Word Formation in Uchoi

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ABSTRACT

All languages have words and in all languages some words, at least, have an internal structure, and consist of one or more morphemes[1]. For instance, *book-s*—the word consists of two morphemes i.e. 'book' free morpheme and '-s' as bound morpheme. The word-formation process especially compounding in any language irrespective its language family is very much productive. There are many word-formation processes, among them Compounding is being described in this paper. This paper critically examines the Compounding Process in Uchoi. Uchoi is a TB language majorly spoken in the small north-eastern state Tripura. The tribe is mongoloid by its origin. The number of native speakers of this language is approximately 2447[2]. Compounding is very common word-formation process among the world languages. Compounding is basically of two types—Endocentric Compounds (having head) and Exocentric Compounds (without head). In this paper we are going to examine the Compounding process in Uchoi as well as we have also discussed Reduplication and Echo formation of the language.

1. Introduction

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[1] The Handbook of Linguistics, Chapter—9 Morphology, Andrew Spencer, pp 213—237.
[2] Census of India 2011—Language and Mother Tongues.

Tripura is a small hilly state with lash greenery in the north-eastern part of India. It is a land of different tribes and culture. Ethnically the state has a long and rich heritage. Linguistically, Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman, these two language families are dominant in this state. It is also evident from the state's official language, i.e. Bangla (Indo-Aryan) and Kokborok (Tibeto-Burman). There are also more tribes under TB family with a smaller number of speakers for example, Mogh, Halam, Rupini, Jamatia, Chakma, Reang etc. In case of Uchoi, according to some linguists it comes under Kokborok as a dialect and for some other group it is a language itself with only 2447 number of speakers. Apart from this the speakers of Uchoi believe that their language is slightly different from Kokborok, and they prefer to call them by their language and use it as their surname.

2.   Review of Literature

There is no comprehensive linguistic study on Uchoi. Few works have been done from the socio-economic point of view such as R.H.S Hutchinson's *An Account of the Chittagong Hill Tracts* (1906), S.B.K. Devvarman's *The Tribes of Tripura—A Dissertation* (1971), T.H. Lewin's *Wild Races of North Eastern India* (2007) and *Rupak Debnath's Exploring Highlanders of Tripura and Chittagong Hill Tracts* (2010).

Apart from these works, two more works/ articles have been published on this language, and both the works by the same author, Keisuke Huziwara. Huziwara's *Usoi Tripura and Proto-Boro-Garo* (2009) discussed the language from the phonological perspective and a comparative study of Uchoi phonology with Boro-Garo. In his second book i.e. *Usoi Tripura Basic Vocabulary* (2010), he gave basic list of vocabulary of Uchoi. Huziwara's *Notes on Usoi Tripura Phonetics and Phonology* (2012) examines the different aspects of Uchoi Phonetics and Phonology and also describes the Uchoi as a dialect of Kokborok spoken in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). The paper also discussed the consonant and vowel contrasts and analyze the syllable structure as well as the tone of Uchoi language.

3.   Compounding

Words are the building blocks in a language. In Morphology we study the formation and nature of words. Words are consisting of morphemes which is again the smallest meaningful unit in a grammatical description. Morphemes can be divided into two types—Free morphemes (that can stand alone) and bound morphemes (that needs free morphemes for its expression). Every language irrespective of its family must have a specific word-formation rules, where new words form from the old ones. Among all the word-formation processes, compounding is very much common and productive in majority of the

world languages. According to Rochelle Lieber (2015:43), compounds are words that are composed of two (or more) bases, roots, or stems. Basically, Compounding is a word-formation process where two or more words are joined together to form a new one.

Many linguists try to categorize different types of Compounding. For instance, Lieber (2015) classifies Compounding into three types—Attributive (non-head is acts as a modifier of the head), Coordinative (the first element of the compound does not modify the second; instead, the two have equal weight), Subordinative (one element is interpreted as the argument of the other, usually as its object). In a Compound head plays a crucial role. Head is the grammatical unit which define the word-class of that compound word. For example, In English, blackboard is a compound word having two free morphemes i.e. black (Adj) and board (N), as English follow the right headedness the word blackboard (N) is Noun. According to Fromkin (2009:148), Compounding is a common and frequent process for enlarging the vocabulary of all languages.

Languages differ in the mechanisms they provide for combining existing words into new, compound words[3]. A term used widely in descriptive linguistic studies to refer to a linguistic unit which is composed of elements that function independently in other circumstances (David Crystal, 2000:78). Spencer (1991:453) divided Compounds as Synthetic (if it contains morphemes corresponding to both a verb and a VP-internal argument of the verb, VP [wash(es) dish (es)] and Non-synthetic or Root-based compounds [could be used as an independent word]. In the case of Bare-stem compounds, they often appear with a hyphen, though it is not ruling governing, in the case of Uchoi language hardly any hyphen between the roots is used. So, the examples of Compounding are listed below—

Noun + Noun

    i.   /kuŋ/ + /blã/

          nose + hole   /kuŋblã/   'Nostril'

    ii.   /məšu/ + /khe/

          cow + excreta   /məšukhe/   'cow dung'

Noun + Verb

    iii.   /ša/ + /ka/

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[3] Snyder, William (in press) Chapter 6, Compound Word-Formation. In Jeffrey Lidz, William Snyder, and Joseph Pater (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Developmental Linguistics.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

	sun + rise	/šaka/	'east'

iv. /ho/ + /khu/

	fire + scatter	/hokhu/	'smoke'

Verb + Verb

v. /wa/ + /thaʔ/

	bite + kill	/wathaʔ/	'bite to death'

vi. /touʔ/ + /thaʔ/

	hit + kill	/touʔthaʔ/	'hit to death'

Noun + Adjective

vii. /mai/ + /člã/

	rice + small	/maičlã/	'paddy'

viii. /nouʔba/ + /juŋ/

	air + large	/nouʔbajuŋ/	'storm'

Verb + Adjective

ix. /thuŋ/ + /kuruŋ/

	play + capable	/thuŋkuruŋ/	'sportsman'

x. /ča/ + /thau/

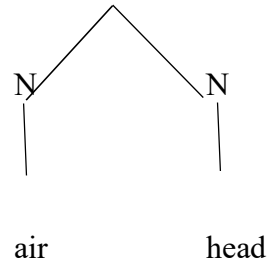|	eat + preferable	/čathau/	'eat happily'

Semantically Compounds have two types i.e. Endocentric Compounds (having a head) and Exocentric Compounds (without having a head). While describing the structure of Compounds, Lieber (2015:44) mentioned that Compounding is a recursive process which means that a compound of two can be

compounded with other bases and that compound again compounding with another base and thus form a complex structure. But analyzing the data of Uchoi language, it doesn't show the recursiveness of compounding, it may be possible but no data showing the formation.
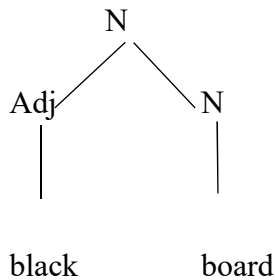
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              N                                           N
            /   \                                       /   \
         Adj     N                                    N       N
          |      |                                    |       |

        black   board                                air     head

      'Blackboard' (N) Endocentric                'airhead' (N) Endocentric
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3.1 Endocentric Compound

In an Endocentric Compound, one element works as the head of the compound and the other part works as the modifier or attributing a property to the head. This Endocentric Compound again classified into two types based on the position of the head—*right headed* and *left headed*.

In the right headed compounds, the second or the right-hand element works as the head whereas the first or the left-handed element works as attribute, and they are found mostly in nominal bases. In Uchoi the constitute elements of right headed compounds are of the following types—

Possessive Relation—where two nouns may be related with each other by the possessive suffix /-in/ to the left or the first bases.

xi. /aboʔ-ni/ + /toi/

breast-GEN water   /aboʔnitoi/   'milk'

xii. /mai-ni/ + /nouʔ/

rice-GEN house   /maininouʔ/   'granary'

xiii. /məkoʔ-ni/ + /kəča/

eye-GEN middle   /məkoʔkəča/   'center of eye'

Verbal Relation—where two constituent elements of right headed compound nouns which may be related with each other in a verbal relation.

xiv.   /moi-soŋ/ + /tuʔ/

curry-ACC pot   /moisoŋtuʔ/   'curry pot'

xv.   /šuʔ-mo/ + /raŋ/

sew-NMLZ + rupee   /šuʔmoraŋ/   'stiching charge'

Extended Compounds—where some right headed extended compounds having more than two roots.

xvi.   /məthai-pha-mo/ + /nouʔ/

fruit-sell-NMLZ + house   /məthaiphamonouʔ/   'fruit stall'

xvii.   /ri-pha-mo/ + /nouʔ/

cloth-sell-NMLZ + house   /riphamonouʔ/   'cloth shop'

In Uchoi, the left headed compounds are those, in which the first constituent element is the head and majority of cases it is a nominal compound, i.e. the head word is a Noun. Left-headed compounds are listed below—

xviii.   /mai/ + /člã/

rice + small   /maičlã/   'paddy'

xix.   /raŋ/ + /čaʔ/   /raŋčaʔ/   'gold'

3.2 Exocentric Compound

An Exocentric Compound can be defined as having no head, i.e. a compound without any definable head. It is needed to be mentioned that Uchoi largely adopt Endocentric Compounds and in the case of

Exocentric, it is rarely found. While discussing the Exocentric Compounds in Uchoi, it consists of a noun with a verbal root. Here are some examples of Exocentric Compounds—

    xx.   /ša/ + /ka/

            sun + rise   /šaka/   'east'

    xxi.   /ša/ + /thaŋ/

            sun + go   /šathaŋ/   'west'

3.3 Co-ordinate Compound

In coordinative compounds, the first element of the compound does not modify the second; instead, the two have equal weight (Lieber 2015: 47). In co-ordinate compounds, both the elements, usually nouns function jointly as head. In the underlying structure of co-ordinate compounds, the two elements are related or joined together through the connective or conjunction /bai/ 'and' in Uchoi. For examples—

    xxii.   /seŋ bai ko/
               'sword and spear'   /seŋ ko/   'weapon'

    xxiii.   /a-ma bai a-pa/
               PRO PRE-mother and PRO PRE father   /ama-apa/   'my parents'

4. Reduplication

Reduplication is a morphological process in which all or part of the base is repeated (Lieber 2015:80). It can be divided into two types i.e. full reduplication, a process in which an entire base is repeated; full reduplication is used to form what's called an attenuative, which is a form meaning 'sort of' or 'a little bit' (Lieber 2015: 81). On the otherhand, in a partial reduplication the whole part is not repeated but a part of the base is repeated.

In other words, reduplication is the doubling of some part of a morphological constituent (root, stem, word) for some morphological purpose. Total reduplication reduplicates the entire constituent, and

partial reduplication duplicates some phonologically characterizable subpart. Reduplication has long been a topic of intense interest for morphological and phonological theory alike. From the morphological perspective, reduplication poses a challenge for item-based theories or morphology because of its process-like phonological character (Anderson 1992:59).

4.1. Complete Reduplication

In a complete reduplication the whole part of the word is repeated to form the construction. So, here are the few examples of complete reduplication in Uchoi—

xxiv.   /braŋ   nouʔ   nouʔ   thaŋ-hã/
         3 PL   house   house   go-PST
         They went each and every house.

xxv.   /bo   rəča-doi   rəča-doi   məša-hã/
        3SG   sing-as   sing-as   dance-PST
        S/he danced as was singing

xxvi.   /abo   məphaŋ-wo   kəto   kəto   thaiču   toŋ-oi/
         DEM   tree-LOC   big   big   mango   EXIS-PRES
         There are big-sized mangoes on that tree.

xxvii.   /dau   dau   phai-di/
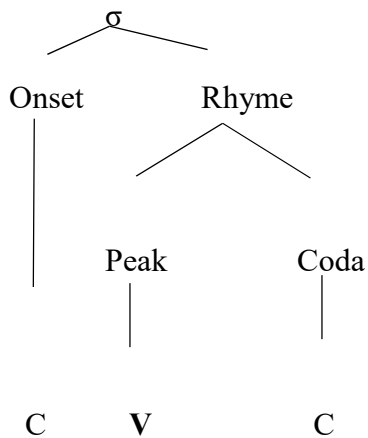   quickly   quickly   come-IMP
          Come quickly

xxviii.   /nouʔ-wo   šo   šo   thaŋ-nai/
           House-LOC   who   who   go-FUT
   Who will go home?

4.2. Partial Reduplication

In partial reduplication a part of the constituent is repeated to form the new construction. Partial Reduplication can be of two types—ablaut or vocalic change [CVC=CVC] (where the vowel sound changes in the reduplicated words) and rhyme-motivated (where the initial consonant sound changes in the reduplicated word). For instance—

ABLAUT/Vocalic Change   Rhyme-motivated
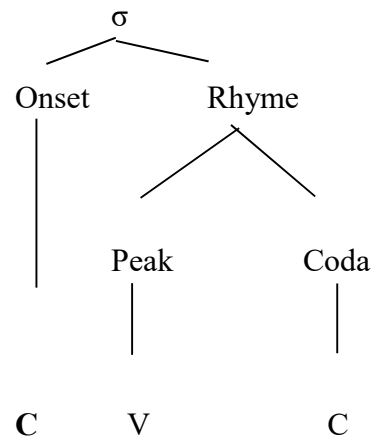
In ablaut kit changes to kat to form kit-kat, where the vowel sound changes, but in case of rhyme-motivated, holy-moly, only the onset consonant is changed.

Examples of partial reduplication from Uchoi language is given below—

xxix.   /doʔpri doʔpra/   'hurry curry'
xxx.   /sarka sarki/   'scatter'

4.3. Expressive

A term sometimes used in semantics as part of a classification of types of meaning. The expressive meaning of an expression refers both to its emotional content and to any identity it might have in terms of the personality or individual creativity of the user (Crystal 2000:144). It is quite different from descriptive and social meaning. Abbi (2018) considers that all expressives as instances of morphological reduplication as opposed to the lexical reduplication where the units before iteration are meaningful words of the language concerned. Expressives behave and function just like the regular words in a language especially in the Indian languages. Though the grammatical function may vary from one

language family to another, in the case of Tibeto-Burman languages 'it can be prefixed by a particle indicating manner[4]'.

xxxi.	/šawl	šawl/	'flowing of river'	
xxxii.	/gruŋ	gruŋ/	'breaking of tree'	Natural Phenomenon
xxxiii.	/črau	črau/	'sound of clapping'	
xxxiv.	/uŋ	uŋ/	'crying of a baby'	Sound made by Human
xxxv.	/tiŋ	tiŋ/	'ringing of bell'	
xxxvi.	/kreʔ	kreʔ/	'cracking of bamboo'	Inanimate Objects

4.4. Echo Formation

An echo word can be defined as a partially repeated form of the base word—partially in the sense that either the initial phoneme or the syllable of the base is replaced by another phoneme or another syllable (Abbi, 1990). In an echo-formation, the base word is followed by an echo word. Though, the echo-word itself has no existence and meaning on its own in the concerned language. It only gets its meaning if it is attached to the base form. The echo word gets the meaning of "et cetera", things similar to or associated with that after its addition to the base word (Baishya, 2003). Echo formation, either in the initial phoneme (C or V) or the or the syllable of the base word, is very common and productive (Bhaskararao, 1997). So, that it is also a very productive phenomenon in Uchai language also. Uchai has /t/ as replacer sound of an echo word. For instances—

xxxvii.	/a	ta/	'fish and etc.'
xxxviii.	/məšu	təšu/	'cow and etc.'

5. Conclusion

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[4] Abbi, A. 2018. "Echo-formations and Expressives in South Asian Languages" in Aina Urdze (ed.), *Non-Prototypical Reduplication*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton. 1—34.

The above discussion on word-formation process in Uchoi reveals that, the language has compounding as a word-formation process. Under compounding we have discussed the endocentric and exocentric compound. And if exocentric compounding is concerned, it is rare in Uchoi. Endocentric compound again distinguishes into two types—right headed and left headed, and among them the right headed compounds are more common. The endocentric compounds again analyzed on the basis of possessive relation, verbal relation and extended compounds, where the latter is constructed with the help of NMLZ The paper also highlights on Co-ordinate compounding, where the Uchoi language has /bai/ as a coordinator. In Reduplication, the language has both the complete/total and partial reduplication. The paper also discusses the formation of echo-words as well as the expressive construction in the language; under expressives we give examples from natural phenomenon, sound made by human and sounds by inanimate objects. So, here in this paper we have discussed Compounding and Reduplication as word-formation process in Uchoi language.

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