

THE ROLE OF REDUPLICATION IN PUNJABI: ECHO COMPOUNDS, AFFIXATION AND EMPHASIS

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Abstract. This study critically examines the role of reduplication in the Punjabi language, investigating both its morphological and semantic properties. By focusing on the processes of full and partial reduplication, the research highlights the diverse forms in which this phenomenon operates across various parts of speech, including nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. The study reveals how reduplication in Punjabi functions not only as a grammatical tool for word formation but also as a semantically rich process that introduces emphasis, intensity, continuity, and distribution. Special attention is given to echo compounds and affixation processes, demonstrating how they contribute to the expansion of meaning within the language. The findings suggest that reduplication is a versatile linguistic strategy that plays a crucial role in shaping the expressiveness and structure of Punjabi, offering insights into both its morpho-semantic functions and its capacity for generating new meanings through repetition. This paper also offers a comprehensive exploration of reduplication's contribution to the broader linguistic landscape, engaging with theories of word formation and emphasizing the significance of this phenomenon in both everyday usage and literary contexts. The research contributes to the under-explored area of Punjabi linguistics, providing new perspectives on its structural and functional dynamics.

Keywords: *reduplication, echo compounds, partial reduplication, full reduplication, emphasis, Punjabi language*

Introduction

New words in all languages are formed through different word-formation processes. Plag (2018) defines word formation as a process for the formation of new words based on previously existing words. It involves both subtraction and addition of phonetic material. Bauer (1983) states that complex forms are produced through word formation processes. Reduplication is one of the word formation processes in which a second word is formed by changing the consonants or vowels from the base word or by simply doubling the whole word. It is mostly used in colloquial speech. Reduplication may occur at the morphological and phonological levels. When an entire word is repeated, the process is called total reduplication, which Montaut (2009) regards as functionally similar to compounding. In contrast, partial reduplication involves the repetition of only a segment of the base word. A further subtype, echo reduplication (Bögel et al., 2008) or echo compounding (Kachru, 2006), occurs when the onset of the repeated segment is altered. Compared to straightforward repetition, echo reduplication is structurally more complex. Tannen (1987) highlights reduplication as a resource for linguistic creativity and meaning-making, while Wang (2005) identifies its discourse-level functions. Ghomeshi et al. (2004) associate reduplication with child language, and Lausberg (2023) stresses its reinforcing and informative roles. In literary contexts, reduplication also functions as a poetic device, where the repetition of syllables, words, or phrases generates rhythm and cohesion.

Cross-linguistically, reduplication has been studied extensively. Haiduck (2013) examined its patterns across lexical categories in Austronesian languages. Odden (1996) investigated reduplication in Kikereve, and Rana (2010) explored its lexical and

morphological aspects in Bangla. In South Asia, research on Urdu by Montaut (2009), Bögel et al. (2008), Kachru (2006) and Islam has documented reduplication at different structural levels. When reduplication, when involving the doubling of morphological constituents, reveals morpho-semantic properties. Islam's work in particular focused on the morpho-semantic properties of reduplication in Urdu-Hindi. Despite its productivity, reduplication in Punjabi remains underexplored. Punjabi is an agglutinative language spoken in both Pakistan and India, written in two scripts: Shahmukhi (Pakistan) and Gurmukhi (India). It comprises 16 vowels and 46 consonants (Malik, 2006) and has recently attracted scholarly interest. In the Punjabi language, it is observed in nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, as well as in non-sense words and particles. It is stated that when reduplication is applied: (1) to a noun, it turns the singular into plural; (2) on a verb, it shows the completion or continuation of an action; (3) an adjective shows intensification; (4) on word for showing distribution (Johnson and Lakoff, 1980).

This study addresses the gap in Punjabi reduplication research by analyzing it at the morphological and semantic levels. Adopting a qualitative and descriptive approach, it investigates not only how reduplicated forms are constructed but also how they convey additional meaning. While the framework of Johnson and Lakoff (1980) informs the analysis, the complexity of Punjabi reduplication necessitates a broader perspective. The primary question of this research is related to the morphological form of reduplication in the Punjabi language. The secondary question is related to the semantic meaning of reduplicated words. Q1: In what manner is Punjabi reduplication morphologically formed? Q2: How does reduplication convey semantically different meanings?

Total reduplication

In total reduplication, the whole word is copied and pasted alongside the base word. Total reduplication is analyzed according to parts of speech, which are noun, pronoun, verb, adverb, preposition, and conjunction.

Reduplication in nouns

Firstly, total reduplication occurs in proper names

*/Oh khuda khuda kər k pɑ:s hogəja/
By saying "God God," he passed.*

The reduplicated phrase /xʊda xʊda kər k/ carries a non-literal meaning, it expresses that one succeeded despite many difficulties.

*/Ṫū: hər wʌqət ali ali i kərɖɑ: rəja kər/
You keep repeating Ali Ali all the time.*

Here, reduplication of a proper noun emphasizes the act of repeatedly remembering or invoking someone.

*/O pa:ni pa:ni kərɖɑ mər gəja/
He died while saying "water, water".*

The reduplicated form emphasizes urgency and intensity: the person died while desperately asking for water. According to Lakoff, "when reduplication is applied to a noun, it turns the singular into plural." This is also observed in Punjabi:

*/Bətʃa bətʃa dʒa:nda e/
Everyone knows.*

*/Bətʃe bətʃe nʊ: pəʃa e/
Even the children know.*

Here, /bətʃa/ is singular, but /bətʃa bətʃa expresses a generic plural "everyone", while /bətʃe bətʃe /specifies actual children. This pattern parallels Urdu reduplication (Mangrio, 2016).

Reduplication in pronouns

Punjabi also exhibits reduplication in pronouns.

*/Othe ki ki hoeja si:/
What all happened there?*

It means to give each and every detail in chronological order what happened there. If it is compared with "othy ki hoye si / othe ki hoeja si: /", it means to tell just what happened in summarized form. It is not essential to tell all the details.

*/Edhe weʃ ko:n ko:n ji:ma:da:r e/
Who all are responsible here?*

It implies the meaning that more than one person is responsible. If someone says that edhy wich kon zimadar ay, it can mean that only one person is responsible.

*/Kinne kinne dʒa:ka: e/
Who all wants to go?*

Reduplication in verbs

Lakoff (1980) suggests that reduplication applied to verbs indicates completion or continuation of action. Punjabi shows similar patterns.

*/riʃ riʃ k /
by slipping.*

*/riʃda: riʃda:/
while slipping.*

*/digda: digda:/
while falling.*

/dig dig k tu:t geja:/

It broke by falling.

In /dig dig k/, the word "k" performs the role of a dummy verb, while /digda dgida/ performs the function of an adverb. The word "k" answers how it happens. The sentence becomes ungrammatical without using the "k" word, e.g., /*dig dig (k) aya/. In the reduplicated form of a lexical verb, it shows a cause-and-effect relationship. While the word /digde digde/ means during the event.

/mēkhed khed k fhək geja:/
"I became tired from playing" (cause-and-effect).

/mēkhedda khedda fhək geja:/
"I became tired while playing" (ongoing process).

Reduplicated verbs can also function adjectivally:

/su: dʒi su: dʒi əkh/
swollen eyes.

/khila khila ɣula:b/
blooming roses.

The primary function of verbal reduplication is iteration, though semantic distinctions arise between cause, effect, and ongoing action. The first sentence shows a cause-and-effect relationship. The semantic meaning of this sentence is that "I tired due to playing" while the second sentence shows that "I tired during playing". Reduplication of a progressive verb is not possible, e.g., /*rirhaha rirhaha/. It makes the sentence ungrammatical. The primary function of verbal reduplication is to show iteration. The verbs in past form sometimes perform the function of an Adjective, e.g., Suji suji akh /su: dʒi su: dʒi əkh/ - swell swell eye, khila khila ghulaab / khila khila ɣula:b / - bloom flower)

Reduplication in adjectives

When applied to adjectives, reduplication shows intensification. This is widely attested in Punjabi:

/wəɖi wəɖi əkh/
"huge eyes" (size/intensity).

/g Arəm g Arəm fɑ:/
"steaming tea" (description/intensity).

/ik ik b Andɑ: /
"every single person" (distribution/emphasis).

/n Λwijã: n Λwijã: g Alã: /
"very new things" (quality/emphasis).

/kɑ:li kɑ:li rɑ:tʃ/
"very dark night" (color/emphasis).

Agreement is maintained:

/miʃha miʃha kela/
"sweet banana" (singular).

/miʃhe miʃhe kele/
"sweet bananas" (plural).

Where noun forms are identical in singular and plural, the reduplicated adjective signals number:

/miʃha miʃha a:mb/
"a sweet mango".

/miʃhe miʃhe a:mb/
"sweet mangoes".

Reduplication in adverbs

Adverbs are also reduplicated in Punjabi, with meanings of time, place, manner, and frequency:

/mẽhʊ:n hʊ:n a:ejã: wã:/
"I came just now" (time/emphasis).

/kiʃhe kiʃhe ɟa:na æ/
"Where all to go?" (place, multiple destinations).

/mətʌk mətʌk k ʃəlɳã/
"to walk coquettishly" (manner).

/roz roz bɑ:rið hoɟã:di e/
"It often rains" (frequency).

/o: su:ba:h su:ba:h i: uʃh ɟa:nda e/
"He wakes up early in the morning" (time emphasis).

Reduplication here adds intensity, distributive force, or frequency, often exceeding the meaning of the unreduplicated form. The function of reduplication in an adverb is also to emphasize. The reduplication of the word "now" means just now or at the spot. It conveys more emphatic meaning than a single word now. The word /kiʃhe kiʃhe ɟa: ɾa: æ/ means one wants to go more than one place. /kiʃhe ɟa: ɾa: æ/ (where to go) means more probably only one place where one wants to go. /roz roz i: bɑ: rið hoɟã:di æ/ means it often rains, while /roz bɑ: rið hoɟã:di æ/ conveys the meaning of everyday.

/Subha uth jaanda/ expresses the meaning to awake up in the morning while /subah subah uth jaanda/ means to awake up early in the morning.

Reduplication in prepositions

Prepositions can also reduplicate for emphasis:

/na:l na:l səʔək ðe/
"right along with the road".

/u: tɛ u: tɛ/
"right on top".

/tʰəle tʰəle/
"right below".

/wiʃ wiʃ/
"right inside".

For example, /na:l səʔək ðe/ means "by the road," whereas /na:l na:l səʔək ðe/ emphasizes closeness or continuity with the road.

Partial republication

Partial reduplication in Punjabi typically forms echo compounds, where the first letter of the base word is substituted with another letter. The second word is usually a nonsense syllable, which does not carry an independent meaning but contributes semantically when combined with the base word. In nouns, echo compounds are commonly used to broaden reference or generalize meaning.

Ali sali jo v ay
/ʎi: səli: dʒo wi: a/

If a speaker does not know the exact reference, this construction is used. Here, it means "Ali or someone else by that name."

Janna Khanna
/dʒʌnnɑ: khʌnnɑ:/

While /dʒʌnnɑ/ literally means 'husband,' in this reduplicated form it refers more generally to a young male.

Roti voti
'bread and other food items'

Khana saana kha k jayo
"Have your meal (and related items) before leaving".

Semantically, reduplication broadens the meaning from one specific item to a whole category. Pronouns in partial reduplication often add emphasis or convey a generalized sense.

/koi: doi: te meri: m^dād kære ga: /
"Someone or the other will help me".

Here, /doi:/ has no literal meaning, but emphasizes the indefinite pronoun.

Ae ethy koi shoi nhi honda
"This does not happen here at all".

Teri meri nhi mukdi
"Yours and mine never end".

Possessive pronouns used reduplicative highlight contrast and express antonymic sense relations. Adjectival partial reduplication often expresses description, color, size, quality, or intensification.

Ati kati (/əti: kəti: /)
'healthy, stout' (description).

Haka baka (/həka: bəka: /)
'stunned, bewildered' (state).

Choty moty (/ʃhoʔe moʔe /)
'small and insignificant things' (size/importance).

Purana sarana (/pura:na: sərə:na: /)
'old' (quality).

Kala sala (/ka:la: sa:la: /)
'black' (color).

In /pura:na: sərə:na:/ or /ka:la: sa:la:/, the second word is nonsense, but it gives meaning in combination. In /ʃhoʔe moʔe /, both words individually give different descriptions, but in combination, the whole word gives a different meaning, e.g., /ʃhoʔe moʔe ka:m / means minute things to do. /əti: / literally stands for shop and /kəti: / means sheep, but in combination it gives a different meaning, i.e., healthy or fatty. Adverbs undergo partial reduplication to convey distributive or generalized meanings.

Jiwen tiwen (/dʒi:wẽ ti:wẽ /)
'in any case'.

Ethy othy (/æʔhe oʔhe /)
'here and there'.

Edhar odhar (/eðhər oðhər /)

'here and there; everywhere'.

Mostly words having opposite meanings are reduplicated in partial reduplication of Adverbs. /æʈhe oʈhe/ or /eðhər oðhər/ means everywhere. The single word /æʈhe / conveys the meaning of only here, and /oʈhe/ means there. In addition to both meanings, it becomes here and there, which literally means everywhere. Verbal reduplication in partial form often shows repetition of action.

Aandean jaandean (/ã:dea: dʒa:dea:/)
'coming and going,' i.e., continuously or repeatedly.

Here, the individual verbs convey opposite meanings, but in reduplication they combine to express habitual or repetitive activity. Certain conjunctions appear in partially reduplicated forms, but their role often shifts away from pure connective function.

Lakin wakin (/le:kin we:kin/)
'but'

Agar magar (/əgʌr mægʌr/)
'if'

Par sar (/pər sər/)
'but'

Oh aya si lakin oh menu mil nh sakya
'He came, but I could not meet him'.

Here "lakin" functions as a true conjunction.

Ay lakin wekin ethy nhi chaly gi
'This will not work here at all'.

In this case, /le:kin we:kin/ serves as an emphatic expression rather than a syntactic conjunction.

Vowel change in Reduplication

In Punjabi reduplication, vowels are often altered in the second component, producing semantic extensions. Final /a:/ changes to /i:/; & final /o/ changes to /i:/:

Gema gemi (/ge:ma: ge:mi/)
'hustle and bustle' (meaningful only in combination).

Anjaana anjaani (/əndʒa:na: əndʒa:ni/)
'stranger'.

Wekho wekhi (/wekho wekhi/)
'to imitate others'.

/wekho wekhi/ in combination gives a totally different meaning from the single word /wekho/ (call others to see something) and /wekhi/ (call others to show something). Middle /i:/ changes to /a:/; /ə/ shifts to /ʊ/; & /e/ alternates with /o/:

Theek thaak (/θi:k θa:k/)
'absolutely fine' (vs. /θi:k/ 'just fine').

Thap thup dena (/θəp θʊp/)
'to press completely'.

Ethy othy (/eθe oθe/)
'here and there; everywhere'.

Short vowel sometimes changes into long vowels; complex changes are changing in the middle and end vowel.

Guzar guzaar (/guzəɾ guza:r/)
'to pass time in routine'.

Toa taai (/toa: ta:i:/)
'investigation'.

Affixation in Reduplication

Affixation strengthens emphatic or distributive meanings. A suffix comes at the end of a base word, while a prefix comes at the beginning of a base word. Prefixes and suffixes are added to the reduplicated form of a word to make it more emphatic. Suffixation & Prefixation:

Kami kameen (/kəmi kəmi:n/)
'low status'.

Aaly dewaaly (/a:le dəwa:le/)
'all around'.

Oher poher (/o:həɪ pə:həɪ/)
'unwanted things'.

Suffixes may be dropped in reduplicated pairs, adding alongside the base word. The literal meaning of the word /pa: ɛi:/ is water, but in / Paanio paani/ it gives an idiomatic meaning that is totally different from the real meaning. It means to be guilty or regretful. /səʃ/ means true, but /səʃo səʃ/ gives a more emphatic meaning. It means absolutely true. The words /Pi:nd o pi:nd/ and /ðehər o ðehər/ have different meanings from /səʃo səʃ/. Its function is not to make it emphatic. It means to go from one city to another or from village to another.

Edherun edher (/eðhəru:~eðhər/)
'to move from one place to another'.

Pehalan pehal (/pehəlaː̃ pehəl/)
'primarily, first of all'.

Wakherean wakh (/wəkhreāː̃ wəkh/)
'separately'.

Sacho sach (/səʃo səʃ/)
'absolutely true'.

Pindo pind (/piːndo piː nd/)
'village to village'.

Sehar o sehar (/dehər o dehər/)
'city to city'.

Sense relations in Reduplication

Some reduplicated forms exhibit semantic relations such as synonymy, antonymy, and hyponymy. In reduplication, the words are similar or the same. Mainly, the exact words are used to convey the same meaning. Sometimes different words conveying similar/ same meanings are used together, e.g.

Jaandean jaandean (/dʒāː̃ deāː̃:/)
'while going'.

Sajty sanwarty (/səʒte sə̃wərtə/)
'well-prepared, adorned'.

Both of these words are different and give their meanings independently, but both convey the same meaning. Antonyms are words that are opposite to each other. The words conveying opposite meanings also come under partial reduplication.

Edher odher (/eðhər oðhər/)
'here and there'.

Aandean jaandean (/āː̃ deāː̃ dʒāː̃ deāː̃:/)
'coming and going' (habitual).

Enj kenj (/endʒ kendʒ/)
'combines question/answer elements'.

Reduplication with negative markers

Sometimes a negative affix is added to a reduplicated word, and due to the negative marker of affixation, the meaning conveyed by the reduplicated word also becomes negative. In such a type, positive words and words with negative meaning come in pairs. It means both positive and negative meanings are conveyed together. Two

versions are amalgamated in such type of reduplication. Negative prefixes (e.g., ən-, be-) modify reduplicated bases, producing polar or contrastive meanings.

Jane Anjane (/dʒa:ne əndʒa:ne/)
'consciously or unconsciously'.

Kuj na Kuj (/kudʒ na kudʒ/)
'something or nothing'.

Waqat be waqat (/wʌqt be wʌqət/)
'timely or untimely'.

Baat be baat (/ba:t be ba:t/)
'in every conversation'.

Reduplication with positive markers

Sometimes a positive marker of affixation is added in a reduplicated word, and the function of such reduplication is to make it more emphatic.

Hoo ba hoo (/hu: ba: hu:/)
'the same'

Kam az kam (/km əz km/)
'at least'

Non-sense words in reduplication

A word always conveys some semantic meaning in a sentence. Certain nonsensical words do not convey any meaning. In Punjabi, through reduplicated forms of meaningless words, meaningful compounds are formed. It mostly occurs in full and partial reduplication.

Aaen baaen (/a: ẽ + ba: ẽ/)
fabricate

Kunn Munn (/kən mən/)
'drizzling'

Tain tain (/t̪ẽ: t̪ẽ:/)
'talkative'

Bek bek (/bək bək/)
'worthless talk'

Owl fowl (/o:l + fo:l/)
meaningless

Aan aan (/a:n a:n/)

'weeping'.

Some non-sense words are not used independently. The meaning of one word is dependent on the other. They always come in pairs. They are known as coordinating nonsense words. For example:

Jinj jinj kam mukta jae onj onj tanhaa lendy jao
/dʒendʒ kəm muk a: dʒa:e o:ndʒ o:ndʒ tənha: lende dʒa:o/
As your work ends, take your salary.

Jinhen jinhen mehnat kiti ohny ohny phal paa lia
/dʒinhe:~dʒinhe:~mehnət kiti: o:ne o:ne ph əl pa: leja:/
Anyone who worked hard had got its fruit.

Jun Jun Rat hondi gai, tun tun loki kaar jandy gay
/Jun jun ra:t hondi geji: tun tun loki: ka:r dʒa:nde geje/
As the night came, people went to their homes.

Reduplication of emphatic elements of words

Punjabi sometimes shows that emphasizing particles are reduplicated. Emphatic particles can come at start, middle, or end of the sentence but, in Punjabi it comes mainly at the start of sentence.

Bus Bus (/bəs bəs/)
'Stop, that's enough.'

Oye oye (/o:e o:e ki: pea: hō~da:/)
'Hi! What is happening?' (interjection).

Chal chal (/ʃəl ʃəl/)
'Go, do your own work' (directive).

Aaho aaho (/a:ho a:ho/)
'Yes, it happens like this (affirmation).

Sentences in which emphatic particles come at the start of a sentence are grammatically correct sentences; the second type of sentence, in which emphatic particles come at the end, is used mainly in spoken discourse. They are grammatically correct sentences, but the third type of sentences in which emphatic particles come in the middle are totally wrong sentences.

Conclusion

It is concluded that reduplication in Punjabi is morphologically realized in various ways and conveys a range of semantic functions. It operates at different levels of language and serves multiple purposes. In total reduplication, the entire word is repeated, often to emphasize meaning, provide additional nuance, or create a rhythmic effect. In partial reduplication, only a part of the word is repeated. This process

frequently results in echo or nonsense words, which, when used in context, perform meaningful functions. Partial reduplication also brings together words with opposite meanings, thereby enriching expression. Both total and partial reduplication are found across all parts of speech in Punjabi.

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