

Sindhi Morphology and Noun Inflections

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Abstract

Sindhi is an example of polymorphemic language with complex and compound words and rich morphological system. Morphological constructions in Sindhi include derivational and inflectional morphology. The paper discusses Sindhi morphology in detail with addition, subtraction and replacement methods. Process of reduplication with partial and complete reduplication types is also discussed. Inflectional morphology of Sindhi nouns with computational perspective is discussed in detail. Nouns and their inflections with respect to number, gender and case are discussed and their rules are presented.

1. Introduction

Sindhi is an example of indo-aryan language [1] [2] with rich inflectional and derivational morphology [3]. It contains high number of inflectional forms. Like most languages of the world Sindhi also has primary and secondary word types. Primary words are basic and not further divisible. Secondary words are again divided into compound and complex words. Sindhi morphological construction can either be inflectional or derivational. This inflection or derivation takes place in three different ways; addition, subtraction and replacement of suffixes. Like Urdu, addition also includes reduplication. Sindhi noun inflection takes place by change in number, gender or case. Following sections discuss Sindhi word types their morphological construction and inflectional morphology of Sindhi nouns in more detail.

2. Sindhi morphology

Words are fundamental building blocks of a language. Linguists divided Sindhi words into two types [4] [5]; primary or simple words and secondary words. Primary words are not further divisible. They are also called minimum free forms (morphemes). For

example p^harj (ڦڙي) (comb), rasto (رسنو) (path, way) and k^hatu (ڪٽ) (bedstead) are examples of primary words. Secondary words are further divided into complex and compound words. Complex words are formed by combining prefixes/suffixes with primary words for example the primary word fāṇa (ڄاڻ) (knowledge) when combined with prefix aṇu (اڻ) (a prefix which negates the meaning) becomes aṇfāṇu (اڻڄاڻ) (layman) and when combined with ō (او) becomes fāṇō (ڄاڻو) (scholar). fāṇō (ڄاڻو) and aṇfāṇu (اڻڄاڻ) are examples of complex words. In case of fāṇō (ڄاڻو), fāṇa (ڄاڻ) is the free form and aṇu (اڻ) is example of bound form morpheme, same is the case with ō (او) which is also a bound form morpheme.

Compound words are those words which are formed by combining two or more simple words; they don't have prefixes or suffixes. Compound words can be formed by combining two same or different class words i.e. their prefixes or suffixes are actually free form morphemes. For example hat^hkaṛj (هٽڪڙي) (manacle or handcuff), d³hagbilo (جهنگيلو) (wild cat) and g^harad^hanī (گهرڏئي) (house owner) are examples of compound words.

2.1. Morphological construction

Like Arabic, Urdu and Hindi Sindhi words are polymorphemic in nature. Derivational morphology in Sindhi is combination of a word stem with a grammatical morpheme usually resulting in a word of different class. For example nouns are derived from verbs and adjectives are derived from nouns and vice versa. Apart from affix changes Sindhi derivational morphology also takes place by diacritic/last vowel changes. Table 1 shows examples of derivational morphology.

Inflection in Sindhi is combination of a word stem with a morpheme usually resulting in word of same class which performs same syntactic function as the original stem. This inflection is due the change of

gender, number, case or tense. Morphological changes in Sindhi can occur by addition, subtraction or replacement phenomenon. Following sections discuss these constructions in more detail.

Table 1: Examples of Sindhi Derivational Morphology

Word / Class (meaning)	Derived Word/ Class (menaing)
pōk ^h i/verb (پوک/فعل)(sow)	pōk ^h a/noun (پوک/اسم)(crop)
rk ^h u/verb (رک/فعل) (put)	rk ^h a/noun (رک/اسم) (ash)
t ^h ul ^h o:/adj (ٺلهو/صفت) (fatty)	t ^h ol ^h /noun (ٺوله/اسم) (fatness)
sag ^h a/noun (سگه/اسم) (power)	sag ^h āro:/adj (صفت/سگهارو) (powerful, strong)

2.1.1. Addition. In this case stem is combined with bound morpheme; this process is also known as affixation. These affixes can be prefix, infix or suffix. Some examples of addition morphology using prefixes are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Addition morphology using prefixes

Stem / Meaning	Derived Word / Meaning
pōro: پورو / complete	aṇapōro: اٺپورو / incomplete
mara مر / die	amara امر / command
va:ra ویر / time	ava:ra اویر / late

All Sindhi words (complex) which are formed by combining prefixes are derived words. There is no inflected word formed in this way [6]. Complex words are formed by applying internal affixes or infixes in Sindhi. Infix changes mostly take place in stems of roots. For example the word sadāiṇu سڌائڻ (to be called) is a complex word with stem sadaṇu سڌڻ (to call) which is inflected form of root sada سڌ (call). Table 3 shows some examples of infix changes in words.

Another complex word construction by addition is adding morpheme in the end i.e. suffix addition. Sindhi words which are formed by adding suffixes can either be inflectional or derivational [7].

Table 3: Complex word construction by infix changes in stems

Complex Word	Stem	Root
sadāiṇu سڌائڻ (to be called)	sadaṇu سڌڻ (to call)	sada سڌ (call)
g ^h urāiṇa گهرائڻ (to bring)	g ^h urāiṇa گهرڻ (to demand)	g ^h ura گهر (demand)
kerāiṇa کيرائڻ (to cause to fall)	kiraṇa ڪرڻ (to fall)	kira ڪر (fall)

Table 4 shows some examples of complex word construction by suffix addition.

Table 4: Complex word construction by suffix addition

Complex Word	Stem + Affix	Change type
sade: سڌي (call)	سڌ + اي	Inflection
baḡāe: باغائي (gardener)	باغ + آئي	Derivation
tʃaṇāe: چڱائي (goodness)	چڱو + آئي	Inflection

Sometimes suffixation causes new words with same semantic function. For example the compound word forms k^hedyo:t^he: (ڪيڏيوٽي) (was playing) and k^hedyo:pe: (ڪيڏيوپي) (was playing) have independently exchangeable morphemes pe: and t^he. These morphemes can be replaced with each other without affecting the lexical semantics of the word. Some morphemes are opposite to them and can not be exchanged even performing same morphological function. For example in Sindhi there are four morphemes a (ا), ā (آ), aō (اون), and yū (يون) which are used to pluralize. These are called allomorphs. Allomorphs are not exchangeable like independent morphemes.

Like many other south Asian languages Sindhi also has examples of Zero-affixation. Like in the case of hāt^hi: هائي (elephant), sāt^hi: سائي (companion) and sipā^hi: سپاهي (soldier) their plurals are same as their singular forms. This happens in almost all masculine nouns ending with اي.

2.1.2. Subtraction. Derivation takes place by subtracting a morpheme from the stem. This mostly happens when verbal noun/infinitive noun (اسم مصدر) is converted to verb. Table 5 shows some examples of subtraction morphology.

Table 5: Derivational morphology by subtraction

Word / Meaning	Derived word
fānaṅa چاڻڻ (to know)	fāna چاڻ (knowledge)
ḍukaṅa ڊڪڻ (to run)	ḍuka ڊڪ (run)
maṅaṅa مڃڻ (to obey)	maṅa مڃ (obey)

2.1.3. Replacement. In this method a morpheme of a word is changed to another one. For example productive nouns (اسم مصدر) halaṅa هلڻ is changed to halat هلنت and viṭ^hāṅa وڙهڻ to viṭ^hata وڙهت. These nouns are affected by last morpheme change. Replacement sometimes affects both root and morpheme and is known as internal change. Sometimes this change causes completely different word. For example in case of change in tense hudḡana هجن (exist in future) is converted to āhini آهن (are existing). This is called suppletion and takes place in Sindhi language [8]. Table 6 shows some examples of replacement morphology.

Table 6: Examples of replacement morphology

Word / Meaning	Derived word
k ^h au ڪاءُ (eat)	k ^h ado: ڪاڻو (ate, food)
pt ^h āiṅa پڙهائڻ (to teach)	pt ^h āi: پڙهائي (study)
āṅa آڻ (bring)	āndo: آندو (brought)

2.1.4. Reduplication (تڪرار). Urdu, Sindhi and other south Asian languages make use of reduplication frequently [9]. This reduplication can either be complete or partial. In complete reduplication word is repeated two or more times. For example palaپل (time) to palapala پل پل (every time) and baraبار (child) to barabara باربار (every child) are completely reduplicated words.

Partial reduplication can be done in tow ways; in first case duplication takes place with small change in the word for example halaṅa هلڻ (to walk) to halaṅat[alaṅa (هلڻ چلڻ) (coming and going) is partial reduplication. In this example first letter of the word is replaced by some other letter.

In second type of partial reduplication the repeated word which is mostly meaningless has semantic relationship with the actual word. If the repeated word is meaningful then it accepts the semantic influence of stem as well influences the stem meaning. For example the word ḡal^h ڳالهه (speech) can be partially reduplicated to ḡal^hmuḡāṭ ڳالهه مهڙ (talk) where muḡāṭ مهڙ means face or dimension which when combined with ḡal^h ڳالهه

accepted semantic influence of ḡal^h as well caused semantic influence on ḡal^h. Table 7 shows more examples of full and partial reduplication.

Table 7: Complete and partial reduplication

Word / Meaning	Reduplicated (تڪراري) word
maṭa مت (change)	maṭasaṭa مت ست (exchange)
qadama قدم (step)	qadamaqadama قدم قدم (every step)
kapṭo: ڪپڙو (cloth)	kapṭo:laṭo ڪپڙو لٽو (cloth of use)

3. Inflection in Sindhi Nouns

Sindhi word always end in a vowel [10] [3]; so is the case with nouns. Nouns can have following vowel endings [11].

ا اِ اِي اُ او اوِ اَوِ اَوِ اِ اِ اِ اِ
i: i o: o u: u e: e a: a

Sindhi Linguists divided nouns in two major categories Concrete Noun (صفتي اسم) and Abstract Noun (ذاتي اسم). Concrete noun is further divided into Common Noun (اسم عام) and Proper noun (اسم خاص) [12]. Nouns are marked by number gender and case. Following sections discuss them in detail.

3.1. Gender

There are two genders in Sindhi nouns masculine and feminine. Like Urdu this gender classification is for animate as well as non-animate nouns [13]. For non-animate nouns which don't have gender naturally defined, gender is specified artificially. For Example meza ميز (table) in Sindhi has feminine and kitāba ڪتاب has masculine gender (which is feminine in Urdu). Apart from some exceptions the last vowel/diacritic sound of noun identifies the gender of the noun.

Nouns with اِ, اِ, اِ, اِ endings are usually feminine nouns and nouns with اُ, او, او, او endings are usually with masculine nouns. Table 8 shows examples of masculine and feminine nouns.

Table 8: Masculine and feminine nouns

Word	Ending	Gender	Meaning
zāla زال	اِ	F	Wife
dunyā دنيا	اِ	F	World

rāte رات	ا	F	Night
tʃhokri: چوکري	اي	F	Girl
bāru بار	ا	M	Child
tānbu: تنبو	او	M	Tent
vitʃhũ وچون	اُون	M	Scorpion
tʃhkiro: چوکرو	او	M	Boy

3.1.1. Some Rules for Gender Inflection in Sindhi. Gender inflection in nouns can take place in various ways including diacritic change, suffix addition and last vowel change. These changes may occur differently in words with same endings like پڪرُ and اٺُ have same endings ا but different rule for gender inflection. Word categories in Table 9 solve this ambiguity. Noun inflection rules with their categories are also listed in the table. These inflection rules are in Chomsky and Halle notation [13]

Table 9: Gender inflection rules for Sindhi nouns

Masculine	Feminine	Rule	Category
گڏھ	گڏھ	ا → ا / ε_#	I
پڪرُ	پڪري	ا → اي / ε_#	II
پلو	پلي	او → اي / ε_#	III
نانو	ناني	اي → او	IV
اٺُ	اٺڻ	ا → اڻ	V

Some masculine nouns have irregular feminine and therefore have no gender inflection rule. For example feminine of puṭa پٽ is d^hi:a ڌي and of muṛsa مڙس (husband) is zāla زال (wife). Also in Sindhi like Urdu there is no general rule to find the gender classification of inanimate nouns. Usually bigger things are masculine and smaller ones are feminine; like dara در (door) is masculine and dari:a دري (window) is feminine so is the case with raso: رسو (rope) which is masculine and rasi:a رسي (cord) which is feminine.

3.2. Number

Like Urdu and English; Sindhi nouns also have two numbers singular and plural. Number inflection of noun depends on gender and last vowel ending. Rules for number inflection of nouns with respect to their gender and ending vowels are given below.

3.2.1. Feminine

- (i) Singular feminine nouns with ا ending are pluralized by changing ا ending to اُون.

- (ii) Singular feminine nouns with آ ending are pluralized by replacing آ with اُون (with اُون ending).
 (iii) Singular feminine nouns with ا ending are pluralized by replacing ا with اُون (with اُون ending).
 (iv) Feminine nouns with اي ending are pluralized by replacing اي with اُون (with اُون ending).
 (v) Some feminine nouns which have ا ending like masculine nouns are inflected by changing ا to اُون.

3.2.2. Masculine

- (vi) Masculine nouns with ا ending are pluralized by changing ا to ا.
 (vii) Masculine nouns with او ending are pluralized by changing او to آ.
 (viii) There can be examples of masculine nouns with feminine ending ا in which case rule (iii) is used for masculine nouns.
 (ix) There are some nouns which do not change their form when used in plural sense. They have null inflectional rule.

Table 10 shows examples of all above rules and their equivalent rules in Chomsky and Halle notation.

Table 10: Number inflection rules for Sindhi nouns

Singular	Plural	Rule	Category
ميرَ	ميرون	ا → اُون / ε_#	I
هوا	هواون	ا → اُون / ε_#	II
رات	راتيون	ا → اُون / ε_#	III
چوکري	چوکريون	اي → اُون / ε_#	IV
پيٺُ	پيٺون	ا → اُون / ε_#	V
ڪتابُ	ڪتابَ	ا → ا / ε_#	VI
هفتو	هفتا	او → آ / ε_#	VII
سيٺُ	سيٺيون	Rule of category III	VIII
پڪي	پڪي	ε → ε / ε_# OR ∅	IX

3.3. Case (حالت)

Sindhi case system consists five different cases [14] listed below.

- Nominative (فاعلي).
- Accusative-Dative (مفعولي).
- Postpositional (جاري/جري).

- Genitive (اضافت).
- Vocative (نداني).

Linguists theoretically discuss three more cases (total eight) namely Ablative (آلي/امدادی), Locative (ظرفي/مكاني) and Instrumental (اوزاري/سببي). Practically these three cases are examples of (جاري/جري) case [15]. Nouns are marked by postpositions following them in (جاري/جري) case. Therefore nouns (subjects and objects) are inflected by the postpositions following them.

3.3.1. Oblique Case (عام حالت/حالت تغيري). In nominative case noun remains in its original form but in accusative-dative, postpositional جري and genitive cases nouns are inflected. Their inflected form remains same in all these three cases and is called general form (عام حالت) or oblique case. Table 11 shows nominative and oblique forms of noun tʃokiro: چوکرو (boy).

Table 11. Nominative and Oblique forms of noun tʃokiro: (چوکرو)

Gender	Number	Nominative	Oblique
Masculine	Singular	tʃokiro: چوکرو	tʃokire: چوکري
	Plural	tʃokira: چوکرا	tʃokirana چوکرن
Feminine	Singular	tʃokiri: چوکري	tʃokiri:a چوکريءَ
	Plural	tʃokirū چوکريون	tʃokiruna چوکرين

Following are rules for oblique case noun inflections.

- (i) Singular masculine nouns with او ending are inflected by changing او to اي. Rule: او → اي / ε__#.

Nominative	Oblique
tʃ ^h okiro: (چوکرو)	tʃ ^h okire: (چوکري)

Example sentences:

Nominative: tʃ^hokiro: lik^he: t^ho:
Oblique: tʃ^hokire: lik^heyo:

- (ii) Plural masculine nouns with ا ending are inflected by changing ا to ان. Rule: ا → ان / ε__#.

Nominative	Oblique
tʃ ^h okira: (چوکرا)	tʃ ^h okirana (چوکرن)

Example sentences:

Nominative: tʃ^hokira: lik^hana: t^ha:
Oblique: tʃ^hokirana lik^heyo:

- (iii) Singular masculine nouns with ا endings are inflected by replacing ا with ان. Rule: ا → ان / ε__#.

Nominative	Oblique
puʃu (پُت)	puʃa (پُت)

Example sentences:

Nominative: puʃu paʃ^he: t^ho:
Oblique: puʃa paʃ^hayo:

- (iv) In plural masculine nouns ا ending is replaced by ان. Rule: ا → ان / ε__#.

Nominative	Oblique
puʃa (پُت)	puʃani (پُتن)

Example sentences:

Nominative: puʃa paʃ^hana: t^ha:
Oblique: puʃana paʃ^hayo:

- (v) Singular feminine nouns with ا, ا, ا, and ا endings don't change in singular oblique form. Rule: ا, ا, ا, ا → ا, ا, ا, ا / ε__#.

Nominative	Oblique
k ^h aʃa (کٔ)	k ^h aʃa (کٔ)
b ^h iti (پٔت)	b ^h iti (پٔت)
ma:u (ماء)	ma:u (ماء)
hava: (هوا)	hava: (هوا)

Example sentences:

Nominative: he:a k^haʃa āhe:
he:a b^hiti āhe:
ma:u nerana kare: t^hi:
hava: laʃe: t^hi:
Oblique: k^haʃa te: ueha
b^hiti te: tʃaʃ^h
ma:u dʒo: adaba karyo:
hava: dʒo: zor āhe:

- (vi) Plural feminine nouns with اون ending are inflected by changing اون to ان. Rule: اون → ان / ε__#.

Nominative
k^haṭū: (ڪٽون)

Oblique
k^haṭuni (ڪٽن)

Example sentences:

Nominative: he:a k^haṭū āhena

Oblique: k^haṭuni te: veho:

(vii) Plural feminine nouns with **يُون** endings are inflected by changing **يُون** to **يُن**.

Rule: **يُون** → **يُن** / ε__#.

Nominative
b^hitiū: (پٽيون)

Oblique
b^hitiuni (پٽين)

Example sentences:

Nominative: b^hitiū: ālyū āhine

Oblique: b^hitiuni te pāṅj: hār

(viii) Singular feminine nouns with **اي** ending are inflected by changing **اي** to **يءَ**.

Rule: **اي** → **يءَ** / ε__#.

Nominative
tʃhokiri: (چوڪري)

Oblique
tʃhokiri:a (چوڪريءَ)

Example sentences:

Nominative: tʃhokiri: par^he: t^hi:

Oblique: tʃhokiri:a par^hyo:

(ix) Plural feminine nouns with **اون** ending are inflected by changing **اون** to **ان**.

Rule: **اون** → **ان** / ε__#.

Nominative
b^he:ṅō (پيٽون)

Oblique
b^he:ṅuni (پيٽن)

Example sentences:

Nominative: b^he:ṅō atʃhana t^hiyō

Oblique: b^he:ṅuni dʒi izata karyo:

(x) Nouns which remain same in plural and singular numbers in nominal case are also inflected in oblique case. These singular nouns are inflected by adding **ءَ** morpheme in the end regardless of their last ending vowel.

Rule: any → **ءَ**any / ε__#.

Nominative
hat^hi: (هاڻي)

vit^hū: (وچون)

Oblique
hat^hi:a (هاڻيءَ)

vit^hū:a (وچونءَ)

Example sentences:

Nominative: hat^hi: k^hāe: t^ho:
vit^hū: dānge: t^ho:
Oblique: hat^hi:a dʒo: mālika:
vit^hū:a dʒo: dānga

(xi) Plural nouns of category (x) listed above with **اي** ending are inflected by adding **ان** in the end.

Rule: **اي** → **ان** / ε__#.

Nominative
hat^he: (هاڻي)

sat^he: (ساڻي)

Oblique
hat^heuane (هاڻين)

sat^heuane (ساڻين)

Example sentences:

Nominative: hat^hi: k^hāena t^ha:
sat^hi: galhāen t^ha:

Oblique: hat^heuane k^hdho:
sat^heuane galhayo:

(xii) Plural nouns of category (x) listed above with **اونءَ** ending are inflected by replacing **اونءَ** with **ان** in the end.

Rule: **اونءَ** → **ان** / ε__#.

Nominative
vit^hū:a (وچونءَ)

ḡaūa (ڳئونءَ)

Oblique
vit^huane (وچن)

ḡauane (ڳنن)

Example sentences:

Nominative: vit^hū:a dāngeyane t^ha:
ḡaūa atʃhane piyū

Oblique: vit^huane dāngayo:
ḡauane k^he: hakala:

3.3.1. Vocative Case (حالت ندا). Sindhi vocative case is formed by prefixing an interjection before the nominative. For example ae: dost (اي دوست) (O friend) and aṅe yār (اڙي يار) (Oh friend). Noun can also be in vocative case without interjection prefix. For example the word dosta is used individually with half long or long stress like dosta (دوست) also means O friend. Following are some inflection rules for vocative case of nouns in Sindhi.

(i) **اَ** ending of singular masculine noun is replaced by **اِ** ending in vocative case.

Rule: **اَ** → **اِ** / ε__#.

Nominative
bāru (بار)

Vocative
bāra (بار)

Example sentences:

Nominative: bāru paṛhe: t^ho:
Vocative: bāra! paṛha

- (ii) ʾ ending of plural masculine noun is replaced by او.
Rule: ʾ → او / ε__#.

Nominative	Vocative
bāra (ٻار)	bārao (ٻارو)

Example sentences:

Nominative: bāru paṛhane t^ha:
Vocative: aṛe: bārao! paṛho:

- (iii) Singular masculine nouns with او ending are inflected in vocative case by changing او to ʾ.
Rule: او → ʾ / ε__#.

Nominative	Vocative
vād ^h o (واڊو)	vād ^h ā (واڊا)

Example sentences:

Nominative: vād^ho: kāṭ^hu kate: t^ho:
Vocative: O vād^hā kāṭ^hu kate: tʃhāḍa

- (iv) Singular feminine nouns with ʾ, ِ, ِ, ِ, and ِ are not inflected in vocative case and remain in their original form. For example:
Rule: ʾ, ِ, ِ, ِ, ِ → ʾ, ِ, ِ, ِ, ِ / ε__#.

Nominative	Vocative
b ^h eṇu (ٻيڻ)	b ^h eṇu (ٻيڻ)
zāla (زال)	zāla (زال)

Example sentences:

Nominative: b^heṇu nārāzu āhe:
zāla bi:māra āhe:
Vocative: ai: b^heṇu nārāzu na t^hi:
aṛe: zāla heḍā^h tʃa

4. Discussion and conclusion

Sindhi morphological construction can either be derivational or inflectional. Sindhi morphology is bit complex because of primary and secondary word types with further division of compound and complex words. Derivational morphology mostly results different class words but sometimes it may result same class words are well. For example derivation takes place when common noun vāpār واپار is converted to abstract noun vāpāri: واپاري. Morphological changes in Sindhi words may

occur due to prefix or suffix addition. Complex words are also formed by infix changes in stems. Compound words are formed by combination of free form morphemes which are themselves complete words. Nouns are inflected by number, gender and case. There are only two numbers in Sindhi; singular and plural. Number inflection rules are defined by vowel endings. Masculine and feminine genders are also cause inflections on nouns. Noun genders and their inflection rules are also defined by vowel endings. Practically there are five cases in Sindhi but theoretically linguists discuss eight cases (same cases of Sanskrit). In Sindhi three of them ablative, locative and instrumental cases come under the umbrella of postpositional case (جری حالت). Accusative-Dative, postpositional (حالت جری) and genitive cases are called Oblique forms (also known as general form) and have common inflectional changes in nouns. Sindhi morphological issues, gender, number and case inflection rules discussed here provide foundations for morphological parsing models of Sindhi nouns and other classes. The discussion also provides basis for further studies of computation models of Sindhi morphology.

5. References

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