

Success Constructions in Hindi-Urdu

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ABSTRACT: Hindi-Urdu relies on iconicity and implicit modification to a greater degree than do standard western European languages. Inspired by Clifford Geertz (1973) this paper attempts a 'thick description' in an exploration of one of Hindi-Urdu's colloquial patterns, one which features hierarchical duplication instead of explicit adverbial modifiers corresponding to 'gradually', 'barely', 'almost' and is also used in antitheses. This is not a study of duplicated participial phrases used in the sense of 'while' - for which see Naim (2011). END

Key words: telos, endpoint, implicit, Accomplishment, Achievement, causal chain, antithesis, undo, syllepsis

In addition to explicit adverbials such as आखिर *ākhir* 'finally' and बिल्कुल *bilkul* 'absolutely' Hindi-Urdu has a construction of a more iconic kind used to express incremental, sometimes effortful, often gradual progress toward the inherent *telos*, endpoint, or goal characteristic of Accomplishments [See Vendler (1967)].

- (1) शादी के बाद प्यार होते-होते हो ही जाता है (gradualness)
šādī-ke.bād pyār **ho.te-ho.te ho hī jātā.hai**
wedding-after love becoming-2 become EMP GOES
'Love forms gradually after marriage.' [wattpad.com/story/317651682-छाप-तिलक-सब-छीनी-रे]
- (2) क्या करना है वो तो हम करते-करते कर ही लेंगे (resolve)
kyā kar-nā hai vo to ham **kar.te-kar.te kar hī lēge**
what do-INF is that TOP we doing-2 do EMP TAKE.FUT
'Whatever has to be done that step by step we shall do.' [instagram.com/reel/DUQrCzDEmDU/]

In situations expressed by verbs of Achievement, where there is no question of prior effort or incremental progress toward a *telos*, a duplicated participle may mean यूँ ही *yūhī* 'by chance', 'for no reason', 'just like that':

- (3) एक अजनबी जाने कैसे अपना हो गया । मिलते-मिलते मिल ही गया
ek ajanabī jāne kaise apnā ho.gayā **mil.te-mil.te mil hī gayā**
a stranger knows how own became meeting-2 meet EMP WENT
'God only knows how a stranger becomes one's own. One meets by chance, just like that.'
[www.facebook.com/100008575457612/videos/sanki-village/4275154312768260/]

Without the particle *hī* a "triplicate" sequence may become a hierarchical formation composed of a duplicated non-past participle followed by the finite form of the same verb in a different meaning¹, 'while V-ing N_α, X V-ed N_β'. In the absence of the particle ही *hī* in (4) the main verb खोल- *khol*- 'open' can be used sylleptically in two related meanings but with two very different direct object complements: दिल *dil* 'heart' and राज *rāj* 'secret'.

- (4) युवती के हुस्न पर फिर फिदा हो गए डी आर डी ओ वैज्ञानिक, दिल खोलते-खोलते खोल दिया देश का राज (antanaclasis)
yuvatī.ke husn par phir phidā ho.gae dī.ār.dī.o vaigyānik, dil **khol.te-khol.te khol diyā** deš.kā rāj
girl's beauty-on again crazy became DRDO scientist heart opening-2 open GAVE nation's secret
'Besotted with a young woman's beauty a DRDO scientist opened his heart and opened national secrets.'
[www.ibc24.in/country/drdo-scientist-fell-in-love-with...-female-agent-...1631593.html]

An event that is almost achieved can be canceled by negation or reversed / undone by an antithetical event. Negating the first part of a success construction yields the sense of 'just barely' or 'almost not' (5) and (6):

¹ There is no reverse restriction. Triplications lacking ही *hī* may still count as examples of success constructions:

- (i) सूरत ढलते-ढलते ढल जाती है बेशक मगर । इश्क में दिल जिदगी भर कायल ही रहता है ।
sūrat **dhal.te-dhal.te dhal jātī.hai** beśak magar išk-mē dil zindagī-bhar kāyal hī rah.tā.hai
face fading-2 fade GOES no.doubt but love-in heart life-long staunch EMP remains
'While faces may fade, loving hearts remain steadfast till the end.'
[www.facebook.com/groups/334320638692043/posts/1251284036995694/]

(5) न होते-होते हो ही गया एक चुंबन ... बिग बॉस के घर में होते-होते एक लंबा चुंबन हो गया।

na hote-hote ho hī gayā ek čumban ... Big Boss.ke ghar-mē hote-hote ek lambā čumban ho.gayā
NEG occurring-2 occur EMP WENT a kiss Big Boss's house-in occurring-2 a long kiss occurred
'There almost wasn't a kiss. (But) in Big Boss's house there (finally) was a kiss, a long one.'
[www.amarujala.com/entertainment/television/kiss-scene-in-big-boss]

(6) गाँधी जी का पहला मुकदमा ऐसा था जिसमें कमीशन ना देने से मुकदमा ना मिलते मिलते मिल गया [Compare with (7)]

gāndhī jī kā pahlā mukadmā aisā thā jis-mē kamīšan nā de-ne-se mukadmā nā mil.te-mil.te mil.gayā
Gandhi Ji's first case such was which-in commission NEG give-INF-from case NEG getting-2 got
'Gandhiji's first case was such that due to not paying commission, he almost didn't get the case.'
[hi.quora.com/क्या-गांधी-जी-वकील-थे] (from a comment by आशुतोष अनिहोत्री)

If the *telos* is itself negated the meaning of the duplicated participle is 'despite almost V-ing' as in (7).

(7) सुस्त खैये के कारण ही धनबाद को एयरपोर्ट मिलते मिलते नहीं मिला। [Compare example (6)]

sust ravaiye-ke.kāraṇ hī dhanbād-ko eyarpoṛ mil.te-mil.te nahī milā
lazy approach-because EMP Dhanbad-DAT airport getting-2 NEG got
'Due to its lackadaisical approach Dhanbad didn't get (that is, almost got but failed to get) an airport.'
[mirrormedia.co.in/ ... -the-pain-of-not-getting-an-airport-in-dhanbad-mp-babu/]

In antitheses the meaning of the *telos* reverses or undoes the meaning of the participle, as in (8) and (9).

(8) कैसे कुछ लोग जीतते जीतते हार जाते हैं और हारते हारते जीत जाते हैं (a Palladianism)

kaise kučh log jīt.te-jīt.te hār jāte haī aur hār.te-hār.te jīt jāte haī
how some people winning-2 lose GO PRES and losing-2 win GO PRES
'How do some people lose when they're almost winning and win even when they're almost losing?'
[www.youtube.com/channel/UC-hEdUYRgp2kDs5LWkbhOqA] (See Naim 2011:166, §215 for more.)

(9) बूँद के गले से नीचे उतरते ही चिड़िया जैसे मरते-मरते जी उठी।

būd-ke gale-se nīče utar.te-hī čiriyā jaise mar.te-mar.te jī uṭhī.
drop-GEN throat-thru down descending-EMP bird as.if dying-2 live AROSE
'As soon as the drop went down the bird's throat, it seemed as if nearly dead it came back to life.'
[scholarszonebooks.com/images/lesson-collection/1549966386Hindi_Class_7_WS.pdf/]

In their basic frame success constructions are composed of a duplicated form of the non-past adverbial participle in -ते *-te* of the main verb (V_{α}) optionally followed by the particle ही *hī* plus a desinential form of the main verb whose subject (X) is coreferential with the subject of the duplicated participle ($V_{\alpha-te}$ $V_{\alpha-te}$). The main verb is the same as the verb in participial form or - if in an antithesis - is opposite to it in meaning:

(10) X (NEG) $V_{\alpha-te}$ $V_{\alpha-te}$ (NEG) $V_{\alpha/-\alpha}$ (*hī*) + (v - vector verb) + desinence (where $V_{-\alpha}$ indicates an antithetical verb)

Pursuing Bashir's (1993) concept of the "causal chain" we can see the appropriateness of the anticipative use of duplicated participles in *-te* as iconic preludes leading to inherent endpoints of Accomplishments that have an "Origin" distinct from a "Termination" [as in (1) and (2)]. Harder to explain is their presence as preludes to endpoints of Achievements where there is no temporal distance separating the "Origin" from the "Termination". However, the pattern in (10) exists as a template into which speakers fit duplicated participles, though now they are pressed into service as implicit expressions of sentence adverbials like यूँ ही *yūhī* in (3).²

Abbreviations

2 = duplicate of preceding item DAT = dative EMP = emphatic ERG = ergative FUT = future INF = infinitive
NEG = negative PST = past SBJNC = subjunctive TOP = topic

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² I am indebted to Elena Bashir for close readings of previous drafts, for numerous cautions, and for referring me to Naim (2011).