



Exploring the infixation in the Punjabi language: Insights into derivational and inflectional morphology

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ABSTRACT

This research article aims at exploring the formational, pragmatic, phonological and semantic characteristics of Punjabi infixes within the theory of expressive morphology as framework. The article proposes that Punjabi words derived through infixes show inter-speaker variation with their properties of pragmatic effect and phonological as well as semantic change. The study deals with special syntax of word formation process along with inter-speaker variations. Different patterns of Punjabi infixes along with their usage in the process of infixation have been explored in this research paper. The article presents answer to claim of scarcity of infixation in South Asian language in general and Punjabi in particular. This study investigates the richness of Punjabi infixation as one of its most common word formation process. Data has been collected from Punjabi dictionary and Punjabi vernacular used in day to day communication by its speakers besides some data from performing arts such as Punjabi songs, theater and cinema. Descriptive analysis of infixes has been conducted in this article to reach the findings.

Keywords: Infixes patterns, expressive morphology, Punjabi, infixation

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INTRODUCTION

Infixation is a word formation process in morphology in which new morphemes are made by inserting morphemes inside morphemes for the formation of new morphemes or lexemes. It is different from other processes for being flexible and less vulnerable to rules. It has many explicit and unique characteristics which are different from other word formation processes. However, it has many irregular characteristics as well. According to Brdar (2015) infixation does not have the main purpose of word formation but of stylistic manner. According to him it has an important purpose of “expressive manner”, as expressing offensiveness, humor, vulgarity habits of people, the association with any group of people, language and culture. Formational and functional properties of many languages have been studied around the world. Punjabi is also one of the richest language which exhibits infixation as one of its most common word formation process. In English, use of infixes is of both kinds i.e. free morphemes and bound morphemes. ‘ma’ in ‘edumacation’ is bound morpheme while bloody in ‘imbloodypossible’ is a free morpheme (McCarthy, 1982).

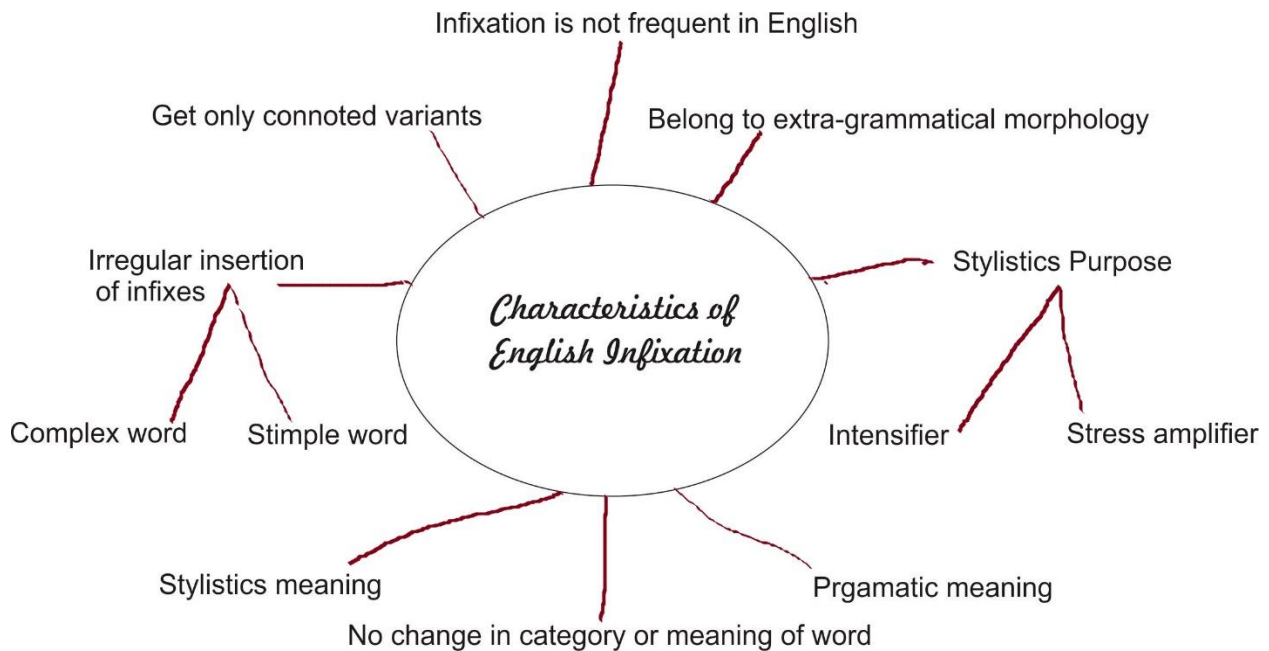


Figure 1. Infixation in English

As far as Punjabi is concerned all the infixes patterns pertaining to this particular research activity are bound morphemes, changing the grammatical category and meanings of the base. Infixes in Punjabi are not much different to Indo-Aryan languages. Phonological properties of infixes is a well-researched area but this research paper focuses on the morphological properties of infixation in Punjabi. Infixation in Punjabi can be presented by following diagram:

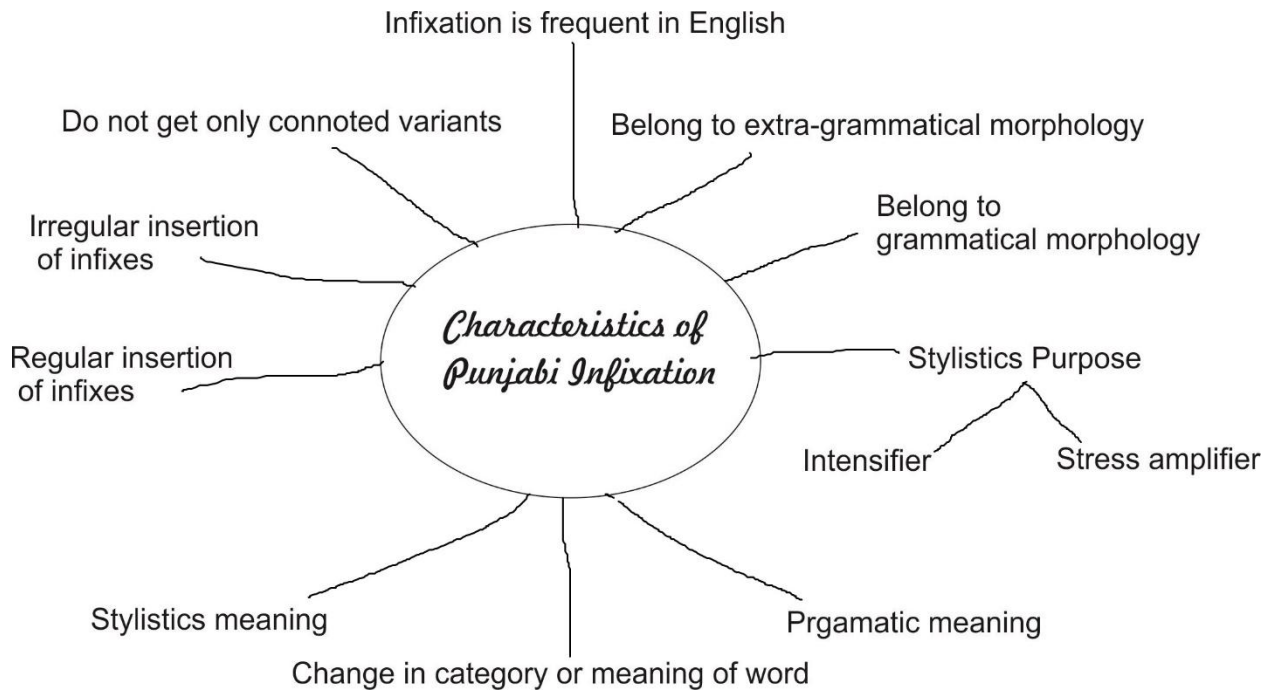


Figure 2. Infixation in Punjabi

Instead of very important status it enjoys, very less work has been done on Punjabi. Above exhibited diagram shows the importance of infixation as word formation process in Punjabi. For the present research activity, different patterns of Punjabi have been selected and categorized according to changes they undergo during infixation. It is a descriptive study. Data has been sorted out from Panjabi dictionary and Punjabi vernacular along with Punjabi music, cinema and theater. Punjabi is most widely spoken regional language in Pakistan. It has different dialects. Almost 45% people in Pakistan speak Punjabi. Punjabi literature is very rich because of diversity it carries. Punjabi music, cinema and theater is most widely attended genres in country. But instead of all these qualities very less work has been done in Punjabi. Present research is an effort to fill this huge gap.

Objectives of the study

Following are the objectives of the study:

To explore the common patterns of infixes in Punjabi.

To identify the kinds of changes occurring in Punjabi lexical items by infixation.

Research questions

1. What are the common patterns of infixes in Punjabi?
2. What kind of changes occur in Punjabi lexical items by the process of infixation?

Significance of the study

The study is significant because it provides an insight into the process of word formation through infixation in Punjabi. It not only depicts the richness of Punjabi but also poses a challenge to English language where infixation is considered a word formation process with no change in word's semantics and categories. It also challenges the claim of Yu (2007) about the scarcity of infixation in south Asian languages.

Theoretical framework

The theory of expressive morphology has been selected to serve as theoretical framework for the present study. It was presented by Zwicky and Pullum (1987). This is qualitative research and data has been collected and described manually. Selection of the theory of Expressive morphology can be justified by the following set of diagrams constructed by the researcher herself.

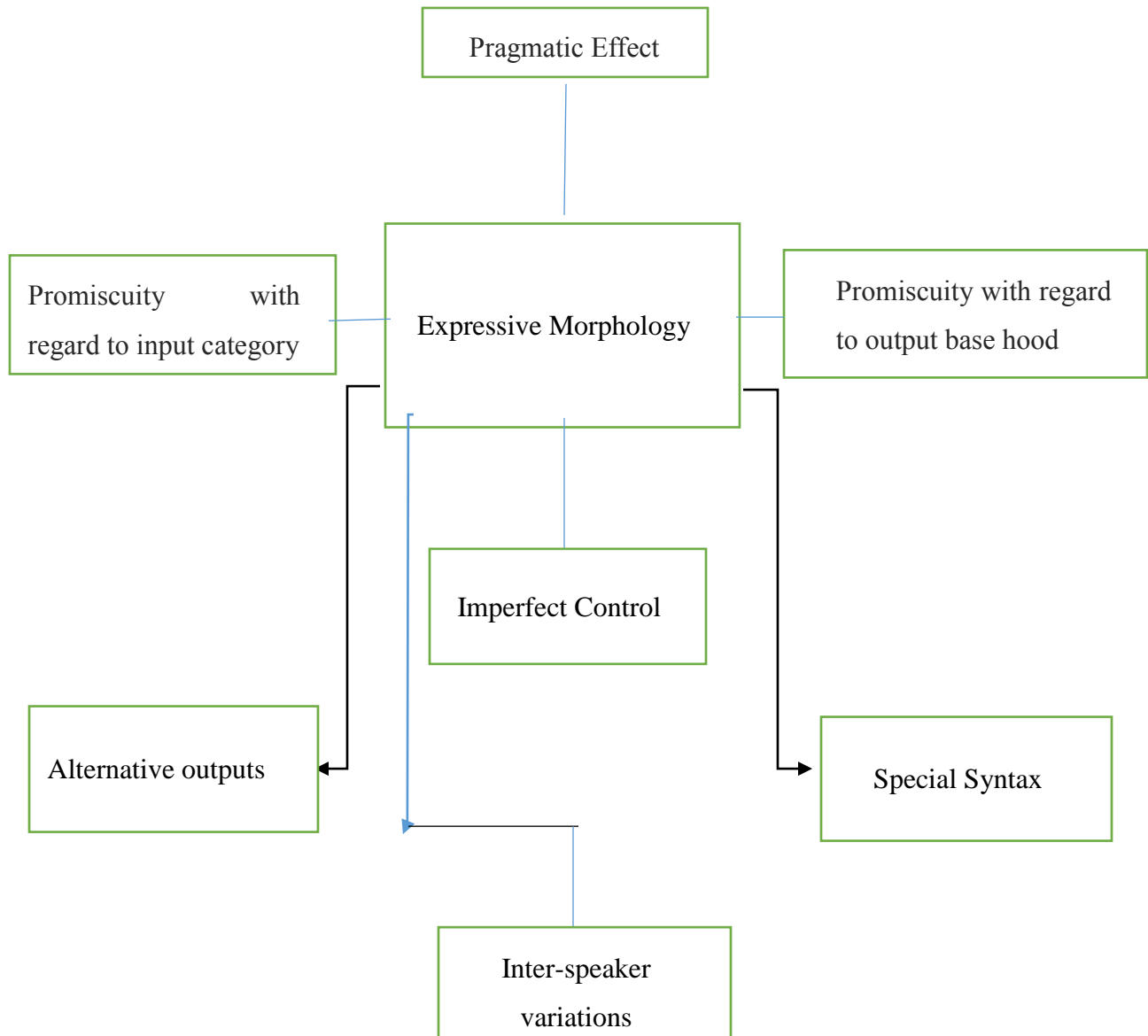


Figure 3. Expressive morphology and infixation

This diagram presents the postulates of expressive morphology. According to the theory of expressive morphology, infixation has pragmatic and stylistic features i.e. feature which cause humor, obscenity and vulgarity etc. Infixation in English is irregular in case of input and output of morphemes. Special syntax is produced which isn't necessarily be meaningful. Different speakers have different control on the production of lexicon using infixes. Which can be called as imperfect control. Infixes in English can be inserted with any category i.e. noun, adjective or verbs and alternative results are produced as a result. There also exists interspeaker variation in the case of infixation in English. Insertion of infix can be different by different speaker producing variable speech items of one word. A special syntax is produced by different infixes as *shm* duplication in English infixation. In English language all the words produced by infixation are non-sensical and don't make a part of proper reptoir. As far as the infixation is concerned, it is not much researched word formation process in the world, that is why postulates of the theory have been explained by referring to English only. Let us now critically look at the features of expressive morphology which coincide with the infixation process in Punjabi. It is presented in the following diagram:

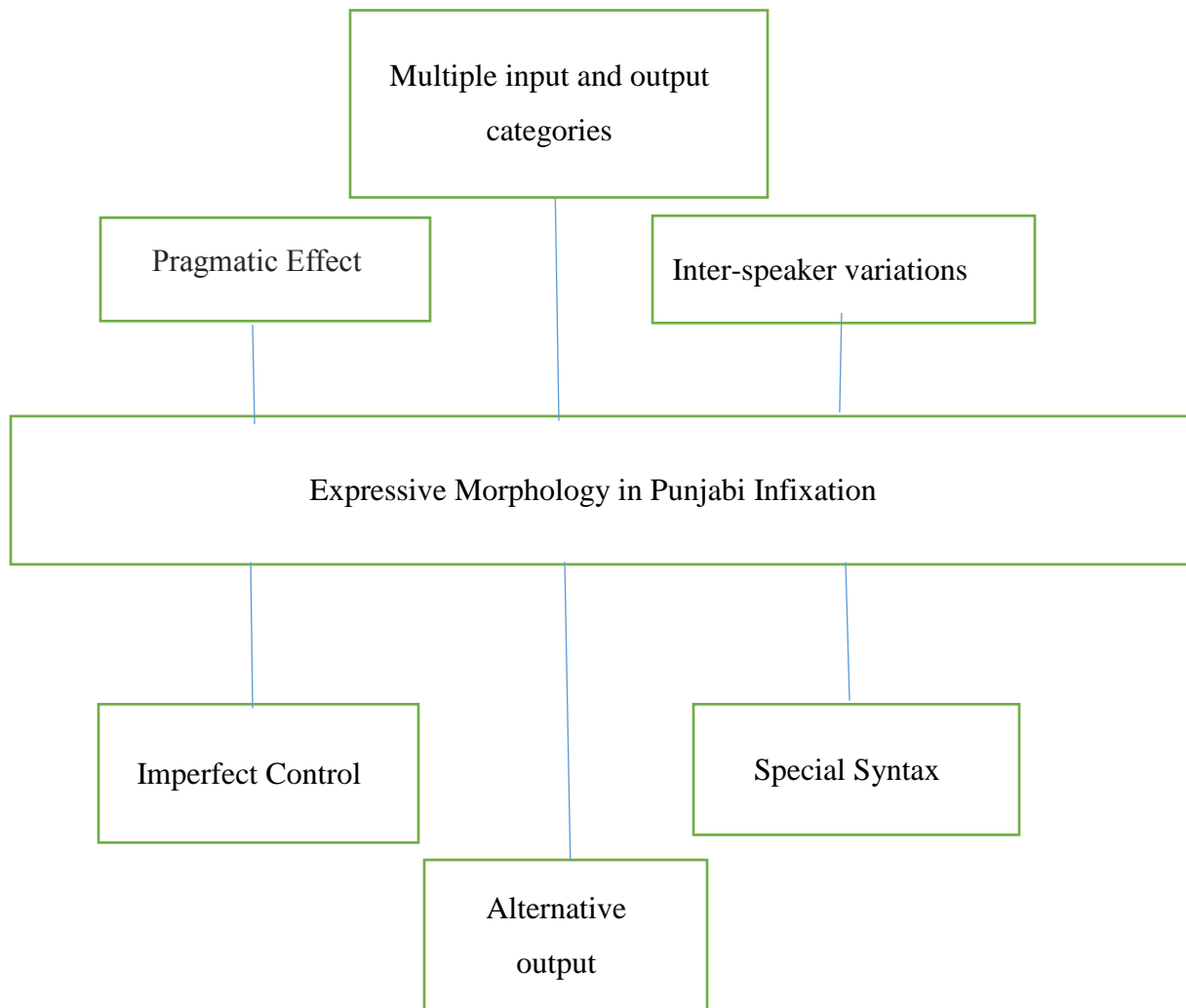


Figure 4. Expressive morphology and infixation in Punjabi

Punjabi is spoken all over the world almost. It is one of the richest and vibrant languages in the world. Infixation as word formation processes is not much popular in English language but it is of greater value in Punjabi. It is quite apparent from the diagram that most of the postulates of expressive morphology are in accordance with infixation in Punjabi. One paramount difference of infixation in Punjabi than English is that words produced by it are not non-sensical, meanings and word categories are also changed along with special syntax. So words made by infixation make a large part of Punjabi lexicon.

Review of Literature

When analysis of morphological structure of the words is carried out, infixes are found to be the fragments implanted inside a word which contain both stem and root. All the languages in the world have distinctions regarding word formation through infixation pertaining to their distinct properties. Infixation is infrequent in English language. It is not considered as an important word formation process in English. In this connection Mattiello (2013) says “Furthermore, while some Indo-European and Austronesian languages like Greek and Atayal rely on infixation to signify important grammatical functions, English has infixes only within extra-grammatical morphology”. Therefore, it can be said that infixation is mostly used for expressive purposes. Infixation is considered to be the part of expressive morphology. Excluding extra-grammatical feature of infixation, Baldi (2000) has given four reasons to include infixation in expressive morphology. “1) it is used in a specific register, 2) the (obscene) meaning of the infix carries a pragmatic effect, 3) it applies to a wide range of input categories, and 4) it is typologically marginal in English” (Mattiello:2013 192).

Criteria and properties of infixes are different in Punjabi. Unlike English, infixes in Punjabi cause the change of grammatical category when implanted inside the root as *جموری* is change into *جمورچی* and category changes from noun to adjective. English infixes are called as ‘emotive intensifiers’ as they express positive and negative emotions and their intensity as *imbloody* possible. That is why Zwicky and Pullum (1987) have associated English infixes particular expletives with expressive morphology. Infixes in Punjabi are also used to give the emotive effect and increase the intensity of situation or to give casual effect as *سُتیا سُتیا* in Punjabi. Fábregas (2006) while working on infixation in Spanish says that “when the base word is a verb that expresses a momentary (or punctual) event, the presence of the infix usually means that the event is repeated and, sometimes, also loosely performed. For example, *tirar*, ‘to shoot’, is a momentary action, and *tir-ot-ear*, ‘to shoot repeatedly’, expresses the same action, but repeated over some time.”

In addition to above stated characteristics of Punjabi infixation, it also has ‘emotive intensifiers’ but important point to note here is that these infixes change the grammatical category along with meanings. However, if expletive infixes in English bring no change in grammatical category they should be considered to be the part of inflectional morphology. In Tagalog Philippines only inflectional changes are caused by inflectional morphemes e.g. ‘*bili*’ (buy) and ‘*bumili*’ (bought). It is also called as irregular word formation process. On the other hand, according to Plag (2003) when expletive morphemes become the part of regular word formation process, they convey the new meaning, thus included in derivational morphology. Therefore, keeping in view the infixation in Punjabi that leads to change in meaning and grammatical category to a greater extent, derivation of new words in Punjabi can be considered to be the part of Expressive Morphology as a regular word formation process. as *پیانا* is changed into *پیاننا* with the change in category from verb to noun.

In Punjabi infixation like other word formation processes, change in the categories and semantics of the words bring up new words at some time, but on other times change in the meaning of the base occurs with or without the change in category. The assertion that insertion of infix does not bring any change in meaning is wrong. As English Homeric infix 'ma' when inserted inside 'education' it becomes 'edumacation' which carries a sarcastic tone and there is a change in conception of meaning. It becomes negative from positive. Yu (2007) has claimed that Homeric infixes are expressive and give a meaning of distastefulness.

Expressive quality of infixes increases the intensity of expressions which leads to the new meaning without change in syntactic category. Such features are called as extra-grammatical features. They occur in Punjabi along with English as **دبنا** is changed into **دبانا** and category of the verb remains the same. As Dressler and Merlini Barbaresi (1994) say expletive infixes are the true example of extra-grammatical category in English. But important thing here is that when the infixes claimed as having extra grammatical features change the syntactic category, they become productive in Punjabi and produce new words. Example is quoted above.

Sometimes same infix is implanted inside a word and the multiple syntactic categories are produced which cause irregularities. As insertion of the infix 'bloody' in noun, pronoun, adverb, etc. in English. This process is also common in Punjabi. the concept of alternative and multiple input categories is also common as a single infix /ن/ is inserted into words to form noun, verb, adjective etc. Here, it is not only a so called insertion but also derivation which shows alternative outputs. As **کھوٹا** is changed into **کھوٹنا** and grammatical category changes from noun to verb. Therefore, it can be said that insertion of infixes inside a morpheme varies from person to person. Such inter-speaker variations are also present in Punjabi but not as frequent as in English. Yu (2003) claims that "Northern/central Europe, South America and Northern/Central/South Asia however, are regions which note a scarcity of infixation in their language usage, probably due to the fact that "northern Europe and Northern and Central Asia region is populated predominately by the so called Altaic languages, which are characteristically agglutinative with rather transparent morphology". Above stated postulates of infixation in Punjabi is an answer to this claim as Punjabi in Pakistan falls under the south Asian languages.

Data Analysis

As discussed earlier data for this specific research activity has been taken from Punjabi dictionary and day to day communications. It also includes some popular infixes patterns in Punjabi music, cinema and theater. After sorting out the data from mentioned sources it has been organized according to the patterns. They are transcribed phonologically and their category variation are mentioned. Data is presented in tables separately for each pattern and descriptive analysis is given with each table. Only two examples of category and class change in each pattern are mentioned in the table, rest of the data is attached in appendix. They are not all the patterns in Punjabi. But keeping in view the limitation of the study only few of the patterns have been mentioned here.

Patterns of Infixes

1. /ا/ ا

S.NO	Punjabi	Transcription	Category
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1.	دبنا دبانا	/d əbɽ̃ɑ/ /dəbɑɽ̃ɑ/	Verb(Infinitive) Verb (Infinitive)
2.	گھنڈنا گھنڈانا	/gəndhɽ̃ɑ/ /gəndhɑɽ̃ɑ/	Verb(Infinitive) Verb (Causative)

Infix /ɑ/ is one of the most frequently used infix in Punjabi. It brings change in the meaning of the words irrespective of the change in category. Example 1 shows the difference in the performance of an action. /d əbɽ̃ɑ/ expresses the state of being in pressure or being afraid of someone. It is a state and an action at personal level. Whereas /d əbɑɽ̃ɑ/ is an action that is done to effect someone else. It is also done to make others afraid and terrified. Both the words are verbs and infixation does not change the category of the word. In example 2 verb infinitive changes into verb causative. /gəndhɽ̃ɑ/ is a verb, when someone mends or repairs something himself. While the word /gəndhɑɽ̃ɑ/ is also a verb, an action done by someone else. Category changes from infinitive to causative. In the lieu of expressive morphology with regard to Punjabi, infixation has produced new meaningful words with different category, whereas in English it doesn't happen so. Figure 1 & 2 also expresses the difference in infixation between English and Punjabi.

2. /b/ ب

S.NO	Punjabi	Transcription	Category
1	شورا شوريا	/ʃorra/ /ʃorrba/	Noun Noun
2.	تومڑ تومبڑ	/tuməɽ̃/ /tumbəɽ̃/	Noun Noun

Infix /b/ is another important infix in Punjabi. In the above cited examples there is no difference in category of the word before and after infix insertion. But meaning is changed. This is different to infixation in English where this process is considered to be making no difference in meaning and category. In example 1, /ʃorra/ means extract of flowers or fruits, it also means gravy, soup or broth in some dialects in Punjabi. While /ʃorrba/ means gravy, broth or soup. In the context of expressive morphology, this word shows a little inter-speaker variation because of the difference in dialects. In example 2, /t uməɽ̃/ denotes a negative connotation. It is taken as a small rotten hollow pumpkin which is considered as bad while the word /t umbəɽ̃/ is considered as a hollow musical instrument which is often called as *tambura* in Urdu. It is similar to saxophone, gramophone or trumpet. Base meanings are similar in both words with dialectical differences. Because of the meanings they can be used in the same dialect as well according to degree of perception and usage.

3. /ʃ/ ج

S.NO	Punjabi	Transcription	Category
1.	بچکنا	/hiʃkna/	Verb(Infinitive)
	بچکچنا	/hiʃkʃna/	Verb (Infinitive)
2.	جموری	/dʒəmɔri/	Noun
	جمورچی	/dʒəmɔɾʃi/	Adjective

Infix /ʃ/ effects both meanings and category. In example 1 both words /hiʃkna/ and /hiʃkʃna/ are infinitive verbs. But meanings of the base are different. /hiʃkna/ means the feelings of being shy or an attitude or a state of shyness which causes stepping back from doing something whereas /hiʃkʃna/ demonstrate a feeling of being shy and reluctance which stops from doing something awkward. Meanings of both the words convey the same meaning, there exists only dialectical difference in both constructions. If it is not considered as something fitting into dialectical difference, then it can be called as an extra-grammatical feature which expands the meaning of the base. Being an extra grammatical feature, it is another aspect of expressive morphology which asserts that process of infixation sometimes gives extra-grammatical categories of the words. In example 2 category of the word has been changed from noun to adjective. Category and meaning change through the process of infixation is not present in English but it is frequently observed in Punjabi which makes it a more vibrant and rich language.

4. /ɽ/ ڈ

S.NO	Punjabi	Transcription	Category
1.	پیکا	/peika/	Noun
	پیکڑا	/peikɽa/	Noun
2.	دندو	/dɒndu/	Adjective(address term)
	دندڑو	/dɒndɽu/	Adjective

Infix /ɽ/ presents change in the meaning but not the class in both above mentioned examples. In example 1 the word /peika/ is a noun which means a married woman's father's home. Whereas /peikɽa/ is also a noun referring to married woman's family including siblings and parents in her father's house. Both the words exhibit simple derivation. In case of example 2 both the words are adjectives expressing the sameness of meaning. /dɒndu/ is used as an address term for the one who has different teeth which can be small, big or some other difference. Whereas, /dɒndɽu/ as an adjective carries connotation which can be positive or negative depending upon the relationship of the speaker with the person. It is a name given to a person because of his different teeth, can be called with love or hatred. It has different pragmatic effect which in accordance with expressive morphology. Pragmatic and stylistic effects is one of the chief element of expressive morphology which is quite evident in infixation in Punjabi.

5. /l/ ل

S. NO	Punjabi	Transcription	Category
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1.	دندو	/dʌndu/	Adjective(address term) Adjective
	دندلو	/dʌndlu/	
2.	پيانا	/pəjaɾ˜a/	Verb (Infinitive)
	پيالنا	/pəjalɾ˜a/	Noun

Infix /l/ is causing word formation by changing the category, a derivational change. In above mentioned cases in example 1 /dʌndu/ is an adjective and is used as an address term, someone who has unusual or different teeth than normal people. whereas, /dʌndlu/ is a title given to someone with different teeth. These are connotational meanings which could be positive or negative. In example 2 the word /pəjaɾ˜a/ is verb (infinitive) which refers to the act of making someone drink something liquid, while /pəjalɾ˜a/ is a noun which means a pot. Made of mud usually. It could be a cup or glass which serves the drinking purposes.

6. (ɾ˜), /n/ ن

S.NO	Punjabi	Transcription	Category
1.	ميچا	/meɟa/	Noun
	ميچنا	/meɟɾ˜a/	Verb (Infinitive)
2.	گھوٹا	/ghota/	Noun (Skill)
	گھوٹنا	/ghotɾ˜a/	Noun + verb(Infinitive)

/ɾ˜/ in Punjabi is one of the most productive infixes, which not only brings derivational and semantic change but category of the word is changed as well. In example 1 /meɟa/ is a noun that means size of anything. By inserting infix /ɾ˜/ with the base it changes into /meɟɾ˜a/, which is a verb and refers to action of taking size of something. So here the infix /ɾ˜/ has changed the category along with meaning. While in example 2 /ghota/ is a noun, it is a kitchen instrument used for grinding purposes. By inserting the infix /ɾ˜/ into the base of the word, its class has been changed. /ghotɾ˜a/ is a noun and a verb at the same time. It is the action of grinding anything and in day to day communication this verb is also used as a nickname used for a male who is short heighted, it usually carries negative connotation when used as noun. Therefore, we can say that infix /ɾ˜/ is dynamic and gives alternative outputs. Which is a very important feature of expressive morphology.

(i, e) /j/ ی

S.NO	Punjabi	Transcription	Category
1.	شودا	/ʃoda/	Adjective Adjective(Address term)
	شوديا	/ʃodeja/	
2.	کتا	/kota/	Noun (Masculine)
	کتيا	/kotija/	Noun (Feminine)

New words are derived by inserting infix /j/. It uses /i, e/ as phonological markers to derive new words. In example 1 /ʃoda/ is an attribute of any one. It is used as an adjective to explain the simple

nature and attitude of any person. Whereas by inserting infix /j/ it changes into /sod eja/ which is also used as an adjective and is used as an address term. It can have positive or negative connotation as it could mean a person having simple nature or vice versa where it could be used for different pragmatic effect. It also displays inter-speaker variations. Pragmatic effects, stylistic variations and inter-speaker variation in this single address term express the productivity of this infix /j/ and displays the richness of Punjabi in which infixation is a very productive process of word formation.

There are some very common words which are constructed by infixes and regularly used in Punjabi music and vernacular. Without these words sense of the implied and intended meanings in the song is incomplete. These construction of words by infixes puts a challenge to the claim of Yu (2003) who said that there is scarcity of infixes in south Asian languages, as stated above. Infixes are not only frequent in Punjabi but contribute significantly in the process of Punjabi word formation process. Some of these most popular infixes are listed in the following table:

Words made by infixation in Punjabi music and cinema

ranjha	رانجھا	رانجھنا	/ranjɲa/	beloved
dhola	ڈھولا	ڈھولنا	/dʰolɲa/	beloved
sajna	سجنا	سجنا	/sʌjɲə/	beloved
sohna	سوہنا	سوہنیا	/sʊɲəjja/	beautiful
Heera	بیرا	بیریا	/hi:ɾja:/	V beautiful
Shahzada	شہزادہ	شہزادیا	/ʃæɦzɑ:ɖəjja:/	Prince

Words made by Infixation in Punjabi, used in daily communication

Abba	ابا	ابیا	/əbijja/	father
Chacha	چاچا	چاچیا	/ʃɑ:tʃijja:/	Paternal uncle
mama	ماما	مامیا	/mɑ:mijja:/	Maternal uncle
Munda	منڈا	منڈیا	/mʊɲɖijja:/	boy
Rorha	روڑا	روڑنا	/rʊrɦɲɑ:/	spilt
Parha	پڑھا	پڑھیا	/pərijja:/	read
Likha	لکھا	لکھیا	/likɦijja/	written
Larha	لڑا	لڑیا	/lərijja:/	fought
Bola	بولا	بولیا	/bolijja:/	spoken
Labba	لبا	لبیا	/ləbijja:/	found
Gavacha	گواچا	گواچیا	/gəvɑ:tʃijja	lost
Sutta	سُتا	سُتیا	/sʊtjja:/	slept
Jaga	جاگا	جاگیا	/jɑ:ɡijja:/	awake
Russa	رُسا	رُسیا	/rʊsijja:/	angry
Dora	ڈورا	ڈوریا	/dʊrijja:/	dumb

There is long list of words in Punjabi made by infixation. These are very few words used profusely in day to day conversation These infixes cited above show inflectional and derivational changes along with change of categories as well. These are the examples of imperfect control of out puts, inter-speaker variations and extra grammatical categories. These all aspects of infixation are in accordance with postulates of expressive morphology. These all words are popular in Punjabi theater as well. These are used for stylistic and pragmatic effects with the implications of inter-speaker variations.

There are also some words made through the process of infixation which give special syntax in Punjabi, usually called as ideophones some of these are given in the following table:

Special syntax via infixation in Punjabi

Viyan	ويان	وياون	وياون شياون	/vi:ja:vəŋ ʃi:ja:vəŋ/	marrying
larha	لاڑا	لاڑيا	لاڑيا شاريا	/la:re:ja: ʃa:re:ja:/	groom
Rorha	روڑا	روڑنا	روڑنا شورنا	/roŋa: ʃoŋa:/	spilt
Parha	پڑھا	پڑھيا	پڑھيا شريا	/pə:ri:ja: ʃə:ri:ja:/	educated
Sutta	سُتا	سُتيا	سُتيا سُتيا	/sʊtʰi:ja: ʃʊtʰi:ja:/	slept

Production of abusive terms through infixation in Punjabi

Goli joga	گولی جوگا	گوليا جوگيا	/goli jogi:ja:/	Someone deserving bullet to die
Tut penha	ٹٹ پينا	ٹٹ پينيا	/tʊt pəni:ja:/	Deserving to be torn into pieces
Bomb joga	بمب جوگا	بمب جوگيا	/bʌmb jogi:ja/	Deserving bomb to die
Mar jana	مر جانا	مر جانيا	/mər ja:nija/	Deserving death
Kavran joga	کوران جوگا	کوران جوگيا	/kəvrɑ:ŋ jogi:ja/	Deserving to be buried in grave
Maot penha	موت پينا	موت پينيا	/mʌʊt pəni:ja:/	Deserving to be dead
Haram zada	حرام زاده	حرام زاديا	/hɑrɑ:ŋ zɑ:dija:	Illegitimate
Kuta	کتا	کتيا	/kutija:/	Dog like
Be gherta	بے غيرتا	بے غيرتيا	/bə ɢərti:ja:/	Shameless
Shoda	شودا	شوديا	/ʃodeja/	Shameless

Conclusion and Findings

Word formation through infixation is very dynamic in Punjabi. Data analysis expresses the diversity of change that occurs through infixation in Punjabi by derivational and inflectional changes in words. It shows that Infixation causes pragmatic and stylistic changes in Punjabi. It also gives alternative out puts and many examples have been quoted where infixation produces the words with inter-speaker variations. Infixation in Punjabi produces both regular and irregular grammatical lexicon with connoted and implied meanings. Through infixation process in Punjabi it is showed that by inserting infixes, sometimes base of the word is expanded, which turned out to be both grammatical and extra-grammatical feature pertaining to the theory of expressive morphology. Input and output of infixes in Punjabi is also quite irregular as required by the theory. These all properties have definitely challenged the old notion of Yu (2003) about the scarcity of infixation in south Asian languages. Infixation is not only common in Punjabi but above mentioned data shows how the process of infixation in Punjabi produce a large number of lexis for different spheres of life.

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