

Expressiveness and inter-subjectivity in Hindi reduplication

The vast category of Hindi expressives has mainly been studied in terms of morphonological structure (Singh 2003, 2005), grammatical function (Abbi 1980), involving the semantics of the structure (Abbi 1992, Montaut 2007), areal convergence (Emeneau 1969, Abbi 1992), and relation between form and meaning (Montaut 2008, 2009). It is now generally assumed that the purely 'expressive' dimension of such devices is an important part of language in a typological perspective (Dingemanse 2012, 2018), and the talk will follow this line.

A general picture of Hindi expressive devices would include onomatopoeics, usually reduplicated, which widely contribute to the enrichment of the lexicon in an iconic way for all types of physical or psychic perceptions of reality; total reduplication of lexical items, fully grammaticalized for certain categories (numeral and participles); echo formations involving the substitution of the initial consonant, supposed to extend the meaning of the simplex form; pairs of related words (synonym, antonym, or complementary words) or "semantic reduplication" (Vacek 1989).

I intend focus on the sub-categories deemed "stylistic" or "expressive", showing that the semantic effects resulting from the use of a given form of reduplication (total, partial, or 'semantic') are not random, even if the mechanisms ruling the association of form and meaning are quite complex and often require the inter-subjective context to be properly accounted for (total reduplication of adjectives is not always distributive, intensive or attenuative as assumed), an inter-subjective dimension ignored in the most successful attempts to account for the phenomenon in terms of iconicity (Kouwenberg 2003, Kouwenberg & LaCharité 2001, 2005, Klamer 2004, Kyomi 2005, Parkwal 2004). Similarly, partial reduplication in echo-words does not always as assumed produce the "etc.", "and the like" meaning, and often conveys parody, or polemical derogatory meanings.

One can aim at principled explanations as I did previously, trying to integrate into grammar the unaccounted meanings: the echo formations may be interpreted as bearing on the notional domain itself, by reshaping the contours of the notion, whereas total reduplication bears on the occurrence of the notion, modifying the scheme of individuation of the notion. Yet the intersubjective dimension is crucial in all the cases with no clear or systematic grammaticalized meaning, whether when the reduplicated form amounts at representing the ideal degree in a given situation in conformity with the addressee's expectation, or when the echo-word tends to disqualify the addressee's viewpoint or win over his reluctance, or to dismiss a shared opinion. A wider context than the bare statement is of course required for analyzing these mechanisms of inter-subjectivity, which are ultimately linked with the subjective appropriation of the language and its creative use. Similar results obtain from the study of 'semantic reduplication' (*ghūmnā-phirnā* [turn/take a walk-circle], "wander around", *ṭūṭā-phūṭā* [broken-burst] "torn out/in a poor condition", *sīdhā-sādhā* [straight/right-plain/ *sada*:authentic] "honest/authentic/straightforward"), which do not always, as expected, provide for some kind of hyperonymic meaning by filtration of the respective semantic features of each component and fusing the compatible features only: what is remarkable is that such compounds, like other forms of reduplication, always add to the discourse a colloquial flavour, making the statement feel more convivial, loaded with more intimacy and 'authenticity'.

This property evokes the German "modal particles" which according to Weydt (2006) may be omitted without the text losing its general meaning, but make the discourse more "natural" and "authentic", more "friendly". A marked difference is that, whereas the modal particles of Germanic languages, as well as the Hindi discourse particle *to*, essentially involve the validation or the discussion of the other's viewpoint (argumentative function), Hindi reduplication is more concerned with the speaker's own way of expressing his own viewpoint and feeling about the situation. The personal appropriation by the speaker of the linguistic material (at phonological, morphological and semantic levels) in order to playfully create his own use of reduplication and eventually his own forms, as pertaining to what

Jakobson called the “poetic function”, is an important source of creative colloquial exchange. Other sources for slang, jargon or familiar lexicon such as metaphor have been extensively studied as creative devices in various languages, probably originating from personal invention and then accepted as a marginal sociolect. Reduplication, particularly partial, may play a similar role in language creativity, like in the French new Verlan the inversion and vowel alteration (“*keuf*” for policeman, from “*flic*” and/or “*fuck*”, *feuje*” for Jewish from “*juiif*”, “*rebeu*” for Arab from “*beur* < “*arabe*”, “*beu*” for herb/cannabis from “*herbe*”), leading from idiolect to sociolect and then widely accepted popular language.

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