

THE PHONOLOGY AND PHONETICS OF
JAMAICAN CREOLE REDUPLICATION

By

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This dissertation is an extensive treatment of the phonological and phonetic properties of Jamaican Creole (JC) reduplication. While reduplication is thought to be a typical feature of Creole languages and has been studied in the past, to date little work has been done on the phonetic or morpho-phonological properties of the process. Complementing the analysis of reduplication developed in this work, is an analysis of the prosodic system of the language. The analysis posited treats the prosodic system of JC as a stress-based system in which lexical contrasts are signaled by differences in the alignment of the F_0 contour with the word.

Reduplication processes in JC are similar in form and semantics to those found in other Caribbean English Creoles. The processes are described and analysed from an

Optimality Theoretic perspective. The phonological aspect focused on delimiting the constraints on the segmental properties of reduplication processes. The observation is that the JC reduplicant is a prosodic foot which copies its base completely. Further, it is shown that when the required phonological conditions cannot be satisfied, there is no reduplication.

The phonetic aspect investigated how the phonological constraints on reduplication interact with the phonetic properties of reduplicated words. Particular attention is paid to *intensive* and *distributive* reduplication processes, which yield segmentally identical words. Specifically, it is shown that distributive reduplications pattern like other words in the language. Consequently, they are treated as a single prosodic word with a single nuclear pitch accent. Intensive reduplications pattern differently and are analysed as two prosodic words with a prenuclear pitch accent and a nuclear pitch accent.

This work has import firstly for our understanding of the productivity and scope of reduplication in Jamaican Creole. It also contributes to our understanding of the relationship between word-level prosody and the semantic functions of reduplicated words in Creole languages in general. Thus, this dissertation represents an important step towards our understanding of the relatively understudied area of Creole prosodic systems.