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From "cognateness" to "reduplication": a syntactic approach to verb reiteration in Haitian Creole

This paper bears on the morphosyntax of three constructions attested in Caribbean French-lexifier creoles (instantiated here by Haitian), whose lexical verb co-occurs in its clausal domain with an exact replica of itself — this triggering an effect of "verb reiteration". We tell apart the verb from its replica in each construction and propose a comparative description of the three cases—illustrated in (1) below. In all three cases, we analyse the phrase headed by the verb's replica as a VP modifier (an adverbial). We however argue that the verb's replica is of a crucially different nature in (1a,b) and in (1c), and must correlatively arise from two different types of derivations: in the two cases exemplified in (1a,b), we analyse the verb's replica as a dummy, a phonological filler providing a head to support the semantically relevant material within the VP modifier, while in (1c) (which subsumes so-called 'Predicate Cleft') we propose to derive the verb's replica by a special case of syntactic Merge under lexical identity, that triggers a contrastive/intensive effect leading to Focus Raising. Under our proposed analysis, one type of derivation involves a Copy Rule operating at PF (1a,b), the other, syntactic Merge followed by Focus Raising (1c), but neither involves a "Reduplication", word-forming rule in Morphology—the V and its replica do not form a constituent at any level, even in the cases involving a copy rule under our analysis).

- (1) a. Djo **kouri** byen **kouri**.
Jo run well run
'Jo runs/ran REALLY WELL.'
- b. Kite Djo **kouri kouri** l.
let Jo run run 3sg
'Let Jo run as (much as) he pleases.'
- c. **Kouri** Djo **kouri** (li pa sèlman mache vit).
run Jo run 3sg neg only walk fast
'Jo RUNS/RAN (he doesn't/didn't just WALK FAST).'