in onomatopoeia (3a) and since grammaticalized as a diminutivizer used in a wider segment of the lexicon, crucially outside of the original domain, i.e. in non-onomatopoeia (3b).

(3) a. [Describing the sound of running]

Trom, **trommelom** tromtom — trom, **trommelom**, tromtom. Overaltfra thunk **thunk.DIM** thunk.REDUP thunk **thunk.DIM** thunk.REDUP from everywhere lød saadan ved Ottetiden sounded such at eight time.DEF

'Thunk thunky thunk. Such a sound was heard from everywhere around 8 o' clock.'
(Bergens Aftenblad, May 18th 1893, downloaded from nb.no)

b. Saa skal jeg minde dig om det, søde, gamle basselasse-n min So shall I remind you of it sweet old big.guy.DIM-DEF mine 'So I shall remind you of it, my sweet old man'

(Tromsø Stiftstidende, January 12th 1905, downloaded from nb.no)

Semantics and productivity: Norwegian L-reduplication aligns with Jurafsky's (1993) seminal work on the universal semantics of diminutives. The semantic components that L-reduplication contributes include AFFECTION, ATTENTUATION, CONTEMPT and PRAGMATIC HEDGING. To demonstrate the (unique) productivity of L-reduplication, a self-report survey was conducted for every Norwegian single-onset

phoneme. Participants (N=50) were asked to evaluate which reduplicative strategies yield a reading where the reduplicate expresses a cute little variant of the base form, a form that might be used with young children or as a cutesy or joking way to refer to the base form. The different columns indicate the type of reduplicative strategy; for the base form sokk, the L column is read as sokkelokk and the T column as sokkelokk. The results, for the seven base forms in (4) are shown in table 1. A checkmark indicates that more than 40% of respondees interpreted this form as diminutive.

(4) sock 'sock'; dumm-ing 'stupid-NOM<sup>1</sup>'; fot-en 'foot-DEF'; dram 'shot of alcohol'; klump-en 'lump-DEF' [hypocorism used for children]; tøff 'tough/cool'; dust 'fool'

| Root                         | M. | N. | P.       | Т.       | K. | В. | D.           | G. | F. | S. | V. | L.           | Н. | ſ | ç | J. | R. |
|------------------------------|----|----|----------|----------|----|----|--------------|----|----|----|----|--------------|----|---|---|----|----|
| sokk                         |    |    |          |          |    |    |              |    |    |    |    | <b>✓</b>     |    |   |   |    |    |
| dumming                      |    |    |          |          |    |    | $\checkmark$ |    |    |    |    | $\checkmark$ |    |   |   |    |    |
| foten                        |    |    | <b>✓</b> |          |    |    |              |    |    |    |    | <b>✓</b>     |    |   |   |    |    |
| dram                         |    |    |          |          |    |    |              |    |    |    |    | <b>✓</b>     |    |   |   |    |    |
| klumpen                      |    |    |          |          |    |    | $\checkmark$ |    |    |    |    | <b>✓</b>     |    |   |   |    |    |
| $t \not\!\! o \! f \!\!\! f$ |    |    |          | <b>✓</b> |    |    |              |    |    |    |    | <b>✓</b>     |    |   |   |    |    |
| dust                         |    |    |          |          |    |    |              |    |    |    |    | <b>✓</b>     |    |   |   |    |    |

Table 1: Every reduplicative strategy for 7 base forms. A checkmark indicates that more than 40% of respondees interpreted this form as diminutive

The most important insight from table 1 is that L-reduplication consistently yields a diminutive reading. Other diminutive readings are sporadic. Crucially, every item in the L-column successfully yields a diminutive reading in more than 75% of participants. Every checkmark not in the L-column is scored between 40% and 50%. This speaks to the uniqueness of L-reduplication above other reduplicative strategies. Underlining the productivity further is its usage across both nouns (5a), verbs (5b), adjectives (5c) and interjections (5d).

| (5) | a. Sjiraff $\rightarrow$ Sjirafelaff | Sjiraffelaff-en i Sør-Afrika<br>giraffe.dim-def in South Africa      |                 |
|-----|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------|
|     |                                      | 'The giraffe in South Africa'  | (vg.no;)        |
|     | b. Skrubb $\rightarrow$ Skrubbelubb  | Skrubbelubb med oppvaskbørsten<br>scrub.DIM with dish.brush.DEF      |                 |
|     |                                      | 'Scrub with the dish brush'  | (blogspot.com)  |
|     | c. Tøff $\rightarrow$ Tøffeløff      | Syns den var tøffeløff<br>thought it was cool.dim                    |                 |
|     |                                      | '[I] thought it was cool'  | (freak.no)      |
|     | d. Uff $\rightarrow$ Uffeluff        | nå er jeg hekta! <b>uffeluff</b> !<br>now am I hooked <b>oof.DIM</b> |                 |
|     |                                      | 'I'm hooked now! Oof!'   | (wordpress.com) |

**Phonology** The stress-based rule COPY - $\acute{V}C_0+$  is the most general formulation of L-reduplication. I show that exclusively morpheme-based or syllable-based approaches yield inaccurate results. The realization of L-reduplicated forms varies between two main groups across the Norwegian dialect continuum: the group who preserve stress as by the base form (6a) and the group who assign primary stress to the L-reduplicate (6b). This pattern is consistent with some aspects traditional dichotomies of Norwegian dialect areas, but challenges other aspects.

(6) realizations of guttelutten

a. group 1: /ˈgutəlutn/b. group 2: /gutəˈlutn/.

Selected references: Velupillai, V. (2012). An introduction to linguistic typology. John Benjamins Publishing.|Bates, D. (1986, May). An analysis of Lushootseed diminutive reduplication. I Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society (Vol. 12, s. 1-13).|Jurafsky, D. (1993, June). Universals in the semantics of the diminutive. In Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society (Vol. 19, No. 1, pp. 423-436).|Faarlund, J. T., Lie, S., Vannebo, K. I. (1997). Norsk referansegrammatikk. Universitetsforlaget.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Abbreviations: NOM = nominalizer; DIM = diminutive; DEF = definite marker