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**Reduplication in Bengali Language**

**Md. Sohel Rana, Ph.D.**

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**Introduction**

This paper discusses the reduplication process in Bengali language. It also gives examples from other languages, especially Hindi, Urdu and Panjabi.

Bengali is a language, which originated between 900 A.D. to 1000 A.D. It is now spoken by more than 230 million speakers, mostly from West Bengal, Assam. Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, some part of Andaman in India, and in Bangladesh where it is the national language of that country.

**Reduplication**

Reduplication is the repetition of all or part of the base with or without internal change before or after the base itself. It is of two types:

- A) Morphological &
- B) Lexical

**A) Morphological Reduplication**

Morphological reduplication refers to the minimally meaningful and segmentally indivisible morphemes that are a larger number of expressions used in speech where sound and sense seems to be united. These expressions have been termed as Onomatopoeia such as:

1. Some Acoustic Noises

Monkey chattering	U? U?
Cat Chattering	Mu? Mu?

2. Noises of Natural Phenomenon

Rain pattering	tap tap
Thundering Sound	gar gar

3. Noises by Humans

Laughing	Ha! Ha!
	Khick! Khick!

**B) Lexical Reduplication**

It can be partial or complete at this level. It consists of four types:

**a. Echo-Formation**

An echo word is defined as a partially repeated form of the base word; partially repeated in the sense that either the initial phoneme which may be either consonant or vowel or the syllable of the base is replaced by another phoneme or another syllable. Here one thing I find that the replacer sound sequences are more or less fixed and rigid.

In Bengali repetition starts with –T, Punjabi –S and Hindi –V. The echo word has neither any individual occurrence nor any meaning of its own in the language. It acquires the status of a meaningful element only after it is attached to a word.

Here are some examples from Bengali. These are also compared with other languages like Hindi and Urdu.

### Example of Echo- Formation

Bengali	Hindi	Gloss
nam - tam	nam – wam	Name
rokto – tokto	khun – Vun	Blood
sohoj - tohoj	asan – vasan	Easy
fol – tol	Phal – val	Fruit
prem – tem	pyar – vyar	Love
gan – tan	gana- -vana	Song

### Echo Formation Used in Sentences:

1. nam – tam: nam – tam jene ki hobe? (Bengali)  
nam - vam: nam – vam pata karke kya karoge? (Hindi)
2. rokto - tokto: rokto –tokto pore na jeno (Bengali)  
khun -vun: khun - vun nikle ki nehi? (Hindi)
3. sohoj - tohoj : sohoj - tohoj prosner uttar age dio (Bengali)  
asan -vasan : asan - vasan question mat kya karo (Hindi)
4. fol-tol : fol -tol khele energy bare (Bengali)  
phal -val : phal - val khared kar wo ghar chala gaya (Hindi)
5. prem -tem : prem -tem koro na porasuna koro (Bengali)  
pyar -vyar : pyar -vyar sab bekar ki cheej hai (Hindi)
6. gan -tan : gan- tan korle mon bhalo thake (Bengali)  
gana-vana: gana -vana gaya karo (Hindi)

### (b) Compounds

Compounds refer to the paired constitution in which the second word is not an exact repetition of the first but has some similarity or relationship to the first word either on the semantic or on the phonetic level. A compound may be used independently in a sentence. Here, the paired construction does not have a new meaning.

### Example of Compound Words

Bengali	Hindi	Gloss
utha-bosa	uthna-bathna	Rise - Sitting
sukhi-dukhi	sukh-dukh	Happy-Sorrow
taka-paisa	dhan-daulat	Money

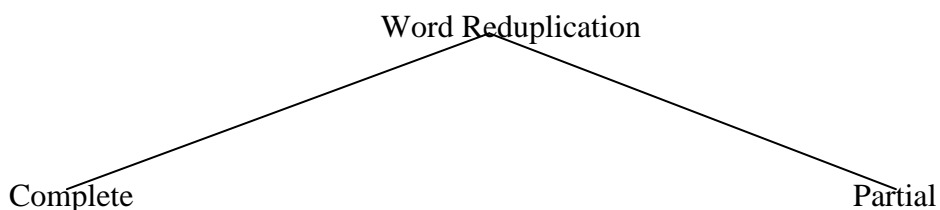
### Compounds Used in Sentences

1. utha-bosa: roj sokale utha- bosa kora bhalo (Bengali)  
uthna-bathna: unke sathmera uthna bathna hai (Hindi)
2. sukhi-dukhi: kokhono sukhi kokhono dukhi etai jibon (Bengali)  
sukh-dukh: kiske jindegı mai sukh dukh nehi hai? (Hindi)
3. taka-paisa: taka poisa na thakle songsar chalano kothin (Bengali)  
dhan-daulat: dhaun daulat se kuch nehi hota achche insan banne ki kousis karo (Hindi)

However, some linguists do not wish to include these under reduplication.

### (c) Word Reduplication

Word reduplication refers to those paired constructions when a single word or a clause is repeated once in the same sentence without any phonological or morphological variation. This word reduplication is of two types:



#### i. Complete Reduplication

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When both the parts have meanings and are meaningful, then the reduplication is called a complete reduplication.

Examples of Complete Reduplication:

Bengali	Hindi		Gloss
cholte – cholte	chalte – chalte	Running	
aste – aste	dhire – dhire		Slowly
bhalo – bhalo	achche – achche		Good
sada – sada	safed – safed		White
chhoto – chhoto	chhote – chhote		Little

### Compounds Used in Sentences

1. cholte – cholte : cholte cholte hafie gelam (Bengali)  
chalte – chalte : bas chalte chalte ho gaya (Hindi)
2. aste – aste : aste aste cholle kobe pouchobe? (Bengali)  
dhire – dhire : bus bohot dhire dhire chal raha hai. (Hindi)
3. bhalo – bhalo : aj canteene bhalo bhalo khabar achhe (Bengali)  
achche – achche: Sufia achche achche Pakora banati hai (Hindi)
4. sada – sada : sada sada kagoje likho (Bengali)  
safed – safed: safed safed kapra pahna karo (Hindi)
5. chhoto – chhoto : chhoto chhoto mach gulo amake dao (Bengali)  
chhote – chhote : chhote chhote alu le lo (Hindi)

These examples are called complete reduplication because here single word or a clause is repeated once in the same sentence without any phonological and morphological change.

### (ii) Partial Reduplication

Partial reduplication in the sense that here only one word or free morpheme is meaningful other word is meaningless.

### Examples of Partial Reduplication

Bengali	Hindi	Gloss
pani – tani	pani – wani	Water
kaj – taj	kam – wam	Work
cha-ta	chawye-waye	Tea
pan- tan	pan-wan	Betel

### Partial Reduplication Used in Sentences

1. pani - tani: pani-tani khao tarpor cholo (Bengali)  
pani -wani: pani-wani hamesha saf pya karo (Hindi)
2. Kaj - taj: aj besi kaj -taj korbona (Bengali)  
kam -wam: kam-wam khatam karo phir ghar chalo (Hindi)
3. cha-ta: cha-ta khabe naki? (Bengali)  
chawye-waye: chawye-waye ho jaye? (Hindi)
4. Pan-tan: pan-tan to 60 bochorer burira khai (Bengali)  
Pan-van pan-wan khake kya karoge? (Hindi)

### Discontinuous Reduplication

It is the reduplication with inter-fixion of a syllable which could be a vowel or VC or CV which is termed as discontinuous reduplication.

### Example of Discontinuous Reduplication

- |                  |  |           |
|------------------|--|-----------|
| 1. criss –cross: | karor songe criss-cross khela thik na  | (Bengali) |
| criss-cross:     | kisike sath criss-cross mat khela karo | (Hindi)   |
| 2. zig-zag:      | rastata khub zig-zag lagchhe           | (Bengali) |
| zig-zag:         | ye rasta zig-zag hai                   | (Hindi)   |
| 3. tip-top:      | tip-top thakle loke bhalo bole         | (Bengali) |
| tip-top:         | hamesha tip-top raha karo              | (Hindi)   |

### Conclusion

Now, a question arises in our mind whether reduplication structures are arbitrary or not? Actually, there are no inherent relationships between the linguistic or non-linguistic sign and the real world. So, reduplications are arbitrary.

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## Colophon

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