REDUPLICATED EXPRESSIVES IN LEPCHA

Satarupa Dattamajumdar∗

ABSTRACT:

Reduplication is defined as repetition or copying of a word or a syllable either exactly or partially in order to bring modification in the semantic interpretation or to convey some special meaning. As observed in Lepcha, (a Tibeto-Burman language spoken in Sikkim and Darjeeling district of West Bengal) reduplicated expressives (structures which represent sounds or senses) may belong to the category of full reduplication as well as partial reduplication. Being an important structural phenomenon of the South Asian languages reduplicated expressives play a vital role in the system of communication and so demands a vivid description of its form and function with reference to the semantic interpretation.

The data of the present paper has been collected from field investigation conducted in Kalimpong subdivision of Darjeeling district of West Bengal.

INTRODUCTION: PRESENT STATUS AND FILIATION OF LEPCHA

The Lepchas are the original inhabitants of Sikkim and are mostly settled in Dzongu valley of north Sikkim. They are also settled in Kalimpong subdivision of Darjeeling district of West Bengal. Apart from Sikkim and West Bengal, Lepcha is also spoken in Bhutan (lower valleys in the West and South) and Nepal (Mechi zone, Ilam district). Lepcha speech community is considered constitutionally a schedule tribe pertaining to the states of West Bengal and Sikkim in India.

According to 2001 census, total Lepcha population in India was 50,629. The population strength of Lepcha in Sikkim is 35,728 according to 2001 census and 14,721 in West Bengal according to 2001 census. [according to: http://www.census India.gov.in/ Census_Data_2001/ census_Data__online / Language/partb.htm]. Lepchas are also settled in Bhutan (Samasti district)---the population strength being 2,000 (2001 Van Driem) and in Nepal (Ilam district)---the population strength being 1,272 (1961 Census) [according to : http://www.ethnologue.com]

∗ The Asiatic Society, Kolkata
The Lepcha language (which is also known as Rong/Rongaring/Rongring) belongs to the Tibeto Burman language sub-family under Tibeto-Chinese language family. Lepcha is placed in the non-pronominalised group of the Himalayan languages under the Tibeto-Burman sub-family.

REDUPLICATION AND EXPRESSIVES

Reduplication is defined as “repetition or copying of a word or a syllable either exactly or partially in order to bring modification in the semantic interpretation or to convey some special meaning. The phenomenon is explained in terms of copying followed by affixation (Dattamajumdar 2001:19) There are some reduplicated structures which represent sounds or senses and thus are expressives of a language. The expressives consist of repetition of a word or of a syllable. These expressives have been termed as Onomatopoeia, sound symbolism, ideophones and imitatives by different scholars at different times as all these represent natural sounds and express senses. But as Abbi (1992:15) proposes, “The best solution would be to treat all these forms by their various names under the term Expressives.”

As observed in Lepcha, reduplicated expressives may belong to the category of full reduplication as well as partial reduplication. Fully reduplicated expressives refer to those structures which are formed by exact doubling of the base form without any phonological alteration in the copied affixed part of the structure. On the other hand partially reduplicated expressives refer to those structures which involve alteration in the phonological shape of the affixed copied part of the reduplicated structure.

Being an important structural phenomenon of the South Asian languages reduplicated expressives play a vital role in the system of communication and so demands a vivid description of its form and function with reference to the semantic interpretation.

The data of the present paper has been collected from field investigation conducted in Kalimpong subdivision of Darjeeling district of West Bengal.

2.1. Expressives (Fully Reduplicated)

Lepcha attests a number of fully reduplicated expressives. These may be imitation of natural sounds or may be expressive of senses. The fully reduplicated expressives are both phonologically and semantically significant in the language.
I. Expressives ---- imitative of natural sounds

1. ʧyore bul bul ʧunɔn. 
   tea-seems imitative boiling
   ‘Tea is boiling with the sound.’

2. iŋasɔŋ brok brok ma tyuk
   child-pl. imitative neg. jump
   ‘The children should not jump with noise.’

3. nam leŋ fuleŋsɔŋ brun brun lɔkam.
   young girl boy-pl. imitative dancing
   ‘The young girls and boys are dancing with the loud sound of drum beat.’

4. hɔ yuk hrak hrak majuk.
   you work imitative neg. to do
   ‘Do not work with (making) rough sounds.’

5. kutʃun unu thaba kram kram hunʃɔ.
   corn to fry to eat imitative to be
   ‘It is crispy to eat fried corn.’

6. hu suk suk thyopam.
   she/he imitative crying
   ‘She/he is sobbing.’
II. Expressives (imitative of Senses)

1. **TOBOK** KIN KIN DØK.
   - stomach expr. of paining
   - gripping pain
   - ‘THE STOMACH IS HAVING GRIPING PAIN.’

2. **tukya ka** nɔm kun kun unnɔn.
   - pan-loc. oil expr. of to be-pr.
   - blowing smoke
   - ‘The oil is smoking in the pan.’

3. **mennambu ambipɔ t** klem klem yumba.
   - ripe mango expr. of seems to be
   - sweet taste
   - ‘The ripe mango is sweet to taste.’

4. **surɔ ktu sa duŋpɔ** kyup kyup dokam.
   - today me-gen. knee expr. of paining
   - acute pain
   - ‘Today my knee is paining acute.’

5. **so zim zim yuβam.**
   - rain expr. of falling
   - drizzling
   - ‘It is drizzling.’

6. **tufɔt ka tʃholi mu nɔŋ sa Ɲvɔ Ɲvɔ matʃ ya?**
   - time –loc. school neg. to go of expr. of why
   - being slow
   - ‘Why are you slow/late, for not going to school?’

The semantic features of the fully reduplicated expressives in Lepcha are
as follows.

Degree of Manifestation
Continuation
Repetition
i. Degree of Manifestation

Mostly the fully reduplicated expressives which are the expressives of senses are found to manifest different qualities at different degrees. Some examples are presented below.

1. **hɯ thyom thyom lomam**
   - **he** expr. of being walking slow
   - ‘He is walking slowly.’

2. **sukmut ḍor ḍor dyam**
   - **wind** expr. of blowing puff
   - ‘The wind is blowing in puffs.’

3. **aŋanre sitet ṃop ṃop yumba**
   - **seat-needs** how expr. of suppose to be softness
   - ‘The seat is supposed to be soft.’

ii. Continuation

Lepcha fully reduplicated expressives which are essentially imitative of some natural sounds of actions often convey the sense of a continuation of a sound. Examples are cited below.

1. **than than mat nu ma lom.**
   - imitative to do by neg. walk sounds made by the heels while walking
   - ‘Donot walk by making sounds of heels (continuously)’.

2. **kआar fo phur phur mat nu lomn2n.**
   - **dove bird** imitative sound to do by fly-ABL.(past) of flapping wings
   - ‘The bird has flown flapping the wings (continuously with the sound)’.
3. so mun mun yubam. rain imitative coming down sound of drizzling rain ‘It is drizzling (continuously with the sound.’

### iii. Repetition

Lepcha fully reduplicated expressives may convey the sense of repeated action. Some examples are given below.

1. myɔnbu ariŋ bella bella yet unknown word expr. of to ask repetition ‘Ask the unknown words repeatedly.’

2. thal thal thom ka mu nun. expr. of town to neg. go again and again ‘Do not go to the town repeatedly.’

3. saarkʌp bruk bruk matɔ tyukkam goat-child expr. of to do jumping repeated up and down ‘The goat-child is (repeatedly) jumping up and down.’

### EXPRESSIVES (PARTIALLY REDUPLICATED)

Partially reduplicated expressives which involve a partial phonological alteration in the copied part affixed to the base element is prevalent in Lepcha. Alteration of a vowel or a consonant in the suffixed copied part have been observed in case of the partially reduplicated structures in Lepcha. Such partially reduplicated expressives are exemplified below.

1. yuk dul dal mʌ mat work expr. of being neg. do jumble ‘Do not jumble up (confuse) while working.'
2. \( f\AA f\AA n \) takly\( n \).
expr. of sky
‘The sky is clear.’

3. \( b\AA k b\AA r\AA k \) so yun\( n \)
expr. of falling rain falling in drops
‘The rain is falling in drops.’

4. tuk\( f\AA l \) n\( y\AA o p n\AA tfu l t\AA f\AA l \) hunbam.
ant by sting from expr. of happening prickling
‘Stinging of the ant is causing prickling sensation.’

5. \( h\AA y\AA p y\AA p m\AA t\AA n\AA m\AA l\AA m. \)
you expr. of to do neg. walk staggering
‘You should not stagger while walking.’

6. \( h\AA n\AA n\AA n\AA l \) hala\( v\AA l\AA a l \) hun\( n\AA n\AA n. \)
you go after house expr. of to be-abl.(past)
emptiness
‘After your departure the house became empty.’

**SEMANTIC INTERPRETATION**

The partially reduplicated expressives are found to be employed in order to convey different degrees of feeling and repeated actions. Thus it is the ‘Degree of Manifestation’ and ‘Repetition’ which covers the semantic interpretation of the partially reduplicated expressives in Lepcha.

**REDUPLICATION IN JUXTAPOSITION**

Additionally a different structure of reduplicated expressive has been noticed in which two fully reduplicated expressives are used together in juxtaposition. An instance can be cited below.
1. surŋsa thupe ka iŋasŋ as wur wur tin tin hunnŋ.

today-gen. occasion on child-pl. expr.of hurry/ to be scurry

‘Children are excited (in hurry/scurry) for today’s occasion/ function.’
REFERENCES


