

Alliteratives in Hindi-Urdu

Peter Edwin Hook

In their studies of partial reduplication in Hindi-Urdu, the category of "echoics" has been the central focus of attention [Barannikov (1928), (Emeneau (1956), and Abbi (1992) among others]. In this type of partial reduplication the reduplicator switches the initial consonant of the reduplicand but preserves the rest of it. Thus in (1) the initial "**kh**" is replaced by a "**v**" in the reduplicator but the rest of the reduplicand, both the body of the verb (the "**-ā**") and the masculine singular preterite ending **-yā**, remain:

- (1) बच्चों ने कुछ नाश्ता-वाश्ता किया कि नहीं? तुमने कुछ खाया-वाया?
baččō-ne kučh nāšta-vāštā kiyā ki nahī? tum-ne kučh **kh.āyā-v.āyā**?
children-ERG some breakfast-ECHO do.PST or not you-ERG something ate-shmate
'Did the children have any breakfast? Did you eat anything?'
[hindwi.org/autobiography/aalo-aandhari-baby-halder...] √¹

In (1), a common type of echoic, the reduplicator *rhymes* with the reduplicand. In this short paper I introduce and examine a much less productive type, a complementary category, that of *alliteratives*, that applies only to monosyllabic verb roots ending in a long vowel. In this type the initial consonant is preserved and the remainder, that is, the long vowel that follows the initial consonant of these monosyllabic roots, is swapped out, usually for the sequence "**-avā**" as can be seen in examples (2) and (3):

- (2) रसोई में एक तलवार भी पड़ी थी। पहले यह कई थीं पर धीरे-धीरे सब खो-खवा गई।
rasoī-mē ek talvār bhī paṛī thī, pahale ye kaidī thī par dhīre-dhīre sab **kho-khavā** gāī
kitchen-in a sword also fallen was before these many were but slowly all lose^{INTR}-lose^{ZERO} WENT
'A sword too was lying in the kitchen - used to be a lot of them but slowly they all disappeared.'
[FB: 100069172535322/posts/292945790850686/] √ (29 June 2013, original text by निरंजन शर्मा)
- (3) एक बार एक गोरा सिपाही ... पी पवाकर बाजी बदकर उसके अंदर दाखिल हुआ था।
ek.bār ek gorā sipāhī ... **pī-pavā**-kar bāji bad-kar us-ke andar dākhil.huā thā
once one white soldier drink-drink^{ZERO}-GER bet place-GER it-inside entered had
'Once ... a white soldier had entered (the bar) after getting drunk and having placed a bet...'
[pustak.org/index.php/books/bookdetails/3822] √

For some reduplicands ending in "o" the replacing element in the reduplicator is "**-uvā**" rather than "**-avā**":

- (4) ईमानदार लड़कियां ऐसा केस कभी नहीं करती है. रो रुवाके पांच दश दिन शांत हो जाती है.
īmāndār laṛkiyā̃ aisā case kabhī nahī kartī-hai. **ro-ruvā**-ke pāñ daś din śānt ho jātī hai
honest girls such.a case ever NEG do-PRES cry-cry^{ZERO}-GER five ten days calm become GO PRES
'Honest girls never file such cases, they cry and cry and calm down after five to ten days.'
[facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=2198210454338990&set=a.120236522136404&type=3] √ Tim Jassa Ram Dara

In both rhyming and alliterative partial reduplications one part of the verb is kept and one part is changed.²

In rhyming echoics and alliteratives partial reduplication creates phonological entities which do not appear as autonomous signifying elements in Hindi-Urdu. They are not independent of their status as derivatives of the reduplicand with which they must co-occur. Consequently they are not found as separate entries in Hindi-Urdu dictionaries with (to my knowledge) the exception of हवाना in McGregor (1992: p. 1065).

- (5) वरना हमारी गैरहाजिरी में कुछ हो-हवा गया तो कौन जिम्मेवार होगा? ऐं?
varnā hamārī gairhājirī-mē kučh **ho-havā** gayā to kaun jimmēvār hogā? āī?
otherwise our absence-in anything happen-happen^{ZERO} WENT then who responsible be.FUT? Eh?
'Otherwise, if something happened in my absence, who will be responsible? Eh?'
[abhivyakti-hindi.org/kahaniyan/2003/daadi_aur_remote/dadi02.htm] √

¹ The check mark √ indicates an unexpired link to a reliable authentic source, free from .I. and from OCR transcription.

² These two kinds of reduplication are optional. If you drop the reduplicator (the *vāyā* or the *khavā*) what's left (*khāyā* or *kho*) has nearly the same meaning as *khāyā-vāyā* or *kho-khavā*. But you can't drop the reduplicand, the *khāyā*- or the *kho*-. On their own *vāyā* and *khavā* have no meaning. They don't occur by themselves. Compare "apple-shmapple", an example of *shm*-reduplication, a linguistic process borrowed from Yiddish where a word is repeated with a "*shm*-" prefix to mock or minimize the original term. The word "shmapple" has no referent of its own. No-one buys or eats shmapples!

The motives for using alliteratives appear to be similar to the motives for using rhyming echoics (Montaut 2008) as well as risers and fallers (Hook 2026). These include helping to express repetition and intensity of action (6), duration of an activity (7), and anxiety or uncertainty regarding the importance of an event (8):

- (6) सिंदूर को बिल्कुल पोंछ डालूंगी, नल में धो-धवाकर मुँह को सफेद कर लूंगी
 sindūr-ko bilkul pōchh ḍālūṅī, nal-mē **dho-dhāvā**-kar mūh-ko saphed kar lūṅī ...
 sindur-ACC fully wipe THROW.FUT tap-in wash-wash^{zero}-GER mūh-ACC white make TAKE.FUT
 'I'll wipe off the vermilion completely, I'll scrub my face from the faucet and make it white.'
[\[i801405.us.archive.org/22/items/in.ernet.dli.2015.404106/2015.404106.suvarnalata_txt.pdf\]](http://i801405.us.archive.org/22/items/in.ernet.dli.2015.404106/2015.404106.suvarnalata_txt.pdf) ✓
- (7) तीन हफ्ते के लम्बे सफ़र की थकान को उसने पूरे दो दिन सो-सुवाकर दूर किया
 tīn hafte-ke lambe safar-kī thakān-ko us-ne pūre do din **so-suvā**-kar dūr kiyā
 three week-GEN long trip-GEN fatigue-ACC he-ERG whole two days sleep-sleep^{zero}-GER away did
 'He slept two whole days straight to recover from the fatigue of a three-week long trip.'
 [Sunil Kumar Bhatt, personal communication] ✓
- (8) तो कहीं घर की कोई कीमती चीज़ न ले-लवा गई हो अपने साथ!
 to kahī ghar-kī koī kīmatī cīz na **le-lavā** -gaī ho apne-sāth!
 so "lest" house-GEN some valuable thing NEG take-take^{zero}-gone SBJNC self-with
 'So I hope she hasn't take anything valuable from the house with her when she left!'
[\[abhivyakti-hindi.org/kahaniyan/2006/bachpan/bachpan3.htm\]](http://abhivyakti-hindi.org/kahaniyan/2006/bachpan/bachpan3.htm) ✓

The scope of alliteratives includes the verb *ānā* 'to come' where the absent initial is absently preserved:³

- (9) धनलोभी सरकार ने आ-अवा-कर उस में भी गबन कर डाला
 dhan.lobhī sarkār-ne **ā-avā**-kar us-mē bhī gaban kar ḍālā
 greedy gov't-ERG (ø).come-(ø).come^{zero}-GER that-in too grift do THREW
 'The greedy government came along and embezzled that, too.' [facebook.com/.../864433314169870/] ✓

The objective of this squib is to introduce a heretofore unnoticed category in descriptions of Hindi-Urdu. So far in my attempt to establish alliteratives as a grammatical category I have encountered a challenge from colleagues who object: "Aren't these causatives?" Perhaps it is the presence of the bilabial segment *ṃ* in the reduplicating affix that resembles a causative as in (10) and influences their interpretation of some examples:

- (10) भारत को एक ओवर बीच में नीतीश राणा से कर-वा लेना चाहिए था
 bhārat-ko ek ovar bīch-mē nītiś rāṇā-se **kar-vā** le-nā cāhiye thā
 India-DAT one over middle-in Nitish Rana-by make-CAUS TAKE-INF should had
 "India should have gotten Nitish Rana to bowl an over in the middle."
[\[cricinfo.com/hindi/series/india-tour-of-sri-lanka-2021-1262739/sri-lanka-vs-india-2nd-t20i-1262759/\]](http://cricinfo.com/hindi/series/india-tour-of-sri-lanka-2021-1262739/sri-lanka-vs-india-2nd-t20i-1262759/) ✓

Without their context examples (3), (6), and (8) might be construed as causatives. Not so the other examples.

Abbreviations

ACC = accusative CAUS = causative ECHO = echoic ERG = ergative GEN = genitive GER = gerundial FUT = future INF = infinitive INTR = intransitive NEG = negative PRES = present PST = past SBJNC = subjunctive TOP = topic ZERO = null (a non-signifying dependent form not found outside of a partially reduplicating pair in modern Hindi-Urdu)

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