
***Man man man* ‘man oh man’: Are Dutch retriplications intensifying or downtoning?**

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In the languages of the world, repetition has many functions, ranging from inflection (Bahasa Indonesia *rumah rumah* ‘houses’ (Sneddon 1996: 16)) to word formation, e.g. to signify prototypicality (Italian *attore-attore* ‘veritable actor’ (Booij & Masini 2015: 48)). These, often iconic, meanings are not expressed by a specific morpheme, but by the abstract schema (Booij 2013: 261). Although the most common type of repetition is reduplication (Finkbeiner & Freywald 2018), items can be repeated multiple times, as in the Dutch ‘retriplication’ schema, illustrated in (1a-c), featuring noun, verb and adjective retriplication respectively.

- (1) a. Maar **man man man**, wat was dat leuk om te doen!
‘But man oh man, that was such a cool thing to do’
b. Tjee.. wat was het warm, **guts guts guts** van mijn hoofd.
‘Djeez ... how hot it was, pour pour pour from my head’
c. Ik ben veel aan het werk, huishouden etc. Kortom: **druk druk druk**.
‘I work really hard, job, home etc. Long story short: busy busy busy.’

In this paper, I present an analysis of a 500 token sample from the nlTenTen14 web corpus (Kilgariff et al. 2014), addressing the following Research Questions:

RQ1: How productive is the retriplication schema?

RQ2: Which lexemes are specifically attracted to the retriplication schema?

RQ3: Which meaning(s) does the retriplication schema convey?

A preliminary analysis suggests that the schema is productive and not restricted to a specific PoS (RQ1). Further, while most lexemes also occur in the reduplication schema, a few seem to have a preference for retriplication (RQ2). Intriguingly, such conventionalised constructions seem to undergo a shift in meaning: instead of intensifying, as in (1a-b), they tone down the proposition (RQ3). An example is (1c): retriplicated ‘busy busy busy’ suggests the speaker is busy, to be sure, but they are also slightly mocking themselves. In this sense retriplication patterns with other intensification strategies, that lose force when they gain in frequency.

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