The Art of Repetition: A Deep Dive into Punjabi Reduplication
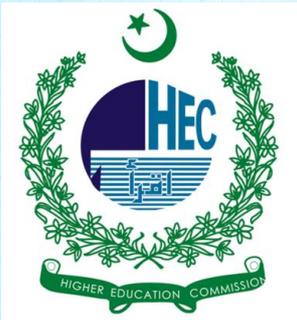
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Abstract

This study explores the phenomenon of reduplication in Punjabi through a morphological lens, focusing on its types, structures, and semantic functions. Data were collected from native speakers in the two speech communities of Narowal (Punjab) and Karachi (Sindh) primarily in the natural, conversational setting, including home domain interactions among family members. The report also included examples from the Punjabi lexicon, describing how the words were used. Using purposive sampling, 20 examples of Punjabi reduplications were studied. The findings categorize Punjabi reduplication into four types: full reduplication, and partial reduplication (twice), and ablaut reduplication, opposite reduplication. These forms serve various semantic functions, including intensification, plurality, habituality, repetition/continuity, and expressing degrees of action. The study highlights the richness and productivity of Punjabi reduplication, offering new insights into its morphological structures and semantic nuances. This research adds to the knowledge of reduplication in Indo-Aryan languages and recommends similar studies of indigenous linguistic phenomena.

Keywords: Reduplication, Punjabi language, Total Reduplication, Partial Reduplication, Doubling Theory

Introduction

Language is a system which has its own rules for its syntactic, semantic, morphological and phonological rules (Ramzan et al., 2023). Yet, languages regularly show universal patterns that go far beyond their first language boundaries. For example, taking Pakistan's education system for the sake of examining, it brings forth tremendous insights into language policies and practices (Akram 2020, Akram and Yang 2021). Reduplication is one of the many word formed processes and is clearly one of the multifunctional. Reduplication is defined as process by which new words are created using the total or partial repetition of a base form (Rubino, 2005), and is used in different ways in languages. For example, in China reduplication works with plural formation, but in the South Asian languages of Urdu, Hindi, Pashto, and Punjabi, reduplication serves multiple functions, and can be used for emphasis and semantic enhancement.

Reduplication is a derivational and inflectional process in which an entire word, root, stem or even a prefix or a phrase is repeated (Inkelas & Downing, 2015). This repetition can be dependent on sound patterns or semantic features, and conforms, in fact, to the dual morphological and

syntactic character of those phenomena. Importantly, reduplication also makes a dimisnical contribution to processing, in that it contributes to compounding for creating new lexical items as well as in the syntactic organization in phrases and sentences. Two main types of reduplication are identified: There are total reduplication where the base is repeated exactly as it is, and partial reduplication where the base word is partially repeated. Reduplication is noted by Montaut (2008) as altering the relationships between constituents in a sentence and so it occurs syntactically (Riaz, 2023).

The language that I examine is Punjabi, which is an agglutinative Indo Aryan language ranked 13th for having the largest number of speakers (Sharma & Aarti, 2011). The Punjabi language as a result has a rich tradition of reduplication. Though Punjabi is prominent in Pakistan's linguistic studies, it is an under researched language. Punjabi has reduplication in spoken and written forms and is a productive word formation process in languages of the world (Booij, 2007). A semantic formalization of such idioms involves the process of copying (replicating) base words or parts of these, based on specific semantic operations (Hurch et al., 2008). Modernization however, has affected reduplication pattern in Punjabi even as observed by Abbi (1985): modern reduplication in Punjabi confines itself to spoken contexts only.

The process of reduplication can take place with prefixes, suffixes, or both, and it is as varied as the languages themselves. For example, the Hadoti language spoken in Rajasthan places its reduplicants primarily at the end of words and in the suffixes. Additionally, the prefixes and suffixes of Hadoti are responsible for reduplication into south Asian languages like Urdu and Punjabi. Reduplication is distinct from simple repetition due to the fact that it possesses a morphological domain, permits access to the domain of the internal structure of the word, and functions as a mechanism for the construction of words (Gil, 2005).

It has been discovered that Punjabi reduplication can take both entire and partial forms. According to Ramzan et al. (2023), entire reduplication, which occurs when the base word is repeated without any changes being made, is frequently found in the languages of Urdu, Sindhi, Punjabi, Saraiki, and Balochi, just as it is in the English language. In the meantime, partial reduplication, which includes alliterative reduplication, is widely encountered in spoken languages spoken in South Asia (Inkelas & Zoll, 2005). This type of reduplication bears numerous differences in semantics between languages. For the purpose of providing a significant contribution to the field of general linguistic research, this study explores the reduplication patterns that were described earlier in order to investigate their morpho-syntactic and syntactic roles in Punjabi.

Objectives

1.   To identify and classify the various types of reduplication present in the Punjabi language.

2.   To analyze the linguistic and communicative functions of reduplication in Punjabi language.

Research Questions

1.   What are the distinct types of reduplication patterns observed in the Punjabi language, and how can they be categorized?

2.   What linguistic, semantic, and pragmatic functions does reduplication serve in Punjabi communication?

Literature Review

Morphology, especially reduplication, has received plentiful attention in linguistic research. We identify reduplication as a morpho-syntactic, a morpho-semantic, and a morpho- phonological process, each differing in degree and usage across languages. Reduplication in the Balochi language spoken in Rahim Yar Khan, Rajanpur and parts of Sindh, was studied by Majeed, Khan, et al. (2024). They analyzed 33 examples of reduplication taken from informal conversations and showed that Balochi has patterns of reduplication that are as rich as any. Adjectives and verbs showed total reduplication, while nouns had partial reduplication used for examples like intensification and emphasis. This research can serve to greatly help the understanding of Balochi morphology and inspire the research of reduplication in indigenous languages of Pakistan.

Garg, Marwaha, et al. (2020) write about the computational identification of reduplication in Punjabi. An algorithm and a graphical user interface were developed to identify and classify reduplicative words to full, partial, and discontinuous types. The study is based on corpus-based and rule-based analysis of digital texts such as blogs and tweets. This highlights the problems that come from lack of computational tools for Punjabi and provides a framework for future reduplication studies of regional languages.

Research on reduplication has also been carried out in Indo Aryan languages. According to Saad (2015) some languages, for example Urdu have been studied, but others, for example Rangri, remain unexplored. Brief inquiry into the hitherto

underrepresented morphological features of the underrepresented language of Rangri under the designation of Haryanvi is done by

Aslam (2015). Following on from the wider discussion of Indo Aryan morphology, Mangrio (2016) looked at loanwords into Urdu. Riaz (2023) has significantly contributed to the knowledge of reduplication by examining both reduplication and triplication phenomena in Punjabi through the lens of Morphological Doubling Theory (MDT). In contrast to Harrison's (1973) claim that triplication is limited to monosyllabic verbs, Riaz provided evidence that triplication is applicable to both monosyllabic and disyllabic words in Punjabi. The research further explored the triplication of imperative verbs alongside illogical particles, thereby questioning earlier beliefs regarding the extent of triplication. The examination of Punjabi triplicate compounds yielded novel perspectives on the structural and semantic dimensions of triplication. The findings underscored the extensive application of triplication in Punjabi, surpassing prior recognition, and highlighted the necessity for deeper investigation into triplication patterns across various linguistic contexts (Nawaz et al.,2024).

Morphological Doubling Theory (MDT) is a framework for the understanding of reduplication introduced by Inkelas, Sharon and Cheryl Zoll (2005). MDT defines reduplication to be morpho-semantic process of duplication characterized by the identity of forms without regard to phonology but for meaning. Through MDT, reduplication is viewed differently from phonological modification, and morpho syntactic and semantic influences are emphasized. Another previous research that contributes to an understanding of the link between reduplicated forms is that by McCarthy and Prince (1995) into Base Reduplicant Correspondence Theory (BRCT), but MDT is particularly suitable for the analysis of reduplication as a meaning driven process.

Studies of reduplication have been done across many languages, pavirtaku pidgins and creoles. Tok Pisin observed by Kouwenberg (2011) had a separate category of reduplication, not repetition. This study shows that reduplication in Tok Pisin functions morphologically and differs from repetition in other respects, from function to use. Indeed, Leroy and Morgenstern (2005) proceeded to investigate the semantic and pragmatic roles of reduplication in child language acquisition.

A limited amount of research has been completed on reduplication in native languages of Pakistan. The four proposed case studies in this thesis are the investigation of nominal reduplication in the Burushaski, Domaaki, Kalasha, Khowar and Shina languages spoken in Northern Pakistan as reported in Yoshika (2017). The closest combination of patterns of reduplication to Burushaski was found in Domaaki and Shina, with the echo-word patterns, for example, as main features, and the most remote ones belonged to Kalasha and Khowar, which differ by unique features. In front of us this work underscores the need for more extensive research on reduplication in Pakistan's indigenous languages.

To the best of my knowledge, morphological analyses of reduplication in Punjabi have been less discussed in terms of different Punjabi speaker lives in different cities, and work on reduplication in Punjabi has been primarily computational. The purpose of this study is to fill this gap by offering a complete morphological analysis of reduplication in Punjabi, and generally for reduplication in regional languages.

Theoretical Framework

Morphological doubling theory is the frame of this study. Morphological Doubling Theory (MDT) is a framework to describe the duplication of a morphological constituent of a base in order to add additional meaning. MTD differs from traditional phonological models, such as those in Marantz (1982) and Steriade (1988; cited in Inkelas, 2005), which treat the reduplicant as an abstract morpheme (e.g., RED) whose substance is derived phonologically via copying. However, MDT proposes that the reduplicant and base are generated by morphological operations in concert within a construction that similarly reflects semantic and phonological generalizations on the output.

MDT's central principle is that reduplication (repetition) is of a morphological form that fulfils a particular morpho semantic description, and not simply a phonological phenomenon. It is an approach focused on the morphological structure and meaning of reduplicated forms (which may be formed by duplicating words, stems or roots; Inkelas & Zoll, 2005). MDT went further than previous, more phonology focused theories of reduplication by treating it as a morphological process, which gives a richer notion for how reduplicated forms are constructed.

While MDT adds to a set of foundational ideas proposed by earlier scholars

such as Singh (1982), Saperstein (1997), and Sherrard (2001), beyond these three ideas, MDT consistently demonstrates that investments in a firm's domestic human capital have substantial spillover benefits. These contributions set the stage for MDT, and the work shows that reduplication is subject to morphological rules that take into account semantic and structural factors, rather than being there solely to achieve phonological harmony. From this perspective, reduplication is not just a mere sound duplication, but a morphological meaningful operation.

Methodology

The present study gathered the data from native Punjabi speakers residing in two provinces of Pakistan: In Punjab, Narowal and in Sindh, Karachi. Mostly data was collected in natural settings; for example with the relatives and in the home domain. Furthermore, alternate examples of Punjabi reduplications at the level of the Punjabi lexicon were included, investigating how they are used in different situations by Punjabi native speakers. The study used a purposive sampling technique as it was aimed at Punjabi speakers. The dataset includes 20 examples of Punjabi reduplications categorised as per their types and semantic functions.

Result And Discussions

This section defines the study's findings, emphasizing the varieties of reduplication, their morphological variations, and their roles as semantics in the Punjabi language. The study relies on data gathered from native Punjabi speakers and instances from the Punjabi lexicon.

Table 1: Reduplication Types and Morphological Structure in Punjabi

Type of Reduplication	Example in Punjabi	English Translation	Morphological Structure
Full Reduplication	/bari-bari/	'again and again'	The whole word is repeated.
	/khandi-khandi/	'repeatedly chewing'	
	Chetti chetti	'Quickly quickly'	
	Aaho aaho	'agreed on some point'	

Partial Reduplication	Pani shani	'water'	Only part of the word (often the first syllable) is repeated.
	Gap shup	'Gossips'	
	Khana shana	'Food'	
Ablaut Reduplication	/thoda-thoda/	'a little bit'	A vowel change occurs in the repeated part of the word.
	Muk muka	'Finish'	
Opposite words	Nikka wadda	Younger elder	The words used together are showing the opposite meaning of each other.
	Aggy peechy	Forward backward	

Reduplication is a key linguistic element that serves both morphological and semantic functions in the Punjabi language. It is a feature that is used in the language. It is possible to divide it into a few different categories according on its structure. When expressing acts that take place continuously or at regular intervals, full reduplication is a typical method of expression. Full reduplication includes the whole repetition of the word. Instances such as bari-bari ('repeatedly'), khandi-khandi ('repeatedly chewing'), and aaho-aaho ('concurred on a matter') exemplify this category. The complete lexical item is reproduced morphologically to underscore repetition, intensity, or agreement.

On the other hand, partial reduplication is one in which only a portion of the word is repeated, frequently with a syllabic reduction. This form is utilized to emphasize behaviors that are repeated or habitual, such as the khandi-khandi, which conveys the meaning of "repeatedly chewing." Instances such as pani-shani ('water'), gap-shup ('gossips'), and khana-shana ('food') illustrate how partial repetition alters the meaning of the root word, frequently enhancing emphasis or conveying an informal tone.

Ablaut reduplication is another sort of reduplication that involves changing the vowels in the syllables that are repeated. Some words, such as "a little bit" (thoda-thoda), are used to describe acts that are progressive or incremental, and they provide

subtle differences in meaning. This form of reduplication features a vowel change in the repeating section, exemplified by thoda-thoda ('a little bit') and muk-muka ('finish'). The morphological structure demonstrates a regular vowel change that implies nuanced meaning distinctions. Reduplication can, in certain instances, involve the combination of antonyms, exemplified by nikka-wadda ('younger-elder') and aggy-peechy ('forward-backward'). These patterns emphasize a contrasting or complementary relationship, fulfilling semantic purposes such as juxtaposition or balance.

Table 2: Semantics of Reduplication in Punjabi

Function of Reduplication	Example in Punjabi	English Translation	Semantic Function
Intensification	/khaaja khaaja/	'force to eat'	Intensifies the action, emphasize to eat.
	Paj Paj	'Force to Run'	Intensifies the action of going/run away
	Waddia waddia	'modifying something'	Telling the intensity of modification
Plurality	/loki-shoki/	'many people'	Suggests multiple instances or a large quantity.
	Mundy shundy	'Boys'	Suggests the plurality of the word
Habituality	/jaandi-jandi/	'go regularly'	Indicates an action done habitually or regularly.
Repetition/Continuity	/baari-baari/	'over and over again'	Indicates the continuous or repetitive nature of an action.
Degree of Action	/chal-chal/	'moving'	Suggests that the action is ongoing or in motion.
	Aenj aenj	Doing like this	Suggests the way of doing.

The use of reduplication is an important semantic function that contributes to the intensification of meaning, the expression of plurality, and the communication of habituality, repetition, or degree of action. Reduplication intensifies the significance of an action or condition. For example, khaaja khaaja ('compel to eat') and paj-paj

('compel to run') underscore hurry or intensity in Multiplicity the acts.

Another way to express plurality is through reduplication, which can be used to refer to several occurrences or a big amount, such as loki-shoki ('many individuals') and mundy-shundy ('males') employ reduplication to signify plurality or a collective notion. To show habituality, reduplication is used for actions that are performed on a regular basis, as evidenced in the phrase "chal-chal," which implies "moving" and stresses movement that is ongoing or persistent. Reduplication conveys the continuous or routine quality of an action, as exemplified by jaandi-jandi ('go regularly'), highlighting regularity.

Terms like baari-baari ('repeatedly') emphasize the repetitive or continuous aspect of an action. This function is especially common in natural discourse. Several reduplicative expressions denote the intensity or manner of an activity. For instance, chal-chal ('moving') and aenj-aenj ('doing like this') indicate continuous motion or a certain manner of executing an action.

In general, reduplication in Punjabi is not only a structural phenomenon, but it is also a powerful semantic instrument that enriches the language by enabling speakers to convey complex meanings, emphasize phrases, and add elements of rhythmic or fun speech to their speech. The expressive and functional aspects of communication in Punjabi are both improved as a result of this multidimensional trait.

It is clear from the findings that reduplication in Punjabi is a highly productive morphological process that contributes to the enhancement of the language by adding subtle meanings and strengthening expressive power. The morphological structures of complete, partial, and ablaut demonstrate the creative ways in which native speakers use reduplication in their day-to-day communication. In addition, the semantic functions provide more evidence of the adaptability of reduplication in terms of expressing emphasis, plurality, repetition, and degrees of action. This is in line with other patterns that have been noticed in other Indo-Aryan languages.

Moreover, the widespread use of ablaut and antonymic reduplication indicates the adaptability of Punjabi morphology to accommodate phonological variation and semantic difference within its linguistic framework. By establishing a connection between morphology, semantics, and syntax in Punjabi, these findings contribute to a better understanding of reduplication as a phenomenon with multiple forms. To

summarize, reduplication in Punjabi serves as a multidimensional linguistic process that makes a considerable contribution to the transmission of meaning and context, while simultaneously occupying a distinct role within the larger range of South Asian languages. The use of this study makes it possible to do additional research into the comparative evaluation of reduplication among the many regional languages spoken in Pakistan.

The research that was done on reduplication in Punjabi revealed that it serves two purposes: morphologically, by means of various patterns such as complete, partial, and ablaut reduplication; and semantically, by means of expressing intensity, plurality, habitually, repetition, and degree of action. Both of these functions are accomplished through reduplication. Because of the typological and semantic variety that enables Punjabi speakers to transmit multiple levels of meaning, reduplication is an essential tool for nuanced communication in the Punjabi language. Reduplication is a technique that is used in the Punjabi language.

Conclusion

This paper provides a comprehensive investigation of the morphological structures of reduplication in the Punjabi language, as well as the semantic roles that reduplication serves. Through the examination of data collected from native Punjabi speakers in natural conversational contexts in Narowal (Punjab) and Karachi (Sindh), the research classifies the many types of reduplication that can be found in the Punjabi lexicon. In Punjabi, it has been discovered that there are a number of different reduplicative forms, including full reduplication, partial reduplication, ablaut reduplication, echo reduplication, and onomatopoeic reduplication. These reduplicative forms are utilized to fulfill a variety of different semantic functions, such as intensity, plurality, habituality, repetition/continuity, and degree of action.

This research not only demonstrates the depth and complexity of Punjabi reduplication, but it also provides valuable insights that may be applied to further comprehending reduplication in Indo-Aryan languages in general. Not only does this research help to our understanding of Punjabi morphology, but it also opens up the possibility of conducting additional research on reduplication in other regional languages spoken in Pakistan. In this section, we address the implications of the findings for the fields of language typology, semantics, and morphological theory,

particularly within the context of Morphological Doubling Theory (MDT).

Recommendations

It is proposed that future research in the field of linguistics investigate the complexities of reduplication and triplication phenomena in Punjabi, particularly within the context of Morphological Doubling Theory (MDT). This recommendation is based on the findings of this study. The investigation of the semantic and structural aspects of triplication in monosyllabic and disyllabic words, as well as its occurrence in imperative verbs and meaningless particles, should receive a particular kind of focus and attention. Our comprehension of the morphological processes that shape Punjabi and other Indo-Aryan languages will be enhanced as a result of this. In addition, research should concentrate on cross-linguistic comparisons in order to find patterns and variances in reduplication and triplication across languages that are connected to one another. These kinds of investigations have the potential to improve theoretical frameworks by delivering perspectives that are broader and more inclusive on morpho-semantic and morpho-syntactic processes.

Additionally, efforts should be made toward the incorporation of these findings into educational practices, particularly in the course of the development of language teaching resources that place an emphasis on the morphological richness of Punjabi. If learners were equipped with this, they would have a deeper appreciation of the structural complexity of the language, which would contribute to the preservation and revitalization of the language.

Last but not least, it is vital for linguists, computational experts, and local speakers to work together in order to build tools and resources that can adequately document and analyze reduplication and triplication phenomena. These kinds of cooperation would not only contribute to the advancement of linguistic research, but they would also help to preserve the linguistic history of Punjabi, so ensuring that the language will continue to be represented in academic and cultural settings.

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