

Seeing Through the Morphological Formation of Echo Words in Bengali and Odia

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Abstract

The paper discusses the comparative Bengali and Odia morphological analysis of reduplication. While dealing with the procedure, two categorizations are made for both the languages under the broad heading of Complete Reduplication and Partial Reduplication. The categorizations include 'Lexeme-based' and 'Onomatopoeic-based' echo word formation. The paper also investigates the process of reduplication where the words are formed based on phonetic imitations of naturally occurring phenomenon which have no semantic value when they stand alone. Furthermore, as an inference of the study, the paper presents an entire list of linguistic similarities and contrasts between the two languages taking only reduplication patterns into consideration.

Keywords

Reduplication, Echo words, Onomatopoeic, Lexical, Prefix, Suffix, Partial reduplication, complete reduplication, Consonant Alteration, Vowel Alteration.

Introduction

The morphological process of words formation through which a new word is constructed by taking into account a part or the whole root word is referred to as reduplication. The reduplicated construction annotates with itself a new grammatical category as well as a semantic value. Any one part of the source word viz prefix, suffix, root must be considered in this construction.

The resultant construction should not only show a different grammatical relationship with other elements in the sentence but also have a different semantic interpretation from only the root word. During this linguistic process, phonological and morphological changes are observed.

Reduplication being a very frequent and abundant phenomenon in both Bengali and Odia, this paper discusses linguistically the morphological formation of the echo words & the similarities and contrasts between the two concerned languages. The paper further investigates the process of reduplication where the

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words are formed based on phonetic imitations which have no semantic value when they stand alone.

1. Echo Word Formation/ Partial Reduplication in Bengali

Partial reduplication of head words helps in the formation of echo words in Bengali. These echo words can never occur in proper syntactic construction without their corresponding head words.

The echo words in Bengali are categorized into two sub-classes:

The prefixed class

The suffixed class

1.1. The Prefixed Class: Category I

Under this categorization, the prefixed head word takes the shape of the head word minus the initial consonant.

/aram taram/	“comforts etc”
/uʃʃob tuʃʃob/	“events”
/alap ʃalap/	“familiarity”
/hab bhab/	“Attitude, appearance etc”
/aʃe paʃe/	“Surroundings”
/bʒol bʒol/	“exchange/interchange”

1.2. The Prefixed Class: Category II

In some cases in Bangla, the prefixed head word takes the shape of the head word with {-a} added to it.

/khobora khobor/	“news etc”
/tʒpa tʒp/	“quickly”
/jʰʒta jʰʒt/	“hastily”

1.3. The Suffixed Class: Category I- Lexical

Under this categorization, echo is formed by consonant alteration or insertion and vowel alteration. The consonant alteration is marked by the replacement of initial consonant of the head word with some other consonant in the echo word. Whereas in case of head words with vowels as their initial alphabet, a consonant is prefixed for the reduplication process.

In case of consonant alteration in Bangla, the rule that is mainly followed is:

CVX → tVX

/cal tal/	“rice etc”
/ʃol tɔl/	“water etc”
/nam tam/	“name”
/rɔkʈo tɔkʈo/	“blood”
/prem tem/	“love”
/fɔl tɔl/	“fruits”
/gan tan/	“songs”
/sɔhoj tɔhoj/	“easy”

In case of vowel alteration in Bengali, the rule that is followed:

CVCV → CVCi

/kata kuti/	“indoor game-croos & zero”
/tuki taki/	“things here and there”
/baki taki/	“left over things etc”
/naca naci/	“dance etc”
/bac ^h a bac ^h i/	“picking up and selecting things”

1.4. The Suffixed Class: Category II- Onomatopoeic

This is formed by lexemes based on the phonetic rhythms. These items do not have any semantic value individually but together they convey meaning.

In most of the cases the echo is formed by the replacement of initial consonant of the base word with a labial sound.

/tɔg bɔg/	“sound of boiling water”
/ɔtor pɔtor /	“swinging loosely”
/kɔt mɔt/	“look of anger”
/kil bil /	“swarm of fish etc”
/luto puti/	“wallowing”

However, there are instances of exceptions to this rule:

/tup tap/	“light rain”
/tuk tak/	“here and there”
/k ^h uti nati/	“some works”
/tɔc nɔc/	“ruined”
/nɔt k ^h ɔt/	“petty quarrel”

2. Complete Reduplication in Bengali

In Bangla, complete reduplication of the head words is observed. These head words may be broadly defined into two categories:

Lexemes with individual meaning and use

Non-lexemes created by the inspiration of instrumental and natural rhythmic sounds.

2.1. Complete Reduplication: Category I- Lexemes

In this category, the true meanings of the individual items are modified during reduplication.

Nouns, Adjectives, Numerals and Pronouns (Interrogative) give a sense of plurality due to reduplication.

/ʃɔpt̪ahe ʃɔpt̪ahe /	“week after week (continuously)”	NOUN
/gɔrom gɔrom/	“hot (food)”	
	ADJECTIVES	
/hajar hajar/	“thousands”	
	NUMERALS	
/ke ke/	“who all (persons)”	INTERROGATIVE
	PRONOUN	
/ʃɔe ʃɔe/	“hundreds of people etc”	
	NUMERAL	

Adverbs are constructed by the reduplication of noun/adjective stems and locative marker –e. Not only is the lone use of the head words ungrammatical, but also without –e.

/jor-e jor-e/	“with speed”
/bar-e bar-e/	“repeatedly”
/ʃil-e ʃil-e/	“little by little”

- Idiomatic word expressions(Bengali)
- Exclamatory words are also reduplicated to express the aspects of emotions and feelings. In the following two echo word formations, exclamatory remarks like “*shame! shame!*” and “*Oh no!*” are expressed.

/cʰi cʰi /
/ja ja /

2.2. Complete Reduplication: Category II- Non-Lexemes

The base forms are created by the phonetic imitation of some natural sound. In fact, they sound like what they try to convey semantically.

/tʰɔk tʰɔk/ “sounds produced due to knocking on the door”
/gun gun/ “sounds produced by bees”

These words help in the construction of Adverbs by the addition of {-kore}

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/tʰɔk tʰɔk- kore/
/gun gun-kore/

Another type of reduplication occurs which is constructed to showcase depth and intensity of action, colour etc.

/tɔk tɔk/ “deep (red)”
/ɔk ɔk/ “shinning”

These words play a role in the construction of adjectives by the addition of the suffix {-e}.

/tɔk tɔk/ : /tɔk tɔk-e/
/ɔk ɔk/ : /ɔk ɔk-e/

3. Echo Word Formation/ Partial Reduplication in Odia

Echo words are formed in Odia by partial reduplication of the concerned head words. Similar to Bangla they are sub-divided into sub classes like the following:

The prefixed class

The suffixed class

3.1. The Prefixed Class: Category I

In Odia, the prefixed class echo words are formed when the head words less its initial consonant is repeated before the head word. The repeated word loses its semantic value when dealt with in separation.

/abara kʰabara/ “Roads”
/ɔbɔ kɔbɔ/ “surprised”
/aburu ʃaburu/ “useless talks”
/asɔ pasɔ/ “surroundings”

3.2. The Suffixed Class: Category I- Lexeme Based

This can be further categorized into: a) consonant insertion or alteration b) vowel alteration

Consonant Alteration/ Insertion

In this condition the initial consonant of the main word is substituted with another consonant, whereas if the initial alphabet is a vowel, a consonant is prefixed to the head words for giving the echo.

RULE FORMATION: VX → phVX
 phVX → phaX [in case of *ph*- initial words]

/bɔhi pʰɔhi/ “books etc”
 /macʰɔ pʰasɔ/ “fish etc”
 /pʰit pʰat/ “tip top”

Exceptions to this rule follow:

/ləkɔ bakɔ/ “people etc”
 /gɔpɔ sɔpɔ/ “story etc”
 /basɔɔ kusɔɔ/ “utensils etc”

Vowel Alteration

RULE FORMATION: CVC(C) → CaC(C)
 (CV)CVCV → (Cu) CUCa

/bʰul bʰal/ “mistake etc”
 /gol gal/ “round etc”

Example for the second rule:

/ɟɔŋɟu ɟuŋɟa/ “animals etc”

3.3. The Suffixed Class: Category II- Onomatopoeic

Under this category reduplication occurs based on rhythmic sounds influenced by naturally occurring phenomenon.

/cɔɔ pɔɔ/ “quickly”
 /luga pɔta/ “clothes etc”
 /cik mik/ “shining like lightning”
 /cʰɔɔ pʰɔɔ/ “suffering with pain”

4. Complete Reduplication in Odia

Similar to partial reduplication, complete reduplication in Odia is marked by the appearance where head words are either a) lexical or b) onomatopoeic.

4.1. Complete Reduplication: Category I- Lexical

Some nouns, pronouns, numerals, adjectives, adverbs and exclamatory words are formed by reduplication in Odia.

NOUN: /g ^h ɔr g ^h ɔr /	“in houses”
ADJECTIVES: /nali nali/	“red flowers”
ADVERBS: /d ^h ir-e d ^h ir-e/	“slowly”
EXCLAMATORY: /are are/	
PRONOUN: /jie jie/	“who who (persons)”
NUMERALS: /ɔhɔ ɔhɔ/	“hundreds and hundreds of”

4.2. Complete Reduplication: Category II- Onomatopoeic

Some echo words resulting in complete reduplication are influenced by phonetic imitation.

/mi:əo mi:əo/	“call of a cat”
/ka: ka:/	“sound made by crows”

There is also another variant of echo words under this category which are formed to express intensity, colour, mode etc. (Although, apparently these words may look like being imitated phonetically)

/ɔk ɔk/	“shining”
/tuk tuk/	“deep”

These words result in adverbial construction when suffixed with {-a}.

/ɔk ɔk -a (mej ^h e)/	“shinning floor”
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5. Inference of the Comparative Study

- I. Difference in Category I: Suffixed Class Lexical Items.[echo word formation]

The rule formation in consonant alteration of Bengali shows a contrast to that of Odia.

CVX → tVX	v/s	VX → phVX
		phVX → phaX

The rule formation in vowel alteration of Bengali shows a contrast to that of Odia.

$CVCV \rightarrow CVCi \text{ v/s}$ $CVC(C) \rightarrow CaC(C)$
 $(CV)CVCV \rightarrow (Cu) CUCa$

[The above mentioned rules for consonant and vowel alteration are dominant. However, it is to be noted that there are quite a few exceptions to this kind of rule formation for echo words.]

II. Similarity in Partial Reduplication Patterns: Suffixed Class-Onomatopoeic [Category II]

The pattern of formation of echo words in both Odia and Bengali under this category is based only on rhythmic sounds influenced by naturally occurring phenomenon.

III. Similarity in Complete Reduplication Patterns [Category I & Category II]

In case of Category I complete reduplication for both Bengali & Odia, the head word singularly always does not convey meaning. But when the head word occurs twice consecutively, a semantic value is received.

Whereas in case of Category II complete reduplication of both Bengali & Odia, the word formation is completely based on phonetic imitation to express call of animals, intensity, colour, mode, emotion etc.

IV. Similarity in Partial Reduplication Patterns [Category I]

In both Bengali & Odia, the prefixed class echo words are formed when the head words less its initial consonant is repeated before the head word. The repeated word loses its semantic value when dealt with in separation.

V. Difference in Prefixed Class Patterns [Category II]

In case of complete reduplication Bengali, some the echo words have {-a} added to the prefixed head word.

This type of reduplication is not observed in case of Odia.

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