

## **Reduplication in Arabic and Urdu**

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**Abstract:** *This paper attempts to discuss the reduplication in Arabic language as well as in Urdu language. Also, the focus is on word; reduplication in the literature and spoken form of the two languages. The paper deals with word reduplication and its types as partial, complete, and discontinuous word reduplication. This paper tries to compare two languages at the level of reduplication.*

**Keywords:** *Reduplication, Arabic, Urdu.*

### **Introduction**

Reduplication is a morphological process in which one or more elements are copied from the base. It is used in many world languages with various types and uses. The study deals with reduplication phonologically, morphologically, syntactically and semantically.

This paper discusses the reduplication process in Arabic language and Urdu language. It attempts to throw some light on reduplication in Arabic at word level only but in Urdu at word level as well as syntactic level.

### **History of the Arabic Language**

Arabic is now the 6<sup>th</sup> most spoken language in the world and is spoken by more than 200 million people worldwide. Arabic started off as a language that was only spoken by a small population. Nomadic tribes would travel around the Arabian Peninsula and speak Arabic, a language they were very proud of. Prose, poetry and oral literature were common ways to communicate through Arabic in those times.

Arabic is a "Semitic," language and is most closely related to Aramaic and Hebrew. Other Semitic languages include Maltese, Mehri, Phoenician and Tigrinya. Semitic languages are based on a consonantal root system. Every word in Arabic is derived from one or another root word (most likely a verb).

By the 7<sup>th</sup> Century A.D., Arabic started to spread to the Middle East as many people started to convert to Islam. During this time of religious conversions, Arabic replaced many South Arabian languages, most of which are no longer commonly spoken or understood languages.

Arabic is the official language of many countries in the Middle East such as Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Sudan. It is also one of the six official languages of the United Nations.

There are three forms of Arabic; Qur'anical Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic, and Colloquial Arabic. Qur'anical Arabic is not used in conversation or in non-religious writing and Modern Standard Arabic is the official language of the Arabic world. Colloquial Arabic refers to Arabic that is spoken with a dialect. There are more than 30 different forms of Colloquial or Spoken Arabic. Some of the dialects that are the most common are Egyptian Arabic, Algerian Arabic, Sudanese Arabic and North Levantine Arabic. Some dialects can be so strong that although people are speaking the same language it's hard to communicate. When this happens, Arabic speakers revert back to speaking the Modern Standard Arabic. Modern Arabic is used for TV, films, plays, poetry and in books. Arabic Courses learnt at the Arab Academy is taught in the Modern Standard form.

Arabic is a language that can be transformed to adapt to new words that need to be created because of science or technology. However, the written Arabic language has seen no change in the alphabet, spelling or vocabulary in at least 4 millenniums.

### **Reduplication**

Reduplication is the repetition of all or part of the base with or without internal change before or after the base itself. Reduplication is among the processes that commonly exist in many languages of the world, and it is one of six main kinds of grammatical processes mentioned by Sapir in addition to word-order, composition, affixation, internal modification of the radical or grammatical element and accentual differences. It is used with various forms to achieve various purposes: lexical, morphological, and grammatical. (Dineen, 1967:228).

"Grammatical processes may either involve the modification of a single form in some way or the combination of more than one form". (Hall1964:135). In this regard, prosodic morphology puts an emphasis on the phonological processes included in reduplication which differentiate the base (that is the fixed element) from the copied (repeated) form. The process and the meaning that it may have in any particular language are not connected in a natural way. Reduplication involves prosodic units (beginning with a phoneme and ending with a morpheme) or a word being repeated. In the same word, the whole or part of a base is repeated. So, it is a process of repetition (Dineen, 1967: 228; Matthews, 1974: 127; Richard et al, 1985: 241; Napoli, 1996: 171; SIL International, 2004: 1; and Yule, 2006: 249). 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. Noises of Natural Phenomenon  
Thundering Sound gaR gaR  
Rain pattering tap tap
2. Some Acoustic Noises  
Chirping of birds  
Buzz of Bees
3. Noises by Humans  
Laughing Ho! Ho! Ha!Ha! He! He! He!  
Clicks! 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 can be said that the replacer sound sequences are more or less fixed and rigid.

In Arabic repetition starts with –B, and Urdu –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 Arabic and Urdu languages.

#### Example of Echo- Formation

Arabic	Gloss	Urdu	Gloss
HaZa – baZa	too much meat	nam – vam	Name
HiS – biS	in a puzzle	paise– vaisa	Money
Daiil – baiil	a little	asan – vasan	Easy
hitan – bitan	to break them	seb – veb	Fruit
Hadra – badra	great	rashion-vashion	Ration
Halalan – balalan	legitimate	sheesha-veesha	Glass

#### (b) Compounds

Compounds refer to the paired construction 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. The second part has a meaning which is different from the first one. Here are some examples from Arabic and Urdu languages.

### Example of Compound Words

Arabic	Gloss
Sakis – lakis	bad- mannered hard and difficult
Xaba – Daba	to amble animal, to surge to take hold of something
fiqah – niqah	to understand, to recover
kaza – laza	dry bolt, staple
Urdu	Gloss
a:na – ja:na	coming – going
khushi – Gam	happy – sorrow
hasna – rona	laugh – cry
jeena – marna	life – death
uthna – baithna	stand – sit

### (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. Word Reduplication (WR) may be defined as total or partial bimodal reduplication there by repetition of the base of the word or of the stem or of a syllable or of a larger constituent of word or of the whole word may iterate. Whatever the unit of repetition the end result is a new word, which has no parallel in its non-reduplicated counterpart" (Abbi, 1992).

This word reduplication is of two types:

#### Word Reduplication

- i) Total
- ii) Partial
- iii) Discontinuous Reduplication

#### i) Total Reduplication

Total reduplication is defined as: "complete repetition of the base word as it is without some semantic modification or some new meaning". In other words "The entire phonological form of a stem or all the meaningful elements may be reduplicated"

**Examples of Total Reduplication:**

Arabic	Gloss
Habba - habba	small
shoya - shoya	little
khutba - khubta	step
laf – laf	to wrap
zam – zam	to stop
Urdu	Gloss
haste – haste	Laughing
haule – haule	Slowly
chori – chori	Secretly
chupke – chupke	Mutely
ka:le – ka:le	Black

**Total Reduplication used in Sentences (Arabic)**

1. Habba – habba : akul habba- habba.(eat small piece)
2. shoya – shoya: ruh shoya shoya.(go slowly)
3. khutba – khubta: khutba ba khubta makan koyas.(step is a nice shop)
4. zam- zam: atini zam-zam ya akhi.(bother give me zam-zam(holy water))

**Total Reduplication Used in Sentences (Urdu)**

1. haste – haste : haste – haste kat jaye raste (Paths will be over with smiles )
2. haule – haule : haule – haule se dua lagti hai. (Slowly prayer is accepted)
3. chori – chori: vo aaj kal raat ko chori-chori atey hain.(They come stealthily)
4. chupke – chupke: chupke – chupke raat din anson bahana yaad hai.(Covertly weeping day n night)

5. ka:le – ka:le : ka:le – ka:le badl chha rhe hain. (Black clouds are coming)

These examples are called Total 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

Arabic	Gloss
azi:zun- mazi:zun	dear
at fa:nu nat fa:nu	thirsty
asanun basanun	What a beauty!
ifri:tun nifri:tun	troublemaker
aswa:nu atwa:nu	sad
Urdu	Gloss
meetha-sheetha	sweet
kam -wam	work
kitabe-shitabe	books
lassi-wassi	custard cool drink
khaya- piya	to eat

### Partial Reduplication Used in Sentences (Arabic)

1. azi:zun- mazi:zun: huwa azi:zun- mazi:zun ali (He is dear to me).
2. at fa:nu -nat fa:nu: innahu at fa:nu nat fa:nu (He is thirsty).
3. asanun- basanun: innaha asanun basanun (What a beauty she is!).

4. ifri:tun- nifri:tun : innahu ifri:tun nifri:tun (He is troublemaker).

5. aswa:nu atwa:nu : huwa aswa:nu atwa:nu ( He is forlorn and gloomy).

### Partial Reduplication Used in Sentences (Urdu)

1. meetha-sheetha: khane k baad kuch meetha-shaeetha ho jaye. (Some dessert after eating)

2. kam -wam: kam-wam ka:m wa:m to hamesha hi chalta rhta hai.(Work is always going on)

3. kitabe-shitabe: kabhi koi kitabe-shitabe bhi paR liya karo. (At times read some books)

4. lassi-wassi: arey kuch lassi-wassi lana! (Hey! Bring some cold milk)

5. khaya- piya: arey kuch khaya piya karo apni sehat ka khyal rkho. (Eat something , take care of your health)

### (iii) Discontinuous Reduplication

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

### Example of Discontinuous Reduplication

Arabic	Gloss
fat-fata	broke
fat-fit	break
saffan – saffa	rank upon rank
laf-lif	to wrap
kaddan– kadda	difficult to attain
Urdu	Gloss
bhiR – bhaR	crowd
po:ch – pa:ch	ask
dekh – da:kh	see
kabhi – kabhar	sometimes

thi:k – tha:k                      right

### **Discontinues Reduplication Used in Sentences (Arabic)**

1. Fat-fata: Fatfata Alwaladu Alkobza (The boy broke the bread into tiny pieces.)
2. Fat-fit: Fatfit Alkhobza (Break bread into small pieces).
3. Saffan- saffa: waja rabbuka wal malaku saffan –saffa (And your Lord has come and the angels, rank upon rank).
4. laf-lif: shay ya jdab laf-lif (u must wrap it).
5. kaddan– kadda: daraja kaddan– kadda(degree is difficult to attain).

### **Discontinues Reduplication Used in Sentences (Urdu)**

1. bhiR – bhaR: yahan hamesha hi bhiR – bhaR rhti hai (it's always crowded here).
2. po:ch – pa:ch: akhir kaar po:ch – pa:ch k aa hi gaye (at last u reached here by asking).
3. dekh – da:kh: sahi se dekh – da:kh lo! ( see it properly).
4. kabhi – kabhar: kabhi – kabhar hi aisa match dekhne ko milta hai (rarely get to see this type of match ).
5. thi:k – tha:k: sab log thi:k – tha:k hi hai (everyone is fine).

### **Conclusion**

To sum up we can say that in both languages the reduplication is common in literature as well as at spoken levels. The reduplicative compound is used for derivational and inflectional purposes. Reduplication is different from other reduplicative phenomena in the following: with partial reduplication, the reduplicant is always regarded as a well- defined prosodic constituent, like a heavy syllable.

The same is with full reduplication whereby the copied part is a prosodic form rather than being a kind of syllable. Sometimes, reduplication and repetition coincide in that the two parts of reduplicative compound can either be placed under reduplication or repetition.

Different points of view exist in the literature on whether reduplication is emphasis or synonymy or not.

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