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# Etymological Characteristics of Homonyms Belonging to The Noun and Adjective Categories In Hindi: A Morphosemantic And Diachronic Analysis

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**Abstract:** This article highlights the lexicological significance of etymological analysis in the process of learning foreign languages. Etymology is interpreted as a branch of linguistics that studies the origin of words, their historical development, morphological structure, and semantic changes. The study examines the sources of lexical borrowings and the phonetic, morphological, and semantic transformations they have undergone. Based on the views of various scholars, the theoretical and applied aspects of etymology are summarized, and its role in linguistics is substantiated.

The article presents an etymological analysis of homonymous lexemes in Hindi, which are classified into four groups: tatsama, tadbhava, deshī, and videshī. Examples are collected for each group, and statistical analysis is conducted based on productive morphological patterns. Homonyms belonging to the tadbhava group are examined through the developmental stages of Pali, Prakrit, and Apabhramsha languages, focusing on phonetic and grammatical changes, from which linguistic conclusions are drawn.

**Keywords:** Etymology, tatsama, tadbhava, deshī, videshī, Pali, Prakrit, Apabhramsha languages.

**Introduction:** In the study and scientific investigation of foreign languages, the etymology branch of lexicology holds particular significance. Etymological analysis enables a deeper understanding of the internal structure of a language by identifying the origin,

historical development, morphological transformations, and semantic shifts of words. Especially in Hindi, homonymous lexemes found within the noun and adjective categories are etymologically complex and multilayered. Determining their sources of origin is one of the key theoretical and practical challenges in linguistics.

This article examines the etymological characteristics of homonymous lexemes in Hindi, focusing on their morphological formation and semantic evolution. Etymology, as a vital subfield of linguistics, studies the origin, historical progression, structural development, and meaning changes of words. It helps uncover the original meaning of a word and explains how it has acquired its current form and semantic function.

Such research traces the lexical journey from its source language, identifies the transformations it has undergone, and analyzes how it is used in contemporary contexts. [1,2]

Etymology (from Greek — “truth,” referring to the true meaning of a word)

- 1) A branch of linguistics that studies the origin of words and morphemes;
- 2) A set of research methods aimed at determining the origin of a word;
- 3) The origin of a word. [2,84]

Generalization Based on Scholarly Views on Etymology

Origin of words: Etymology, as affirmed by various linguistic scholars, investigates the origin of words by identifying the languages from which they have been borrowed and the historical conditions under which they have evolved. This process involves analyzing the phonological, morphological, and semantic changes that words undergo as they enter a language from external sources. Through such diachronic examination, etymology reveals the pathways of lexical integration and transformation across linguistic systems.

Historical Development: The historical development of words involves examining the changes they have undergone over time. This process takes into account how their pronunciation, structural form, and meanings have evolved throughout different linguistic stages. [3,38-40]

Morphological Changes: Morphological changes involve the analysis of how word forms have transformed over time and how new forms have emerged. This process includes the study of word structure and its constituent elements, such as roots, affixes, and inflectional patterns. Through such examination, linguists identify the mechanisms by which words evolve morphologically, reflecting both

internal linguistic development and external influences. [4,45-47]

Semantic Changes: Semantic changes refer to the study of how word meanings have evolved over time and how new meanings have emerged. This process involves analyzing both the original meanings of words and their contemporary interpretations. Through such examination, linguists trace the semantic trajectory of lexical items, identifying shifts such as broadening, narrowing, metaphorical extension, and contextual reinterpretation. [5,55-57]

Walter Skeat refers to etymology as the “history of words” and emphasizes the necessity of analyzing it through historical facts. According to him, studying the origin and transformation of words contributes to a deeper understanding of the developmental processes of language. This approach reveals the complex structure of language through semantic, phonetic, and morphological changes, thereby providing a theoretical foundation for etymological research.

Noam Chomsky, on the other hand, views etymological analysis as a means of understanding the internal structure of language and its reflection in human cognition. Through this lens, etymology offers valuable insights into cognitive processes and the mental representation of linguistic systems. [6,38-40]

Renowned linguist Max Müller interprets etymology as a tool for analyzing words and expressions within a language, emphasizing its crucial role in illuminating the historical and cultural development of linguistic systems. According to him, the origin and historical context of words serve as a gateway to a deeper understanding of both language and culture.

Drawing on the theoretical perspectives of Walter W. Skeat, Noam Chomsky, and Max Müller, etymology is regarded as a vital scientific instrument for identifying the historical formation, semantic evolution, and cultural connotations of lexical units in language.

Theoretical and Methodological Foundations of Etymological Analysis

Etymological analysis not only reveals the internal structure of language but also sheds light on the mental representation of language within human cognition. This approach serves as a theoretical foundation for semantic interpretation and historical-linguistic inquiry in linguistic research.

In this article, the primary methodological framework for etymological analysis is the comparative-historical method, which enables the examination of words in accordance with phonetic, morphological, and semantic regularities. Through this method, the historical development and sources of origin of lexical units are

systematically identified and interpreted. [7, 2]

#### The Broader Relevance of the Comparative-Historical Method

In our view, the comparative-historical method is not only essential for linguists but also holds significant value for scholars engaged in cultural and historical research. This approach enables a deep exploration of language development processes and the impact of cultural transformations on linguistic systems.

By analyzing phonetic, morphological, and semantic changes in words, researchers can uncover connections between different languages and cultures, thereby gaining a more profound understanding of their historical and intercultural relationships.

#### The Role of the Comparative-Historical Method in Modern Linguistic Research

The comparative-historical method is widely employed in contemporary linguistic research and serves as a crucial tool in the development of new dictionaries, the enhancement of automatic translation systems, and the advancement of language teaching methodologies. By conducting in-depth analyses of the historical formation, phonetic structure, and morphological features of words, this method proves to be not only theoretically and practically significant within linguistics but also valuable across other academic disciplines.

The primary aim of etymological analysis is to determine the historical stage at which a given lexical unit emerged, the linguistic source from which it originated, the morphological pattern and linguistic material through which it was formed, and the semantic load it acquired in the process. This analytical procedure relies on phonetic laws, morphological rules, and their historical transformations, and is carried out within the framework of the comparative-historical method.

The principal function of etymology, moreover, is to examine ancient sources and reconstruct the developmental trajectory of a language's lexical inventory, including its earliest structural state.

It is well established that words in Hindi are etymologically classified into four major categories.

1. **Tatsama** (literally "exactly the same"): This group includes words that have been directly borrowed from Sanskrit through literary channels and have largely retained their original orthographic form, similar to native lexical items. The term tatsama is derived from the Sanskrit components तत् ("that") and सम ("similar"), collectively meaning "similar to that," i.e., "resembling Sanskrit." These words preserve the classical structure and are often used in formal or scholarly registers of Hindi.

In this interpretation, the word tatsama is composed of two Sanskrit elements: तत् (tat – "that") and सम (sama – "similar" or "equal"), which together convey the meaning "similar to that language." In Hindi linguistics, this term is typically used to refer to words that have been directly borrowed from Sanskrit without undergoing any phonological or morphological changes. [8,136]

2. **Tadbhava** (literally "that which has originated from it") is one of the three principal etymological categories derived from the core grammar of Middle Indo-Aryan languages. Words of this type have undergone extensive phonological transformations over time, passing through the stages of Prakrit and Apabhramśa. These lexemes, which form a substantial part of the vocabulary in these languages, are recognized as having ultimately originated from Classical Sanskrit.

3. **Desi** (literally "local" or "indigenous"): These words are considered foreign to the Sanskrit linguistic system and are typically not derived from Sanskrit. Some of them originate from Dravidian and Munda language families, while others have unknown or untraceable origins. In Hindi linguistics, deshaj lexemes represent the native, non-Sanskritic stratum of the vocabulary, often reflecting regional, cultural, and oral traditions.

4. **Videshi** words refer to lexical items that have been borrowed into Hindi from foreign languages such as Arabic, Persian, English, and others. These loanwords entered the language through various historical, cultural, and administrative interactions, and they now form an integral part of modern Hindi vocabulary. [9,39]

A statistical analysis of the aforementioned Hindi lexical categories has been conducted, and the results are presented in **Table 1**.

Groups	Homonymous Words	Num ber	Percent age
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<b>v</b> Tadbha	भाव, मक्री, नल, गधा, चात, हरवर, सिर, करकरा, काबर, कानक्लवति, चेदा, कुहक, चुगा, चुल, भुजंग, मथी, मधुकरी धोती, धार, बरत, राव, चांट, तकाही, टोपा, पहरा, बनरी, रसा, दिंगर, धाल, सावन, सिरा	726	56,5%
Videshi	साया, गंज, शोक, सील, गोल, शकल, शान, कार, महरम, तूल, तरेश, मेयार, लुक, बीम, कमान, निकर, जासुसी, हर, रसद, दराज़, काफी, लैस, नवा, बौरा, चंद, तंगियाना, कमाना, बजाना, गरकना	224	17,4%
Tatsam	कुहक, भुजंग, करी, नाली, घात, मानक, मान, गय, यंत्रिक, यवि, यती, यवन, याता, युग, सुरागार, सुरालय, हयी, भग, संवास, फलक, पाली, पात्री, रंग, रज, उपद्वि, उपदंश, कंचुकी	220	17,1%
Hybrids	मसताना, महाजानी, महराना, कामदार, कपतना, कमाना, फतूही, फलदार, उदासी, ऊनी, झोलदार, खलासी, खाबिया, रवादार, स्पर्शाना, साफा, चीराबंद, जालिया, जंमना	34	2.6%

When the homonymous words in Hindi are analyzed from an etymological perspective (see Table 1), lexical items belonging to the tadbhava category constitute the most frequently occurring stratum. Out of a total of 1,284 examples, 726 words—representing 56.5%—are identified as tadbhava, placing this group in the leading position according to the results of the analysis.

In second position are videshi homonyms—those derived from foreign language sources—amounting to 224 items, which constitute 17.4% of the total.

The third position is occupied by tatsama homonyms, with 220 items out of 1,284 lexical units, representing 17.1%, and classified as words directly borrowed from Sanskrit.

The fourth and least frequent category comprises hybrid homonyms. Out of a total of 1,580 homonymous items, only 34 (2.6%) belong to this

group, indicating their limited occurrence.

Videshi Homonyms in Hindi: Classification and English-Origin Lexemes

Foreign-origin homonyms (videshi) in Hindi can themselves be subdivided into three distinct categories. This classification will be elaborated in the following section.

1. English-Origin Words: This group comprises lexical items that have been borrowed in varying degrees from languages such as Portuguese, Dutch, and primarily English. The emergence of this category is closely tied to the growing influence of English from the 19th century onward. During that period, significant socio-economic transformations and the rise of industrial and technological development contributed to English becoming a lingua franca in the region. As a result, the incorporation of English vocabulary into local languages intensified.

English has also served as a primary conduit for the introduction of international socio-political and scientific-technical terminology into regional languages. Within the domain of Hindi homonyms, English loanwords are particularly prevalent. A total of 85 such items have been identified, accounting for 6.62% of the overall dataset.

Examples: मिस, मेगज़ीन, मीत्र, मार्च, मार्का, माइका, कफ, कोक, केस, कवर, कोच, कैरियर, काटन, काफी, कोट, कोर, वात, फार्मा etc.

#### Arabic-Persian Loanwords in Hindi

Arabic-Persian lexical borrowings in Hindi originated during the early centuries of the second millennium CE, primarily through historical interactions with Central Asia, Afghanistan, and Iran. Additionally, the Arab conquest of the Sindh region in the 7th–8th centuries and the subsequent spread of Islam played a pivotal role in the integration of these lexical items.

The volume of such borrowings is particularly significant in languages like Urdu, Sindhi, and Saraiki, where Arabic-Persian elements can constitute as much as 70–80% of the lexicon. Within Hindi, Arabic-Persian loanwords also form a substantial portion of homonymous vocabulary, reflecting deep historical and cultural entanglements.

2. Persian-Origin Words: A total of 76 homonymous items have been identified as Persian borrowings, accounting for 5.9% of the dataset. These include, among others: मेख, मोर्च, मरमर, मशक, मिर्ज़ाई, मीना, मेह, मय, मोहरा, कोह, कानी, कान, कल्ला, कंडा, किशत.

3. Arabic-Origin Words: A total of 63 homonymous items have been identified as Arabic borrowings, accounting for 4.9% of the dataset. Examples include :मुसल्ला, मजाज़, मिल्लत, मैयार, महरम, जाज़न, मजाज़ी, मार्का, माली, मयार, मद, मकर,कसत etc.

Although hybrid formations did not occupy the most productive morphological pattern in the etymological analysis of homonymous words in Hindi, their actual frequency exceeded our initial expectations. This suggests that, due to the distinctive structural and semantic properties of homonyms in Hindi, hybrid

A detailed linguistic analysis of the morphological structures and distributional patterns of hybrid homonyms in the prepositional case is presented in **Table 2**.

No	Models	Number	Percentage
1	S + (P, H, )	11	0,86%
2	P + (H, A + P)	10	0,77%

lexical items necessitate the development of diverse formation models.

- गरकना – 1) to boom, to thunder; 2) to sink, to submerge; (A+ H)
- रगीला – 1) stubborn, obstinate; 2) chewy portion of meat; (P+ H)
- रजिस्त्री – 1) to register, to enlist; 2) Order dispatch; (E + H)
- पुली – 1) bridge; 2) chig'ir — a mechanical device used for lifting or moving water or loads; (P + H)
- बहाली – 1) To cheat, to trick, 2) Appointment to the previous position; (P+ A+ P)
- बेपीर – 1) merciless, ruthless; 2) Without psychological support; (P+ H)
- बलदार – 1) strong, powerful; 2) bound, tied, fastened; (H + P)
- तस्करी – 1) thievery; 2) thieving woman; (S + P)
- तिक्की – 1) Three (as in the numeral 3 on a playing card); 2) A small portion or fragment of meat; (P + H)
- तगियाना – 1) o engage a friend in an activity; 2) to let the horse go; (P + H)

According to the research findings, productive morphological patterns have been identified in the prepositional-case models of hybrid homonymic lexemes. In this context, the most frequently occurring units are those of Persian and Arabic origin, totaling 19 instances, which constitute 1.5% of the overall hybrid homonym corpus.

Hybrid homonyms of Sanskrit origin appear in 11 instances within the prepositional-case construction, accounting for 0.86%. Lexemes of Hindi provenance comprise 6 units, representing 0.47%.

The least frequent group consists of hybrid homonyms borrowed from English, with only a single instance recorded in the prepositional-case model—equivalent to 0.07%.



3	A + (H, P)	8	0,62%
4	H+ (P)	6	0,47%
5	E + H	1	0,07%

As a result of the etymological analysis of homonymous lexemes, no clear examples were identified among “deshī” (indigenous-origin) lexical units. In linguistic research, the study of the historical-phonetic development of lexemes provides a foundation for their deeper semantic analysis. Notably, ancient languages belonging to the Indo-Aryan family—such as Pāli, Prakrit, and Apabhramsha—are genetically interrelated, and the phonetic shifts among them have led to significant semantic expansion and the emergence of homonymy in numerous lexemes.

In Hindi, homonyms belonging to the tadbhava group (i.e., those of native Indic origin) and exhibiting genetic continuity are classified into the following three historical strata based on their formation periods:

Group 1: 2nd–1st centuries BCE.

During this period, Pāli emerged as the language of Buddhist canonical texts, representing a simplified spoken form in contrast to Classical Sanskrit. Research indicates that Pāli developed from vernacular dialects prevalent in central regions of India, characterized by distinct phonetic and morphological features. By the 2nd century BCE, the linguistic influence of these central dialects had extended as far as the region of Orissa (present-day Odisha) in Eastern India. [11,162]

During the Pāli phase, homonymous lexemes were linguistically analyzed based on the Pāli-Hindi Kosh dictionary compiled by Bhadant Anand Kaushalyayan. The analysis identified a total of 268 homonymic units, accounting for 16.96% of the overall lexical corpus.

The phonetic-semantic examination conducted at this stage yielded the following linguistic observations:

- No homonymous units were found that begin with or contain the phonemes ś (श) or ṣ (ष).
- The absence of diphthongs (i.e., the co-articulation of two vowel sounds within a single syllable) was observed.
- Cerebral (retroflex) consonants were used very sparingly, with only limited phonetic traces recorded.
- Lexemes involving ligatures (graphemic compounds) were extremely rare and did not exhibit morphologically complex formations.
- Homonymous units whose semantic components were entirely tadbhava (indigenous origin) or tatsama (directly borrowed from Sanskrit) were virtually nonexistent.

Examples of the homonymous units identified in this phase are presented in Table 3, where they are classified according to phonetic formation, semantic expansion, and morphological differentiation.

№	Pali	Hindi	Meaning
1.	आसा	आशा	आशा- 1) hope; 2) golden or silver staff, mace;
2.	ऊनत्त, ऊनता	ऊनी	कमी, न्यूनता- 1) scarcity, deficiency; 2) woolen, related wool fabric;
3.	कसि	कसी	कृषि खेती-बाड़ी- 1) agricultural and farming; 2) plow tip, shovel.
4.	गमक	गमक	जानेवाला- 1) one who goes, goer; 2) drumbeat

Group 2: 6th–5th centuries CE.

During this period, the Prakrit language was regarded as one of the widely spoken dialects in the region of

Maharashtra, and it later served as a foundational substrate for the development of the Marathi language. According to linguistic sources, the Prakrit speech form described by Vararuchi around the 4th century CE corresponds to Shauraseni, which by that time had entered the Second Middle Indo-Aryan phase.

Shauraseni Prakrit, distinguished by its phonetic and morphological features, diverged significantly from Classical Sanskrit. It functioned as a spoken vernacular in the northwestern regions of India, and was actively used in oral communication during that era.

In the analysis of homonymous units from this phase, the Prakrit-Hindi Kosh compiled by Dr. K.R. Chandr was selected as the primary source. The lexical entries in the dictionary were examined from the perspectives of phonetic transformation, semantic expansion, and morphological differentiation, leading to the identification of mechanisms underlying homonym formation during the transition from Prakrit to Hindi.

The linguistic analysis conducted at the Prakrit stage revealed 250 homonymous units, constituting 15.8% of

the total lexical corpus. Several key phonetic developments were recorded during this period:

- Lexemes involving anusvāra (nasal resonance) appeared with notable frequency in the analyzed corpus.
- Words beginning with the pre-palatal retroflex consonant “ṇ” occupied a distinct position within the dictionary’s lexical inventory.
- Lexemes containing aspirated consonants (breath phonemes) were present and played a significant role in phonetic structuring.
- The use of ligatures (graphemic compounds) was extensive, indicating a high degree of complexity in the orthographic system.

Certain lexical units underwent consonantal phonetic shifts, which in turn influenced their semantic development and morphological structuring. The homonymous units identified in this phase are presented in Table 4, where they are classified according to criteria of phonetic transformation, morphological differentiation, and semantic expansion.

No	Prakrit	Hindi	Meaning
1.	अहिवास	अधिवास	बासना- 1) hope, personal will; 2) A place of residence;
2.	कागी	काकी	कौए की मादा-1) female crow; 2) wife of one’s younger paternal uncle;
3.	कुट्ट	कोट	किला, नगर-1) fort, town; 2) coat;
4.	चूला	चूल	विद्याघरों का एक नगर- 1) City of knowledge centers; 2) - a short drive shaft or stub axle.

### Group 3: The Apabhramsha Phase (500–1000 CE).

Apabhramsha represents a medieval linguistic stage within the Indo-Aryan language continuum, functioning as a crucial transitional link between Prakrit and the modern Hindi languages. Although its active period is generally accepted to span from 500 to 1000 CE, certain literary sources confirm the existence of works composed in Apabhramsha as late as the 15th century.

Despite being labeled apabhrashta—meaning

“corrupted language”—by Sanskrit scholars, Apabhramsha in fact constitutes a complex linguistic form shaped by the phonetic and morphological convergence of various regional dialects. This stage played a pivotal role in the formation of modern Indo-Aryan languages, with Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, and Punjabi all evolving from Apabhramsha roots.

In the analysis of homonymous units from this phase, the Apabhransha-Hindi Kosh compiled by Dr. Naresh Kumar was selected as the principal source. The lexemes

in the dictionary were examined according to criteria of phonetic transformation, semantic differentiation, and morphological structuring, leading to the identification of mechanisms by which homonyms emerged during the transition from Apabhramsha to modern Hindi.[13,591]

As a result of the linguistic analysis conducted during the Apabhramsha phase, a total of 200 homonymous units were identified, constituting 12.6% of the overall lexical corpus. This phase revealed several key phonetic developments:

- In the 11th-century Rodakrit text, the suffix “अल” was employed to express past tense, clearly observable in lexemes such as ओढ़िअल and पैहिरअल. This

morphemic element remains active in contemporary Bengali, Bhojpuri, and Maithili, indicating its diachronic continuity.

- In modern Hindi, the short vowel “अ” is no longer used as a matra (diacritic) in medial or final word positions, marking a significant stage in phonetic evolution.

These phonetic features played a crucial role in the morphological structuring of Apabhramsha and its transition into modern Hindi languages. Examples of the homonymous units identified in this phase are presented in Table 5, where they are classified according to phonetic transformation, semantic differentiation, and morphological formation criteria.

No	Apabhransha	Hindi	Meaning
1.	अमाण	अमान	अमाप, अमन्त, असंख्य- 1)infinitive, extremely large; 2)safety, security;
2.	आसा	आशा	आशा-1) hope, personal will; 2) golden or silver staff, mace;
3.	ऊन	ऊण	न्यून,हीन-1) Deficiency, shortfall, lack 2) wool;

## Conclusion

The etymological analysis of homonymous units in Hindi serves to uncover their origins, patterns of distribution, and linguistic evolution. According to the research findings:

- Tadbhava words—those that have naturally evolved from Old Indo-Aryan—are the most prevalent, comprising 56.5% of the total examples.
- Videshi (foreign-origin) words account for 17.4%, while Tatsama (direct Sanskrit borrowings) make up 17.1%.
- Among hybrid homonyms (2.6%), those of Persian-Arabic origin dominate at 1.5%, followed by Sanskrit (0.86%), native Hindi innovations (0.47%), and English borrowings (0.07%).

Source languages and historical influences reveal that English words entered the Hindi lexicon from the 19th century onward, primarily due to socio-economic and colonial impact. In contrast, Arabic and Persian elements were assimilated through Central Asian contact and the spread of Islamic culture.

Phonetic changes across historical stages include:

- In the Pali phase, cerebral and diphthongal sounds were rare, occurring in only 2–3% of cases.
- In the Prakrit phase, aspirated consonants appeared in 12% of lexemes, while nasal sounds (anusvāra) were present in 25%.
- The Apabhramsha phase showed consonantal phonetic shifts in approximately 10–12% of the corpus.

Grammatical features evolved as follows:

- Pali exhibited a simplified grammatical structure.
- Prakrit made extensive use of ligatures, with a 20% occurrence rate in written forms.
- Apabhramsha developed increasingly complex grammatical constructions, laying the foundation for the syntax of modern Hindi.

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