English Reduplicative Loans in Bangla

Sarwar Morshed

University of Chittagong, Bangladesh

A B S T R A C T

This small-scale exploratory study attempts to trace and taxonomize English reduplicative loans used in Bangla. Reduplicatives are the products of the morphological process known as reduplication i.e. doubling of a word, stem or root. For example, *ha ha*, *dilly dally*, *hocus pocus* etc. Though reduplication interfaces with both Phonology and Morphology, it is customarily included in Morphological Linguistics. The prime purpose of this paper is to detect and classify the morphological products in the form of reduplicative loans to Bangla from the English language. For the detection of loan reduplicatives, lexicographic works have been consulted. Social media sites have also contributed to the corpus of this study. Our corpus reveals that Bangla has two types of English-based reduplicative loans – unchanged and changed. The unchanged category includes onomatopoeic and baby-talk reduplicatives. The members of the changed category, on the other hand, undergo different morphological modifications. There are a few English-based reduplicative loans that have been assimilated into the fabric of Bangla – these are so strongly Banglicized that their English identity is unrecognizable without the help of etymological dictionaries. Apart from this fully integrated small category, there exists another class of loan reduplicatives that has effaced some unalloyed, internally sourceable reduplicatives.

1. Introduction

Reduplication is conventionally treated as a morphological process where a lexeme or root or stem is fully or partially repeated to form a new word. The original word is dubbed as base or reduplicand whereas the repeated word, either unmodified or modified, is labelled as reduplicant. The resultant word produced through this process is called a reduplicative. For example, *ha ha*, *blah blah*, *hocus pocus,* etc. The first two examples are known as 'complete or copy reduplication' while the last one goes by the name of partial reduplication. The newly constructed words based on *ha*, *blah* and *hocus* are baptized as reduplicatives. Now let us have a glimpse at some Bangla examples of reduplication *ghorey ghorey*, *lal lal*, *poysa-toysa,* etc. Like their English counterparts, the first two examples are 'copy reduplication' whereas the last one belongs to the category of partial reduplication.

According to the cross-familial research of Rubino (2016) among 368 languages, 85% show the presence of reduplication. The authenticity of Rubino's work-based claim is attested by Kauffman (2015). He presents some representative examples of cross-familial reduplications in an engaging manner. A bus service in Hawaii is known as *Wiki-Wiki* (Wiki= Fast) meaning that the service is very fast. *Hier-hier* in South Africa means right here. A melon in Swahili is *tiki* while *tikitiki* refers to a big melon. From America and Africa, let us turn our attention to Asia. In Mandarin, *xiao* means small whereas the reduplicated form of the word *xiao-xiao* refers to something very tiny. The English counterpart of the Chinese diminutive is *teenie-weenie* which means a tiny girl. *Bunga* in Malay is flower and the pluralized version of the word is *bunga-bunga*.

Rubino (2016) and Barbaresi (2015) have shown that reduplication is a morphological process with iconicity. This feature is a natural phenomenon and hence unmarked in most of the languages. Though there are some reduplication-free languages, in the words of Kauffman (2015), many languages have inherent reduplication constructs. Speaking on an areal basis, the South Asian languages have the capacity to make copious use of the reduplication process because of the presence of these in-built constructs (Racova, 2012). Bangla, according to Bhattacharya (2016), is remarkably rich in reduplicative words. Tagore (2011) in his discussion on the use of repetition has shown how rich Bangla is in terms of reduplicative resources.

Despite the super-abundance of reduplicatives in Bangla, this word formation device has not received detailed treatment at the hands of the researchers. There are some small-scale researches on reduplication in Bangla but none of the works has shed light on the reduplicative lexemes that Bangla has borrowed from English.

Among the handful works on reduplication in Bangla, Bhattacharya's (2016) research can be considered as a pioneering one. He discusses reduplication in Bangla in the light of the Whole Word Morphology (WWM) approach. In his work, the researcher has made an important distinction among the words in Bangla formed following the process of reduplication and thwpattern of reduplication.

Another work that sheds light on the reduplication process in Bangla is Reduplication in Bengali Language by Rana (2010). This work is an attempt at taxonomization of the reduplication processes used in Bangla. Chevkina (1964) also dwells on reduplication in Bangla even though she employs the term repetition in place of reduplication. As her focus is on pair constructions in the Bangla language, she only discusses about total reduplication in Bangla. Chakravarty and Bandopadhya (2010) have carried out a study to identify reduplication in Bangla corpus. Besides identification, they attempted to analyze the examples from semantic perspective. Racova (2012) is an interesting study on reduplication in Bangla. In the work, she focuses on the reduplication of verbal forms in Bangla.

Though Bangla, along with its South Asian peers, makes abundant use of reduplication, studies conducted on this important aspect of expressive morphology are few. Surprisingly, even those few researches on reduplication in Bangla have not touched upon reduplicative loans in Bangla. This exploratory study is aimed at filling the hitherto unnoticed and unaddressed void. We have a substantial body of research literature on English loanwords in Bangla. Yet, none of the works has paid attention even in a peripheral or passing manner to English reduplicative loans in Bangla. This paper is intended to making contribution to this uncharted and unexplored territory of expressive or extragrammatical morphology.

2. Research Methods

This is an exploratory research based on lexicographic works and researcher-observation. The major segment of data for this work has been culled from Moitree's (2001) work *Bideshi Bangla Shobder Obhidhan* (Dictionary of Foreign Words in Bangla). Besides, examples have been extracted from literary texts and posts on social media sites. All the works cited and used have been properly acknowledged in the reference section of this paper. Besides lexicographic and literary materials, researcher observation has been amply used in this study. As there is a noticeable paucity of research materials on English reduplicative loans in Bangla, observation of the paper writer has been employed as an important research tool. This tool has been recognized by Weinreich (1963). According to him, the issue of the dearth of previous research materials can be efficiently addressed through the observation of trained linguists and researchers.

This is a small-scale exploratory study and hence it is not immune from the shortcomings that typically accompany this type of research. Among the limitations of this paper, first comes the issue of space and time. It is remarkably deficient in the spatial and temporal aspects. Hypothesis formation and drawing of generalizations are difficult from studies that suffer from time and space constraints. Apart from this, the dataset used in this study, even though efforts have been made to render it inclusive and representative, is very small. Last but not the least, the phonological aspect of reduplication has not received any attention from the researcher.

2.1 Cross-linguistic taxonomy and functions of reduplication

Based on the studies of Abbi (1992), Singh (2003), Rana (2010), Kauffman (2015) and Bhattacharya (2016), reduplication across languages can be roughly typologized as follows:

a. Copy reduplicatives
b. Partial reduplicatives
c. Ablaut reduplicatives
d. Echo reduplicatives

e. Baby-talk reduplicatives
f. Onomatopoeic reduplicatives
g. Name doubling reduplicatives
h. Shm-reduplication

Cross-linguistically, reduplication serves a good number of important functions. Their functions include both phonological and morphological aspects. In morphology, they range from derivation to inflection. In phonology, reduplication serves as a concomitant element of affixation. The following are the most prominent functions of reduplication identified by linguists from cross-linguistic data (Kauffman, 2015; Abbi,1992; Singh, 2003; Tagore, 2011):

a. Pluralization.
b. Tense shifting
c. Diminutivization
d. Intensification
e. Amplification or augmentation
f. Frequency
g. Specificity
h. Collectivity
i. Similarity
j. Playfulness
k. Aimlessness
l. Reflexivization
m. Greeting
n. Wishing

2.2 Reduplication in Bangla

Reduplication, as we have already mentioned, has an ambivalent position in linguistics with roots in both the domains of phonology and morphology. Although it interfaces with phonology and morphology, it is traditionally discussed as a word formation process (Jespersen, 1942). Bangla also complies with this conventional compartmentalization of reduplication and hence in this paper it is being treated as a component of morphology.

Bangla, like other South Asian languages, is significantly rich in reduplicatives. Tagore (2011: 48) comments on the reduplicative resources of Bangla, "So far as I have observed, Bangla is richer than other Aryan languages in reduplicatives". Chatterjee (1988) echoes Tagore in his discussion on reduplication in Bangla.

Linguists, grammarians and researchers have taxonomized Bangla reduplicatives from different perspectives. Rana (2010) has pointed out that Bangla has two types of reduplicatives – morphological and lexical. Morphological reduplication refers to the modified or unmodified cloning of the base. Some examples of the morphological reduplicatives are *jol tol*, *gan tan,* etc. The lexical reduplicatives, on the other hand, refer to doubled words which despite their binary identical composition are unanalyzable into single meaningful units. *Chacha* and *bulbul* are instances of lexical reduplication.

In good conformity with English reduplicatives, Bangla also has copy reduplicatives and partial reduplicatives. *Haste haste* and *chalte chalte* are copy reduplicatives while *boi toi* and *chhuti tuti* are examples of partial reduplicatives. In Bangla we also have onomatopoeic and echo reduplicatives. *Shon shon*, *bhon bhon*, and *kolkol* belong to the previous category while *faltal*, *billtill*, and *namfam* are members of the latter class. If we summarize, the products of reduplication in Bangla can be classified as follows:

a. Copy reduplicatives
b. Partial reduplicatives
c. Onomatopoeic reduplicatives
d. Echo reduplicatives
e. Lexical reduplicatives

The first four sub-types belong to the broader class of reduplicatives known as morphological reduplicatives.

2.3 Functions of reduplication in Bangla

From the classification of reduplicatives in the preceding paragraph, we see that the patterns of doubling in Bangla conform to the global typology of this component of expressive morphology. From the cluster of functions performed by reduplicatives across language families, the following ones are noticeable in Bangla –

a. Pluralization (Lal lal ful- Many red flowers)
b. Frequency (Masey masey – Every month)
c. Intensification (Tatka tatka (Tagore, 2011: 49) – Very fresh)
d. Augmentativization and Diminutivization (Bochka buchki – Big and small bags)
e. Pretension (Chor chor khela (Tagore, 2011: 49) – Playfully pretending as a thief)

In addition to these functions, as Chaterjee (1988: 95-97) observes, reduplication in Bangla also expresses intention like *Jabo jabo korchhi*, *Mon bari bari Korey,* etc. Tagore (2011: 49) and Majumdar (2016: 80) have illustrated another function of Bangla reduplicatives – certainty (***Char char***peyada asia hajir/ In came FOUR mercenary musclemen with all their threatening might; ***Panch panch***jon lok accidente mara gelo/ The accident devoured FIVE people). Last but not the least, Tagore (2011) in his classic work on Bangla linguistics titled *Shobdototto* has dedicated a whole chapter on reduplication (he uses the word 'repetition' in place of 'reduplication') in Bangla. Besides above mentioned functions, according to Tagore, Bangla reduplicatives can also convey senses of hesitation (*Jabo jabo* and *uthhi uthhi*), incompleteness (*Bhasa bhasa*, and *kando kando*) and mildness (*Jor jor* and *shith shith*).

3. Results and Discussion

In the light of the collected data appended with this paper, let us first see whether the English-based reduplicatives used in Bangla conform to the basic taxonomy of Bangla reduplicatives proposed by Rana (2010). Rana (2010) in his work has shown that Bangla reduplicatives can be divided into two categories: Lexical and morphological. Lexical reduplicatives, as we have already come to know, are words unanalyzable into meaningful smaller units. Bhattacharya (2016: 224) has given some examples of lexical reduplicatives in Bangla suc as *Chacha*, *Lala*, *Bulbul,* etc. Bhattacharya (2016:227) terms these as pattern reduplicatives. According to him, these are not proper reduplicatives. All the reduplicative words catalogued in the data section belong to the category called morphological reduplicatives.

From the examples used in Appendices 1 - 6, we can propose yet another classification of English reduplicative loans in Bangla – Unchanged reduplicatives and Changed reduplicatives. Unchanged reduplicatives have entered Bangla without any morphological or phonological changes, for example, ***Hiss hiss korey sapti choley gelo***. Here the English onomatopoeic word *hiss* has entered Bangla as a single lexeme and through its total reduplication we have got *hisshiss*. Same is the case with the English word *tick* (***Tick tick*** *korey ghori janan dichchhey somoy thik thik choley jachchhey*). Appendix 2 contains some more examples of unchanged reduplicative loans popularly used in Bangla such as *hiphip*, *tata*, *bye bye*. The changed reduplicatives which constitute the bigger segment of loan reduplicatives are morphologically processed. The base is English and the reduplicant is phonologically Bangla. In this way, we have got *sublet-gublet*, *biketike*, etc.

Our data attest the presence of an interesting type of loan reduplicative in Bangla (Appendices 1 & 3). Moitree (2001: 117) confirms that the much used Bangla word *finfiney* is of English origin. The reduplicative owes its existence to the English word fine. Initially, any thin, good cloth was described as *fine fine* by the Banglophones which ultimately turned into *finfiney*. Another example belonging to this category is *Jandrel jandrel* (Appendix 3) which has its origin in the English word *general*. This type of reduplicative loans can be dubbed as naturalized loan reduplicatives.

The data-set that we have used makes clear that most of the English reduplicative loans in Bangla are partial reduplicatives. The base is English but the reduplicant is Bangla for example, *biketaik*, *fitfat*, *brand-trand*, etc.

Appendix 4 presents some interesting examples of English loan reduplicatives in Bangla. For example, we notice the presence of two variants of reduplicatives based on the English word *bill* into *billtill* and *billfill*. While *billtill* means bill, commission, etc., *billfill* connotes negative emotive feelings of the speaker for example, ***billfiller*** *bishoye ami kichui janina*. Think of the famous line from Shamsur Rahman's poem *Pandashrama-* ***Meeting*** *holo* ***feeting*** *holo, kun milena tobu*. The same negative attitude of the speaker is manifest in this sentence *Eto brandfrand diye ki hobey*? The shades of appreciative and depreciative semanticity can be traced in the following duos, *brandtrand/brandfrand*, *votetot/votefot*, and *mediatidia/mediafidia*. Tagore (2011: 78) has commented in an arresting manner on the semantic shift that the reduplicative word undergoes when 't' is

replaced by 'f' in the reduplicant. At times the public 't' is replaced by the new actor 'f' in the construction of the reduplicative form but it imparts a kind of depreciative meaning to the word. By *luchituchi* we refer to *luchi*, *kochuri*, *nimki* and other tasty items, but when we use *luchifuchi*, we do not make reference to any delicious items.

Appendix 3 presents a curious English-based reduplicative loan very popularly used in both formal and informal situations like *Votavuti* based on the English word 'vote'. The word has found its way into Murshid's (2013: 2268) *Bibartanmulak Obhidhan*, published by Bangla Academy, the regulatory body of Bangladeshi Bangla. Even though we have two Bangla counterparts of vote which are *Nirbachan* and *Rai,* and hence reduplication through calque construction is possible, yet we prefer the English-based reduplicative *votavuti* to *nirbachananirbachani* or *rayaraii*. This lexicalization is an attestation of the fact that some loan reduplicatives are strongly integrated into the fabric of Bangla. We come across some more examples of this type in Appendix 4 which are *postaposti*, *likalike*, *tagategi*, *commentacommenti* and *sheyarasheyari* based on English words, post, like, tag, comment, and share respectively.

Although Bangla terms can be constructed through translation, users exhibit a clear preference for the English-based reduplicatives in these cases. We already have a pure Bangla reduplicative for share (and the English-based reduplicative *sheyarasheyari*) – *bhagabhagi* but it is not used in the digital sense. The potential calque forms of reduplicatives based on like, tag and comment can be *pachhandapachhandi*, *songjukta-songjukti* and *mantobbya-mantoibby* respectively but we notice a preponderance of the use of English-based reduplicatives. The loan reduplicatives generated mainly by the social media sites are, however, used in non-serious, informal situations. These recent entrants to our tongue popularized by the internet, blog and especially by facebook have contributed to the enrichment of our vocabulary. They are important addition to the repertoire of Bangla reduplicative vocabulary reflecting the ever changing nature of human languages.

Appendix 5 is a clichéd Bangla phrase literally translated into English. This type of calqued reduplicative, though not used in formal and serious situations, is very popularly used by Banglophones in spoken colloquial speech. The construction of the English reduplicative sinking sinking from Bangla *dubey dubey jol khawa* adds humour and colour to the conversation. While in appendix 7, we come across an interesting case of lexical exchange between English and Bangla. This is a banal corollary that in typical contact situations, the superstrate language is the lender and the substrate language is the borrower. Contrary to its insurmountable superstrate status, in this case we see that English has borrowed the native reduplicative which showed that Bangla has borrowed it from Hindi, *Tom Tom* from the substrate language (Chaki, 2008). The inclusion of this reduplicative in all the standard English dictionaries has contributed to making the contact between English and Bangla, at least nominally, bidirectional.

The dataset that we have employed in this small-scale study reveals the following facts:

1. Among the loan reduplicatives, the partial reduplicatives far outnumber other types.
2. Some onomatopoeic words are borrowed as single items in their original form and they undergo the doubling process in Bangla. (Appendix 2)
3. Though the majority of English reduplicative loans occupy the initial position in the duplication process, in some rare cases, they can be placed at the suffixal position as well for example, *cha-coffee*. (Appendix 6).
4. In the formation of depreciatives, the base (from English) is reduplicated following the rule of Bangla. The depreciative forms are generally used in the spoken colloquial speech. They are not normally used in formal speech or writing.
5. The internet, blog, especially the social media sites have been instrumental in the creation of what we may call digital reduplicatives.
6. The English-based reduplicative loans in Bangla are of two sub-classes – Unchanged and changed. The changed subtype, the appendices reveal, is numerically superior to the unchanged reduplicative loans.
7. Though few in numbers, Bangla has some English-based reduplicative loans which are so deeply integrated into the fabric of Bangla language that their origin is untraceable without the help of etymological dictionaries.
8. Despite the presence or potential presence of Bangla counterparts in some cases, *Banglophones* have a tendency to use English reduplicative loanwords.
9. Calqued reduplicatives are formed out of commonplace Bangla reduplicatives to add colour and humour to conversations in informal situations. (Appendix 5)

4. Conclusion

Reduplicatives, despite the fluidity of their meanings, are important morphological products because of their iconicity. Albeit semantic indeterminacy, they are a natural phenomenon i.e. unmarked. As reduplicative lexemes are core morphological products performing multiple functions, these words deserve more attention. This attention-deficit is more prominent in case of English reduplicative loans into Bangla. Despite a few works on reduplication in Bangla, not a single work has so far been done on loan reduplicatives in our language. By detecting, collecting and taxonomizing representative samples of the English-based reduplicatives in Bangla, this paper has initiated shedding light on the hitherto ignored aspect of extra-grammatical or expressive morphology. It can be hoped that future researchers will do more spade work to crack the complete code of English reduplicatives in Bangla from an integrated perspective including the trinity of phonology, morphology and pragmatics.

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Appendices

1. Some English reduplicatives culled from Moitree (2001):
   Fitfut (Based on English 'fit')
   Finfinay (Based on 'Fine')
   Subletgublet (Based on 'Sublet')
   Benchitenchi (Based on 'Bench')
   Bomtom (Based on 'Bomb')
   Biketike (Based on 'Bike')
   Coffetoffee (Based on 'Coffee')
   Tablettublet (Based on 'Tablet')
   Dietduet (Based on 'Diet')

2. *Ghori **tick tick** korchhey*
   ***Hiphip** hurray!*
   ***Tata bye bye** abar jeno dekha pai.*
   ***Hiss hiss** Korey sapti dariey gelo.*
   *Camerar **click click** shobdey mukhorito onusthhansthhal.*
   (Morshed, 2018)

3. ***Jandrel jandrel** lokera **white white** shirtder **cute cute** andolon nie **postaposti**, **commentacommenti** ar **shiarashiari** korchhen. **Votavutir** uthsob uthsob amejey hothath ki je holo*!
   (Researcher generated sample)

4. The following reduplicatives have been collected from facebook (fb) posts of native speakers of Bangla. The facebookers are connected with the fb account of the researcher:
   Brandtrand and *Brandfrand* (Based on 'Brand')
   Likealiki (Based on 'like')
   Tagfag (Based on 'tag')
   Fattat (Based on 'fat')
   Partytarty (Based on 'Party')
   Billtill and *Billfill* (Based on 'Bill')
   Licensetiscence (Based on 'License')
   Mediattidia and *Mediafidia* (Based on 'Media')
   Electiontilection (Based on 'Election')
   Votetot and Votefot (Based on 'Vote')

5. *Bhaier caseto dekhi **sinking sinking** drinking water!*
   (Researcher generated sample)

6. *Esob **meeting feetingey cha-coffee** khawa chhara arto kichhui hoyna.*
   (Researcher generated sample)

7. *TomTom* is a kind of drum. English has borrowed the word exactly from Bangla. An official announcement of 1793 reads:
   'It is ordered that tomorrow morning the choultry justices do cause the TomTom to be beat through all the streets of the Black town'.
   Here 'Black town' refers to the localities of Kolkata inhabited by local people.
   (Chaki, 2008:92)