

# EMPHATIC REPETITION IN SPOKEN ARABIC<sup>1</sup>

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This paper identifies and explains Arabic emphatic repetition in ethnographic interviews against the general backdrop of an understanding of non-pragmatically motivated repetition in Spoken Arabic. It also considers the basic linguistic resources for expressing intensity in the lexicon and syntax and the significance of repetition as one of these resources. The latter part of the paper explains how these resources are drawn on in interaction and what other types of spontaneous immediate emphatic repetition occur. This approach allows for a nuanced interpretation of the salience of emphatic repetition in this spoken Arabic genre. The discussion contributes to our general understanding of the essence of repetition that allows it to be used as a productive interactive resource.

## 1. Introduction

This study on repetition and emphasis was triggered by noticing patterns of Arabic repetition that contrasted with views expressed originally in works like Shouby (1970), Patai (1973), and Beeston (1970), that Arabic speakers and writers use extensive repetition which is chiefly interpreted as being emphatic exaggeration. This is, one assumes, in unspoken contradistinction to practices in other languages. Such commentaries on Arabic rhetorical practice provide a limited explanation of the formal and functional characteristics of this linguistic resource. This study explains the need to account for emphatic repetition of different formal types (sounds, syllables, words, phrases, and clauses) as well as the more subtle repetition of semantic components in lexical couplets and repetition by codeswitching. Hence some emphatic repetition is part of the grammar and lexicon of the language; some is part of bilingual capacity; and in terms of interactional strategies, some emphatic repetition is part of the preferences of that language, which are themselves delimited by the grammatical and lexical possibilities of that language.

## 2. Background

Many claims have been made about the types and uses of repetition ranging from the classic Jakobson (1966, 1968) to Norrick (1987, 1988), and Tannen (1987a, 1987b, and 1989). Interactional functions of repetition are interestingly explored in Brody (1994) (multiple repetitions in Tojalab'al conversation); Mannheim (1998) (couplets in Quechua); Murata (1995) and Fox, Hayashi & Jaspersen (1996) (Japanese); Sorjonen (1996) (Finnish); and Yemenici (2002) (Turkish). Al-Batal (1990), and Johnstone (1991) focus on Arabic repetition in chiefly written texts. Johnstone (1994) attends to broader issues of

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repetition, Holes (1995a) considers grammatically and rhetorically conditioned Arabic emphasis, and Eid (1996) examines pronominal doubling. Of most direct relevance is Holes' (1995b) historic and sociolinguistic description of repetition in non literate Bahraini conversation.

### 3. Method

The main data are 30 minimally structured interviews with Australian citizens about emotions at work: 15 in Arabic - Lebanese, Palestinian, Jordanian and Egyptian bi literate bilinguals -18 hours audio taped data in total. All Arabic data was transliterated, transcribed<sup>2</sup> and translated. The interviews include question/answer sequences (initiated by interviewers and interviewees), clarification sequences, solicited narratives, and discussions within the consent negotiation process. Extra spontaneous Arabic data comes from four recordings of adult Arabic triadic conversations about child rearing.

All repetition needed to be accounted for before emphatic repetition could be analysed. Initial formal coding relied on Johnstone's (1994) dimensions for repetition: (1) what is repeated, that is, the linguistic level at which the repetition occurs, determined for the present study as (a) noticeably incomplete in terms of meaning generation: sounds/ non-morphemic syllables, morphemes, semantic components, syntactic frames (parallelism) and incomplete phrases or multi-phrase sentences; (b) noticeably complete well-formed words, phrases and clauses; (2) immediate or displaced - immediate or near immediate repeats are examined here; and (3) who is producing the repeat, that is, whether it is a self-repeat or other-repeat. Repetition, then, is seen as is the second, third or further reproduction of a sound, syllable, morpheme, syntactic or prosodic pattern, or word, phrase or clause within or across turns, by the same or different speakers. The instances were broadly grouped according to whether the repetition was related to (a) the grammar and lexicon, (b) being bilingual or (c) being a participant in interaction. In the latter, the functions were then allocated according to contextualized meaning, that is, relevance to surrounding talk. Tannen (1989) and Norrick's (1987) typologies formed a starting point for the typology developed for this study, but their models were not adequate for identifying all the repetitions found in bilingual and Arabic speech. Other relevant dimensions were added to allow comparison of the two different languages, as in Figure 1:

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<sup>2</sup> **KEY: Arabic Phonemic transliteration (in italics). Consonants:** Sounds similar to English sounds have the same symbols (b, d, f, h, k, l, m, n, s, t, w, y, z). sh= voiceless post-alveolar fricative. 'Emphatic' consonants' (pharyngealized): S, D, T, Z; j = voiced post-alveolar fricative (affricate dj in some varieties and voiced velar stop g in the present Egyptian data); H = voiceless pharyngeal fricative; 3= voiced pharyngeal fricative; TH = voiced interdental fricative (MSA import); th = voiceless interdental fricative (MSA import); x= voiceless post-velar fricative; gh = voiced post velar fricative; r = single tap (or trill when doubled); ʔ = glottal stop. q = (voiceless uvular stop) in CLA, MSA, =g in some regional varieties (including the present Jordanian data), as the glottal in others (in the present Lebanese data)

**Vowels:** a = fatHa, i = kasra, u = Damma, a: = Alif; u: = vocalic w, i: = vocalic y.

**CA:** > faster than surrounding talk<, ° softer than surrounding talk°, [overlap], =speaker continues, ↑= raised pitch ; ↓ =markedly lowered pitch; CAPS: =prominent stress; colon : = stretching a sound (phonemic in Arabic) (.) micropause, (1) estimated pause by second, semicolon =continuing intonation, full stop = sentence final intonation. [ = overlap Note that phonemic length is marked in the Arabic transliteration with a colon, whereas in English it marks stretching a sound as a prosodic option.

**Grammar:** ACT = actuality; IND = Indicative; DUM= Dummy Pronoun; F=feminine M=masculine; S singular; PL=plural; DUAL 3 = third person.

**Other:** Underline = repeatable; Bold= repeat (+~ indexical subscript numbers); superscript = word with INTENS in the meaning. INTENS = intensity. [ ] after example number = tape identifying number.

**Variation in example format.** Following Holes (1995a), the amount of interlinear information given will vary according to its relevance to the point being made.



Corrective self-repairs, on the other hand, are marked by change. For example, Arabic has a morphophonemic rule whereby the [l] in the proclitic definite article *al-* and demonstrative *hal-* is assimilated to the first sound of roots beginning with dental and alveolar-palatal consonants. This is similar to constraints on the use of the English allomorphs of the indefinite article. This results in semantic repetition when a speaker immediately repairs the wrong choice, as in.

(1b) AR 2B    *waSal*            *al-*    *ash-shaxis*    *j-jdiid*  
                   came:3ms    the-    the-person    the-new  
                   “the- the new person came”

Formally, an emphatic repetition, however involves more stylised prosodic marking (raised pitch, pause, final stretch of repeat), as in

(1c)            *bass*    *ka:n*            *ik↑ti:r:: ik↑ti:r::*    *'ija:bi*  
                   but    was:3ms            very    very    positive  
                   “But it was very positive.”

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Linguistic level

#### 4.1.1. Repetition and Intensity in the Lexicon

There is doubling in Arabic at the sound, syllable and fixed collocation levels, some emphatic. Proverbs and tautologies also rely on repetition, sometimes for contrastive emphasis, some words have ‘intensity’ as part of their meaning, and incremental emphasis is produced by idiomatic and fresh lexical couplets.

##### 4.1.1.1. Gemination

This is a productive morphological process in Arabic which involves stretching a sound rather than articulating it twice. ‘Emphasis’ is an umbrella term traditionally referring to different types of prominence and focus. Prosody researchers refer to ‘stress’ and ‘accent’, and linguists like Lodhi (2004:6) (who discusses Swahili grammar) speak of emphasis as intensity marking *inter alia* increase, abundance, and diversity.

So, for example, Arabic gemination has emphatic functions, like intensity, iterativeness (words for professions or occupations), increment, and plurality; and non emphatic functions, like the causative. Verb augmentation, as in Arabic verbal Pattern II (one of more than 10 patterns) includes doubling the medial radical to mark causative, as in *fahham* ‘explain’ (*faham* ‘understand’), and intensity or iteration, as in *kassir* ‘smash’ (*kasir* ‘break’), *saffa* ‘app lauded’ (*safa* ‘clap’), *aTTa3* ‘cut up’ (*aTa3* ‘cut’) *fassax* ‘tear to pieces’ (*fasax* ‘tear’). Nouns or adjectives can also be augmented by gemination, for iterative behaviour (occupations and dispositions) as in *xabba:z* ‘baker’, *kizza:b* ‘liar’,

*barra:da* 'refrigerator' (*ba:rid* 'cool/cold'); for intensity, as in *shaghghi:l* 'hard worker' (*shaghi:l* 'worker'), and for the diminutive, as in *shwayyi* 'a little/a bit' (*shi:* 'thing').

Holes (1995a: 113-4, 128) claims that in regional dialects, Pattern II is productive in its intensive sense for augmenting verbs, and in the habitual or intensive sense for creating new nouns of occupation. He also notes (p.114) that speakers will tend to choose the Pattern II verb in emphatic passages, which is more prominent in uneducated speech and storytelling. This implies that choosing a geminate form is in some cases socially indexed.

#### 4.1.1.2. Reduplication

Reduplication accounts for non emphatic word baby talk words in Arabic (e.g. *kaka* 'excrement') and is productive to express (1) iterativeness : e.g. *laflaf* 'wrap up' (*laff* 'wrap'), *naTnaT* or *naTwaT* 'jump around' (*naTT* 'jump'), *waswas* 'fussy', *hazhaz* 'jiggle/rock' (*hazz* 'shake'); or (2) sound symbolism: e.g. *xaDxaD* 'rattle' and *xashxash* 'jangle; including human sounds like *za'za* 'chirp/squeal [happy like a bird]', *xanxan* 'speak nasally', *tnahnah* 'to sob', *sarsar* 'chatter (prattle)', *Ta'Ta* 'chatter (teeth)', and *washwash* 'to whisper'. It has no apparent intensive meaning in nouns like *waTwaT* 'bat', *bulbul* 'nightingale' and *mbarbar* 'misanthrope' (pers.com. N. Tarsissi).

#### 4.1.1.3. Intensity as a semantic component of a word/phrase

The unmarked grammatical intensifiers of adjectives are *kti:r* 'very'; or *jiddan*, the Modern Standard Arabic (and Egyptian vernacular) form of 'very'. Verbs may be intensified with, for example, 'awi: 'strong' as in 'inzi3aaj 'awi: 'I felt very annoyed'.

Other intensifying expressions focus on a particular dimension. "Reality", is focused in *bi-l-Ha'i:'a* ' [in truth] 'really/truly', *fi3lan* 'really/indeed', *'aki:d* 'for sure', *3al-maZbu:t* ['at the exact'] 'certainly', and *bidu:n shakk* [without doubt] 'surely' in Arabic. "Totality" is expressed with 'Hatman 'entirely'; both *bi-l- shakil ikbi:r* ['in way big'] and *Tama:m* 'complete(ly)', *kama:l* 'total', *bi-kull* 'very' e.g., *bi-kull sahli* [with-all ease] 'very easily', and *3al-a:xi:r* ['at the end'] 'thoroughly'.

"Degree" is expressed with *kti:r* 'much/many'/'a lot/lots', *3addit* 'a number/many/several', and *la-daraja* [to an extent] 'terribly/really'.

The meanings and scope of the Arabic term and its gloss are not always necessarily coextensive. For example, whereas the English 'very' intensifies or specifies, Arabic *kti:r* intensifies but does not specify, Arabic has other ways of specifying, for example, [3B] *bi-nafs ash -shughul nafs-u* [at-same/self the-work same/self:3MS] 'at the very same job'. 'Very' and *kti:r* both intensify gradable adjectives, however English prefers to use 'really' when the adjective is itself intensified and participial, hence the preference for 'really overworked' rather than 'very overworked', whereas *kti:r* is fine with all gradeable adjectives, participial or not. *kti:r* augments the nominal (adj or noun) or the verb to a degree constrained by the possible meanings of the verb, adjective or noun. The Arabic practice for intensifying is for the hearer to interpret the degree of intensity according to linguistic and real life context, whereas the English 'very' is unambiguously the case of the speaker indexing a large degree of intensity. Weather temperature words provide a good example of how the meaning of *kti:r* is predictable from the semantics of the word it is qualifying and on the context, so that *l-yaum shaub /ba:rid* could mean 'it's quite hot~warm /cool~cold today' and *l-yaum kti:r shaub/ba:rid* 'it's quite hot~very warm /very

cool~quite cold today'. Sensation and emotion verbs and adjectives also entail a range from 'X to quite X', so from context the utterance *z3alit minn-u* could be interpreted as either 'I got [affected] annoyed by him' or 'I got quite/very [affected] annoyed by him', and *b-hubb-u ikti:r* as 'I like/love him a lot', and *b-hubb-u 'ikti:r ikti:r* as 'I like/love him very/too much, lots'. However, *b-3asha'-u* is unequivocally 'I love him passionately', and one intensifier would suffice.

#### 4.1.1.4. Proverbs

Many Arabic proverbs display repetition of words within repeated syntactic frames probably consequent to their contrastive or equational nature rather than being emphatic, e.g., *yaum 'il-ak yaum 3al-ak* 'one day for you one day against you'; '*ana: fi: wa:di: wa 'inta fi: wa:di:* [I am in a valley and you are in a valley] 'we can't communicate'; *yaum 'asal yaum basal* ' [one day] sometimes honey, [one day] sometimes onions', and *lissa:n jadi:d 'insa:n jadi:d* 'a new language, a new person'.

#### 4.1.1.5. Tautologies

These are common in some Arabic varieties and some groups within a regional variety. Farghal (1992) gives a full account of the pragmatics of Jordanian Arabic tautologies, but the examples he gives e.g., (p.299) *al-asad asad* [the-lion (is) a lion] 'He's a nice person.' and *al-Hma:r Hma:r* [the-donkey (is) a donkey] 'He's stupid.' (p229), are part of the Jordanian lexicon, but are not so relevant to speakers of other dialects<sup>3</sup>.

#### 4.1.1.6. Other fixed collocations

Intensity, duration and iteration can be expressed idiomatically. Non-emphatically, Arabic has *haik (u) haik* 'like this like this' = 'this and that'. Emphatic repetition in fixed collocations includes *yaum ba3da yaum* 'day after day', *marra u marrtain* [time and two times] or *marra:t wa marra:t* [times and times] 'time and again', *marra ba3da marra* 'time after time', '*aktar wa 'aktar* [more/most and more/most] 'more and more', *nutfi nutfi* 'bit by bit', and *haik haik* [this way this way] 'et cetera'. Extreme formulations are constructed using words or collocations marked for intensity, and/or words for maximal and minimal extremes, like *dayman* 'always', '*abadan* 'never', *miyya bi-l miyya* 'one hundred per cent', *min juwwa 'albi* 'from the bottom (deep) of my heart'.

#### 4.1.1.7. Lexical couplets: repetition of semantic components<sup>4</sup>

A lexical couplet or 'binomial' (Malkiel 1959, Norrick 1988), which is similar to the Sanskrit compounding called *dvandva*, is a phrase or sentence coordinating two or more words with shared semantic components and 'a single referent' (Johnstone 1991, 37), like the idiomatic English 'bits and pieces'. In Arabic grammar this is *at-tawki:d al- lafTHi* 'emphasis by words'<sup>5</sup>. For Arabic, this is demonstrated by an extract from Ja:bir Abu: Husayn's narrative poetry performance (2a), and from the present data: a fixed couplet (2b), a newly created vernacular lexical couplet (2c), and a Modern Standard Arabic

<sup>3</sup> Whereas some speakers in other varieties may say *huwwa huwwa* [he he] 'that's how he is', this is expressed more literally in Lebanese Arabic by *haida huwwa haik* [that he like that] 'that's how he is', which has no repetition, or with *ba3da huwwa huwwa* [still he he] 'he's still himself (the same)', in restricted contexts, for example, commenting on someone just returned from a year overseas.

<sup>4</sup> I take the perspective that the frame for producing lexical couplets is part of the lexicon of Arabic, and that speakers/writers can exploit this frame in new ways.

<sup>5</sup> see Cowell 1964: 511 for the distinction between this and *at-tawki:d al-ma3nawi:* 'emphasis by meaning' in complements and supplements .

lexical couplet (2d)<sup>6</sup>. Synonymous parallelism may extend to adjacent clauses (2e). As coordinated phrases with a cognate verb and noun, lexical couplets may include rhyme (phonetic repetition) further intensifying the utterance (2f).

(2a) *wa-za:di*                      *bi-hi wa-Hasrat-o wa-ghulb-o wa-a:la:m-o*  
and-increased                  in-him and-sadness-his and-woe-his and-grief-his  
'And his sadness, his woe and his grief increased.' (Connelly 1986: 100)

(2b) [3A]      *huwwa*                      *mabSu:T*                      *u*                      *farHa*  
'He is (so)                      happy                      and                      joyous.'

(2c) [2B ]      *Hawalt*                      '*aku:n*                      *layyin*                      *wa*                      *marrin*  
'I tried                      to be                      flexible                      and                      pliant.'

(2d) [6A]      '*a3Sa:b-u*                      *wa*                      '*infi3a:la:t-u*  
[nerves] temper-his                      and                      emotions-his  
'his temper and his emotions'

(2e) [4B]      *haida shi:*      *b-y-ijinnin*                      *b-y-Tayyir*                      *Dabana:t*                      '*l-3a'il*  
this      thing      IND-he-driven crazy                      IND -he.lets fly                      'supports' the-mind  
'this (is something that) will drive one crazy (and) **leave one mad.**'

(2f)                      *al-ta'yi:d-u*      *wa-*                      *al-musa:3ada-tu*  
the-aid-NOM                      and-the-help- NOM  
'the aid and help' (Johnstone 1991:40)

Speakers drew on fixed couplets or created 'fresh' ones (see Johnstone 1987:208 for Arabic examples of both types of couplet in written texts).

#### 4.1.2. Repetition and intensity in the grammar

Formal repetition accounts for much immediate repetition in Arabic, in contrast to the scarce English grammatical emphasis (like emphatic 'do'). Again, in order to appreciate the significance of repetition in Arabic talk, it is useful to explain briefly the non-emphatic occurrences (4.1.2.1.) before going in more depth into the emphatic aspects (4.1.2.2.).

##### 4.1.2.1. Non-Emphatic repetition in Arabic Grammar

Arabic has a number non-emphatic structures involving repetitions and these were prolific in the data: (1) immediate repetition with count marked words, as in *kilmi kilm-tain* [word word-DUAL] 'a word or two', *shaHar shaHr-ain* [month month- DUAL] 'a month or two' and in *wa:Hid wa:Hid* [one one] 'one by one' or 'one after the other'. Although the English data showed the same paratactic structure, as in 'after one two weeks', repetition was not involved. (2) *min ... la...* 'from...to...' constructions, as in *min Taba'a li-Taba'a* [from social class to social class] 'from one social class to another'; (3) expression of

<sup>6</sup> A number of the repetitions in this group relate to what Jakobson's (1960) terms as the 'poetic function' of language. While this may be relevant for other languages, the prose/poetry dichotomy is not so relevant for Arabic. As Holes (1995:272) notes, the notion of 'poetic' may not be categorially coextensive to the distinctions between prose and poetry in the Arabic tradition. This will be discussed further along in the paper.

equivalence in coordinated phrases, with repetition of the preposition and variation in affixes, as in *mitl-i mitl-ak* (Lebanese) OR *zayy-i zayy-ak* (Jordanian, Egyptian) [like-me like-you.ms] ‘We’re the same.’ Cowell (1964:488) explains this as a reflex of there being no other way of coordinating pronominal suffixes. In these cases, the unmarked English translation avoids repetition and uses pronouns; and (4) things, attributes, actions and states are compared with repetition of a nominal with different person and number suffixes, as in *bait-ik ‘akbar min bait-i* [house-you.FS bigger from house-my] ‘Your house is bigger than mine’.

In order to establish emphatic repetition of pronouns in Arabic, it is essential to firstly rule out non emphatic pronominal repetition. This involves co-occurrence of the same independent pronoun, or of independent and bound forms of a pronoun. Arabic Subjects and Objects are marked on the verbs whether or not the Subject or Object slot in the sentence is filled and independent pronouns are used in topic and comment slots in non-verbal sentences. If known or assumed from context, the subject is usually suppressed in Arabic (Cowell 1964:418), and its occurrence is either emphatic or non emphatic. Unemphatically a noun or independent pronoun, either at the beginning or end of the clause, can disambiguate, be the unmarked way to answer a yes/no question, or mark language change in action (from synthetic to analytic).

### *Disambiguation*

The perfect 2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular and 1<sup>st</sup> person singular are identically marked on the verb, and the imperfect indicative and subjunctive 2<sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular and 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular are identically marked on the verb. In the present data, much inclusion of the independent pronoun in a person marked verbal sentence was disambiguating.

- (3a) [2B] *‘ana law ruH-it*  
I if went-I/you.MS  
‘if I had gone ...’ (not ‘you: MS had gone’)
- (3b) [6B] *al-m3alama:t ‘illi ‘inta 3am ti-Hitt-a*  
the-information which you.MS ACT you. MS/she-would give-it(FS)  
‘the information you’re going to give’ (not ‘she’s going to give’)
- (3c) [6B] *‘amra:r hiyya kama:n bi-t-zi:da:*  
times she also IND-you. MS /she-exaggerate  
‘sometimes she also exaggerates’ ( not ‘you: MS also exaggerate.’)

This occurred when there was a contextual possibility of ambiguity in identifying the referent. So, for example, it did not occur in the interviews between women, because there was no possibility of confusion with the male addressee.

### *Answer formation*

Yes/No questions are answered with a partial repeat of the proposition, rather than only with a substitution word like *na3m* or ‘*ai*’ ‘yes, or *la*’ ‘no’, and first person pronouns can be unmarkedly expressed.



- (4a) Q: *Hakkait-i ma3-u (inti)*  
‘Did you talk to him (you)?’
- A: (‘na3m) (‘ana) *Hakkait ma3-u*  
(yes) (I) I talked to him’ [\* *na3m* / ‘ai ‘yes, la’ ‘no.’]
- (4b) Q: *fi: kharabah*  
‘Is there (any) electricity?’
- A: (‘ai) *fi:*  
‘(yes) there is’ [\* *na3m* / ‘ai ‘yes, or la’ ‘no’.]

#### *Independent pronouns and Language change*

In this data, Arabic independent personal pronouns were used 195 times. 34% were essential for forming non-verbal sentences, 6% were used in quasi-verbal sentences (that is, with the verbal forms of the prepositions), 17% used for disambiguation, 7% for topicalization, 5% in questions and 10% were clearly for emphasis. The remaining 21% could not be allocated a clear function according to Arabic grammar, although some can be accounted for pragmatically. This residue of unmarked occurrences can probably be explained by Holes’ (1995a:149) observations that regional varieties of Arabic are moving away from being synthetic towards being analytic which is most evident in first and second person singular pronouns.

#### 4.1.2.2. Emphatic Repetition

##### 4.1.2.2.1. Lexical Echo

Otherwise known by scholars like Johnstone (1991:63) as the Cognate Accusative, this term is taken from Holes (1995b:60) as a more accurate depiction of the informal version of Classical Arabic *al-maf3u:l l-muTlaq* ‘the absolute object’. Johnstone (1991) and Cowell (1964) explain the co occurrence of cognate noun and verb as providing a vehicle for qualification of the action referred to by the verb. This repetition of semantic components is incidentally rather than strategically emphatic. Note in the free glosses in (5) how English avoids such repetition.

- (5a) [2B] *Ha:dith illi Hadath ma3-i*  
happening which happened.it with-me  
‘the incident that happened to me’

Repetition through the use of cognates is particularly evident in adverbial noun complements, chiefly because of the lack of adverbs in Arabic<sup>7</sup>.

- (5b) [3B] *raza’-ni rizi’*  
he.provided for-me provision  
‘He provided well for me.’
- (5c) [3B] *muHtamal ikfur.(.) ikfur kufra:n 3aZi:m*  
sometimes I.blaspheme I.blaspheme blaspheming great  
‘sometimes I swear. (.) I swear a great blasphemy.’

<sup>7</sup> This may well be an Afro-Asiatic areal feature as Verb + Cognate noun to express certainty occurs as the Infinitive Absolute in Hebrew, which also has few adverbs.

- (5d) [7B]     *kin-t*   *Hiss*   *'itka:fa'*     *al-muka:fa'a*  
 was-I   feel   rewarded   the-reward  
 'I felt so rewarded.'
- (5e) [2B]     *wa darrabt-u*     *tadri:b*     *mni:H*  
 'and trained.I-him   a training   good  
 'and I trained him very well.'
- (5f) [6B]     *lamma 'l-wa:Had*   *bi-y-a3Ti*     *3aTa:'*     *min 'alb-u*  
 when   the-one   IND-he-gives   giving   from heart-his  
 'when someone gives with all his heart.'
- (5g)     *'ana ftikarit*     *fi:*     *fikra*  
 I   thought-I   in   thought  
 'I had an idea.'

This is a grammatical resource but Holes (1995a:114) shows it is a narrative option which is increasingly marked as indexing non-educated speech in some dialects.

#### 4.1.2.2.2. Pronouns

As the Arabic subject is usually suppressed, the co occurrence of the independent pronoun and affixed form is noticeable. Doubling the semantic components by using the same-referent bound and free pronominal forms in an utterance is an important way to provide emphasis, and was frequent in this data. The free and bound demonstrative pronouns co-occur for emphatic specification (for examples in other Arabic dialects see Holes 1995a, 150).

- (6a)     *la*     *-ha-n-*     *nahar*     *ha:da*  
 to –   -this-the-   day   this-ms  
 'to this very day'
- (6b)     *bi-*     *ha-l-*     *'iyyam hayy*  
 in-this-the-days   this  
 'ONE of these days'
- (6c)     *ha-l-*     *mishkli*     *hayy*  
 this-the-problem   this  
 'THIS problem'
- (6d)     *ha-l-*     *ghalTa*     *hayy*  
 this-the-mistake   this  
 'THIS mistake'
- (6e)     *ha-sh*     *-shaghli*     *hay*  
 this-the-thing   this  
 'THIS matter'



but IND-she.sends-to-him email  
 ‘but send emails to him’

5. wa huwwa b-**yi**-b3at-l-a E Mail  
 and he IND-he.sends-to-her email  
 ‘and HE sends emails to her.’

Contrastive stress of both subject and object pronouns is the most explicit use of this kind of repetition in Arabic. In (8b) the first 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun is an example of topicalization, but the next pronoun is the contrastively emphatic subject, followed by the matching subject pronoun affix on the verb. The postposed independent 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun and the antecedent pronominal affix provide the object emphasis.

- (8b) [4A] 1. Fa’*izan* hinni bass ‘inti::  
 so if them but you.FS
2. int-i ma: HaSSa:-**ti** shi tija-hun hinni  
you-FS not felt-**you.FS** thing goes towards-**them** **them**  
 ‘That was them. But as for you, didn’t YOU feel something  
 towards THEM?’

This is also the case with pronouns referential to the pronominal affix on a prepositional complement. Context determines whether an emphatic or non-emphatic reading is most likely, and whether the pronominal referent or the predicate is being emphasized.

- (8c) [3B] *yu-HuT il-xaTa’ min-ni* ‘ana  
 he-put the-fault from-me me  
 ‘He blamed the fault on ME.’

- (8d) [6A] ‘ai ‘aki:di (.) ‘ana Sa:r ma3-i: ‘uSSa  
 yes certain I it.became with-me story  
 ‘Yes, for sure an incident DID happen to me.’

The pre- or postposed independent pronoun can also contrastively emphasize possession

- (8e) [KIDS] ‘inTi rifa’a:-tik inti jaw-tik  
 you-fs friends-of-2fs you-fs surroundings-2fs  
 ‘YOUR friends. YOUR surroundings.’

- (8f) *haida mabda’-i* ‘ana  
 this principle-my I  
 ‘This is MY principle.’

- (8g) [4A] ma: b-a3rif. ma: b-i’dar ‘a3mul shi: ‘ana.  
 not IND-I.know not IND -I.can I.do thing I  
 ‘I don’t know I can’t do anything MYSELF.’

#### 4.1.2.2.3. Contrastive emphasis from extraposed preposition+affix

In Arabic the object can be contrastively emphasized without repetition by using the pronominal suffix on the independent ‘*il-* ‘to-’.

(9a) *mumkin*      *ti-fassir-l-na*      *shwayye*  
 maybe      you.ms-explain-to-us      a little  
 ‘Maybe you could explain a little to us’

(9b) *mumkin*      *ti-fassir*      *shwayye*      ‘*il-na*  
 maybe      you.ms-explain      little      to-us  
 ‘Maybe you could explain a little to us’ (not ‘explain to them/him/her’)

#### 4.1.3. Summary.

In order to provide a meaningful account of repetition and expression of emphasis, one needs to understand the distinction between grammatically and pragmatically motivated repetition, and to recognize that grammatical, semantic, and morphological features of a language influence pragmatic possibilities. For example, Fox et al (1996:202) explain that repair differences in their Japanese and English data can be explained in terms of difference in Japanese and English verb morphology. A greater degree of grammatical repetition may also lead to tolerance towards strategic repetition, which Johnstone (1994:13) claims is the case for Arabic.

This section explained how the use of repetition overlaps with expressing emphasis, and points out that repetition is highly productive in Arabic word formation and grammar, sometimes for emphasis, and this is naturally a basic resource speakers have for expressing emphasis in interaction. It noted that English relies more on prosodic resources for contrastive emphasis and on using words with an INTENSITY component than it does on repetition.

## 4.2. Repetition, emphasis and interaction

The basic grammatical features of a language provide “potentials for artistry in the poetics of language” (Johnstone, 1994:13) as well as in the strategic packaging of other genres of spoken and written language. As well as using the basic building blocks of the language, speakers are involved in creative decision making and strategic use of additional linguistic features like silence and pausing; marked change in volume levels, pitch or rate of speech; preferred ways to produce and respond to, say, actions like offering, inviting and asking; and, most relevant to this study, repetition of words, phrases or clauses.

Repetition as an interactional emphatic resource involves immediate repeats that are either partial copies or duplications. Partial copies occur in syntactic parallelism, that is where a syntactic structure is repeated with a replacement of one of the words or morphemes in the repeat. ‘Partial copies’ also refers to repeats of semantic components in translation codeswitches. On the other hand, words, phrases or sentences may be duplicated for emphasis. The following description and explanation of interactional emphatic repeats deals firstly with the more subtle partial repeats and then with repetitions of words, phrases and sentences. It also includes some contrastive examples and discussion of English preferences to emphasize without repeating.

### 4.2.1. Syntactic frame repetition: parallelism and emphasis

Syntactic parallelism allows for cohesive variation of the same idea (Holes 1995a, 270). Syntactic frame repetition was used in this data to perform a range of speech acts apart from ‘emphasizing’, like ‘clarifying’ and ‘correcting’.

The examples of syntactic frame repetition for emphasis fell into one of two types: either contrastive syntactic parallelism or coordinating (incremental) parallelism. In this present data, both contrastive and coordinating (incremental) emphasis was expressed through syntactic frame repetition.

*Emphatic contrastive syntactic frame repetition: difference emphasized*

Syntactic frame repetition can frame a contrast and difference is emphasised, for example in (10) ‘capability’ contrasts with ‘background’.

(10) [7A]

1. *fa kant il-aS↑wa:T ; mu3Zam-ha: DuDD-i*  
so it was the-voting most-it against-me
2. *mush 3a-sh-shan kafa'at-i<sub>1</sub>*  
not for-the-reason capability-my
3. *3ash-shan background bta:3-i:1*  
for-the-reason belongs-me

‘So the votes; most were against me. Not because of my capability; because of my background’.

*Emphatic coordination syntactic frame repetition: similarity emphasized*

The focus here is on cohesion and similarity rather than contrast and difference. This type of parallelism is incrementally emphatic.

- (11a) [4B]
1. *al-muwaZZafi:n bi-nafs al-mustawa<sub>1</sub>*  
the-employees at- same the-level
  2. *wa bi-nafs al-bina:ya<sub>1</sub>*  
and in- same the-building

‘The employees at the same level and in the same building.’

- (11b) [4B]
1. *wa 'ana: 3a:rfi<sub>1</sub>*  
and I knowing
  2. *kill-na 3a:rfi:n<sub>1</sub> 'innu ha-sh-shi:*  
all-us knowing:pl that this-the-thing

‘And I know and everyone knows about this.’

*Multiple parallelism for emphasis*

Emphatic syntactic frame repetition can occur within and across sentences. In (11c), for example, the predicate slot of the presentational *fi*: ‘there is’ is filled by two different nouns, with the parallel structures set off by a micropause. In the same example, Line 4 begins with a repeat of the frame of the first line.

- (11c) [5A]
1. wa dayman kin-t Hiss<sub>1</sub>  
and always was-I I.feel
  2. ma: fi: 'imtina:m<sub>2</sub>  
not there is gratitude
  3. **ma: fi: ta'di:r<sub>2</sub>**  
not there is praise
  4. **wa dayman kin-t Hiss<sub>1</sub> Ha:l-i: ...**  
and always was-I I.feel state-my  
'And I was always feeling there is no gratitude (.) there is no praise.  
And I was always feeling in myself ...'

#### 4.2.2. Emphasize by codeswitching: repetition of semantic components

Emphasis was one of the uses of codeswitching in the Arabic data (other functions including 'explaining' and 'clarifying'). For example, at line 5 in (12), the interviewee (who works in an Arabic speaking workplace), repeats the direct quote (reported first in Arabic in Line 4) in English to emphasize the strength of her disgust at the boss' behaviour.

(12) [4B]

- 1 *masalan 'ana mudir-i ma fari' ma3-u;*  
for example I boss-my not care with-him
- 2 *bayi3a;*  
he gave up
- 3 > *shu: ma b-iSi:r* <  
what what IND-it.happens
- 4 *'ya Hara:m ma: fi:-na: n-a3mil shi:'*  
Oh sorry! Not in-us we-do thing
- 5 **'we cannot do anything'**
- 6 *ma: ba3rif ma: bi'dar 'a3mul shi: 'ana*  
not IND-I.know. not IND-I.can I.do thing I
- 1 for example MY boss does not care
- 2 he has given up
- 3 > whatever happens<
- 4 'Oh sorry! We can't do anything'
- 5 WE CANNOT DO ANYTHING
- 6 I don't know. I can't do anything

#### 4.2.3. Repeating a word, phrase or clause.

Emphatic repetition is stylized, with marked prosody, and as mentioned earlier in 4.1., this formally distinguishes an emphatic repeat from a simple involuntary speech production repeat of a word or phrase, or from a strategic repetition like a corrective repair.

*Iconic increment*

This is expressed with co-ordinated or paratactic repeats in both languages. *Shwayye* ‘little, a bit’ was used like this by a number of speakers in the Arabic corpus.

- (13a) [2B] *huwwa ya3mil-ha laHalu wa shway shway shway shway shway*  
 he he.do-it himself and bit bit bit bit bit  
 ‘he will do it by himself gradually (slowly slowly slowly slowly slowly).’

*Doubling an intensifier*

*kti:r* ‘very/much’ was repeated for intensifying emphasis:

- (13b) [2B] *bass ka:n kti:r kti:r ija:bi*  
 but it.was very very positive  
 ‘But it was VERY positive.’

- (13c) [2B] *aktar shi: aktar shi b-izku:r ism allah*  
 Most thing most thing IND-I.say name Allah  
 ‘MOSTLY I’d say Allah’s name.’

*Emphatic spotlighting of negation*

Spotlighting or highlighting throws retrospective prominent focus on the repeatable and this occurred in negative descriptions of an account of a state of affairs or course of events.

- (13d) [6B] ‘I just couldn’t **COULDN’t** bear it.’

- (13e) [6A]
1. *Hassait innu a:: a:: a:: (0.5)*  
 I.felt that ah ah ah (0.5)
  2. *xalaS. (.)*  
 enough
  3. *>ma: fi: ma: fi: ma: fi:- ni:*  
 not in not in is in-me
  4. *tabi3 aktar< min haik*  
 continue more than that

‘I felt that a:: a:: a:: (0.5) it is over. (.) can’t **can’t** **I** **can’t** keep going anymore.’<sup>8</sup>

*Spotlighting narrative focus through topicalization*<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> This rather awkward gloss is a way of dealing with the different placement of the pronominal subject in each language.



Narrative focus refers to that part of what is said or written which the narrator is presenting as most salient or prominent. Topical clauses occurred to provide cohesive or shifted narrative focus. This involves a partial or complete match of semantic components – a complete match when a word or phrase in the topical clause is identical to the one in the comment, and partial when you have both a noun phrase and a pronoun, with the possibility in Arabic of having both the independent and cliticized pronoun.

- (14a) [4B] *'innu 'ana 3am b-a3mil shi: mni:H*  
 that I ACT IND-I.do thing good  
 'As for me, I am doing something good.'
- (14b) [3A] *ha:d-il-yunit (.) badd-i tabillit-l-i ya:*  
 this-the-unit want-I you.MS.tile-for-me DUM:it.FS  
 'This unit. I want you to tile it for me.'

The data demonstrated repetition to provide overt emphatic spotlighting of the narrative focus, with double subjects and objects, sometimes already topicalized (15b-d). In these cases, the delivery was highly stylized with an initial rising pitch, followed by a micropause and then the repeat.

- (15a)[6B] 1. *u:: shi: ta:ni: a (2) l-'inDiba:T bi-l-3amal*  
 and thing second um the-discipline at-the- work
2. *ha:↑da (.) ha:da ↑'aham shi: .*  
 this this most important thing
- 'Another thing is discipline at work. THIS is the most important thing.'
- (15b) [2b] 1. *'a↑na:; (.) 'ana: ma: 3and-i mani3*  
 I I NEG with-me objection
2. *'aHki ma3-ak wa haida*  
 I:talk with-you.MS and this
- '(as for me) I have no objection talking to you and so forth'

Heavy pronominal marking of the utterance acts to increase the intensity of the whole utterance:

- (15c) [kids] *bass 'ana ha-sh-shi: ma: b-iHibb-u.*  
 But I this-the-thing not IND-I:like-it. MS  
 'But ME, I don't like it.'

(15d) [6B][Translated immediately prior talk: 'True, everyone feels anger, feels spite,

<sup>9</sup> For further examples of extraposition in a range of clause types and varieties of Arabic see Cowell (1964: 429-434, 530-532) and Holes (1995:149ff).

feels tension.']  
 'ana hadu:l mathalan mumkin 'aHiss fi:y-un  
 I these example perhaps I:feel in-them  
 'ME, THAT's what I may feel, for example.' (this utterance is not acceptable for  
 a number of speakers)

#### *Emphatic repetition for topical shift*

There were also instances of the object of the immediately prior utterance being repeated as the overt subject of the next. This can shift the focus on that narrative participant from, in this case, a passive to an active role in the recount:

- (16a) [2B]
1. Fa 'ana: Hakait ma3 il-masu'↑u:l (1.2)  
 So I I.talked with the-responsible
  2. u: l-masu'u:l 'a:l  
 and the responsible he.said
  3. a:: raH n-a3T-i:k wa:Had a::(0.5) maka:↑n-u  
 ah:: going we- give-you.MS someone ah: place-his

'So I talked to the boss and HE said ah we are going to  
 give you someone ah: to replace him'

#### *Intensify a speech act*

As well as creating prominence and focus on one part of an utterance, repetition can be used to create a speech act with a strong illocutionary force. For example, although speakers can intensify imperative directives in order to be specific or add general emphasis by using the second person pronoun, for Arabic this can also mean that there is a doubling of pronominal marking, as in: (*'int-i*) *Ta3-i la-haun* '[(you-FS) come-you.FS to-here]' ('You) come here.' In this data, as well as intensifying reported or current talk imperatives, repetition also emphasized the strength of an agreeable acknowledgement as in (17a), an explanation, as in (17b), and collaborative joint expression of agreement, as in (17c). In (17d), there is word order change created by topicalization of the locative pronoun in the repeat. This adds additional emphasis to the reported speech act of refusing (by giving the reason it cannot be done) to do what the client has requested.

(17a) [3B] [Translated immediately prior talk:

Intee: 'I was very happy with my work']

INTER: 3azi:m 3azi:m wallahi  
 Great great indeed!  
 'That's really great!'

- (17b) [4A]
1. bass 'il-X ka:nit kti:r mni:Ha.  
 But the-X it.was very good
  2. bidd-i 'a'u:l il-X ka:nit kti:r mni:Ha  
 want-I I-say the-X it.was very good  
 'But (the company) was very good (to me). I want to say (the company)  
 was very good.'

- (17c) [KIDS]
1. B: *l-ula:d*      *b-yi-shu:f-u*    *haik*  
the-children    IND-3-see-PL    like this/so
  2. A: =*ai*'=  
yes
  3. C: => *b-Si:rit*      *hinni*    *yi-t3allam-u*<=  
IND-it.happens they    3-come to learn-PL.'
  4. B: = >*b-Si:rit*      *hinni*    *yi-t3allam-u*<=  
IND-it.happens they    3-come to learn-PL.'
  5. A: = >*b-Si:rit*      *hinni*    *yi-t3allam-u*<=  
IND-it.happens they    3-come to learn-PL.'
  6. C: = >*killu*      *b-y-irja3*      *li-l-bait*<  
Everything      IND-3- returns to-the-house
1. B: 'The children see this'
  2. A: 'yes'
  3. C: 'They will come to learn.'
  4. B: 'They will come to learn.'
  5. A: 'They will come to learn'
  6. C: 'Everything depends on the upbringing.' (saying)

- (17d) [2B]    *fi:* \_\_\_\_\_ *qa:nu:n*      ↓*hu:na* ↑ *hu:na*      *fi:*      *qa:nu:n*  
there is      law      here    here      there is      law  
'There are laws here. Here there are laws.'

#### 4.2.4. Arabic preference for repetition as an emphatic strategy in interaction

In order to emphatically spotlight, Arabic uses extraposition, parallelism, repetition of a word or the use of lexical items with 'intensity' as part of the meaning. The preference with Arabic is to more frequently repeat for intensity than use a word with 'intensity' as part of its meaning - across 13 of the 15 interviews there were 23 lexical expressions of intensity but 89 emphatic repeats). 55% of the Arabic emphatic repeats occurred in descriptions of people, places, things, events and feelings; 34% of emphatic repeats were used in explanations; and 11% of emphatic repeats occurred as responses.

In this corpus there were clusters of emphasis; that is, the speakers used a variety of ways of producing emphasis in the same stretch of talk. This can be thought of as "emphatic attraction" and such stretches are useful for demonstrating preferences for the linguistic resources used for emphasizing.

Extract (18) shows a representative Arabic preference for a range of types of repetition (non emphatic (line18), emphatic (lines 20-21 and line 22), as well as the use of lexical marking of intensity (italic superscript)

- (18) [3B]
15. INTER    *Ghayyarat*<sub>10</sub>    *ya3ni*    *shaghla:t*    <sup>'IKTI:R</sup> *-i*  
It.changed      that is,    thing:PL    many-FS
  16. INTEE:    *Ghayyarat*<sub>10</sub>    <sup>bi-Haya:t-i</sup>      *Hatta min- a::*

- it.changed      in-life-my      since from-
17.      *b- 'add-ak*      *ti- 'u:l*  
IND-can-you.MS      you.MS-say
18.      *min*      *Taba'a<sub>11</sub>*      *li-Taba'a<sub>11</sub> (raised)*  
from      social class      to-social class
19. INTER:      *na3m*  
yes
20. INTEE:      *mathalan*      *3imilt*      *ma sh↑ru:3<sub>12</sub> 3ammart ↑bait<sub>12</sub> a::*  
like      I.made      project      I.built      house
21.      *3aTait*      ↑*'a:hl-i<sub>12</sub>*  
I.gave to      parents-my.
21. INTER      *m:::*
22. INTEE:      *ya3ni*      *'IKTI:R<sub>13</sub>*      *'IKTI:R<sub>13</sub>*      *ya3ni*  
it.means      much      much      it.means

Interviewer: It changed, well, many things.

Interviewee: It changed my life since then, from- a::, you could say, from one social class to another.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: Like, I had a project, I built a house, I gave (money) to my parents.

Interviewer: mmm

Interviewee: Well, it was too much, you see.

Expressions of intensity light the hearer's path through the minutiae of extended turns, such that the hearer can appreciate what aspects of the recount of course of events or state of affairs are most salient to the speaker at the time he or she is creating them. From the findings from this interview data, and from other works on repetition in Arabic, spoken Arabic emphatic repetition also appears to index social and regional variation as well as strength of intention, and strong involvement in what one is saying<sup>10</sup>.

## 5. Discussion

This section draws on the findings described above to provide an explanation of the essence of emphatic repeating as a linguistic resource. It will also discuss the link between the nature of repeating and preference for its use as a conversational or textual resource for emphasis. That is, it will explain some of the relevant aspects of repetition as part of the communication norms of a group in order to engage in a particular speech situation.

<sup>10</sup> Holes' (1995a:30)3 comment that codeswitches do not necessarily mark 'commitment to [ ] truth' but what is important to the speaker, is relevant to this more general question of emphatic repetition. It may be an attempt to persuade, but through reference to personal salience, rather than to truth.

The essential meaning of repeating can be understood by looking at what it can offer at all linguistic levels.

From a semantic point of view, emphatic repeating is perspective-free. It is clear from the earlier explanation of lexical intensity in both languages in 4.1., that Arabic speakers and English speakers can emphasize by choosing one of a number of words with ‘intensity’ as one of its components. Some are neutral (*kṭi:r* ‘very’) but other intensifiers have additional semantic components, for example: *bi-l-Ha’i’a* ‘really’ is linked to the notion of ‘truth’ and *tamaam* ‘completely’ is linked to the notion of ‘whole’.

From a conversation production point of view, grounded in the importance of the moment by moment production of talk (hence the analytical focus on attention to order and relative sequencing) a repetition delays the progress of the current turn construction unit.<sup>11</sup> This iterated moment of the interaction marks incompleteness and leads to heightened hearer /speaker attention and involvement. This is one way of creating narrative suspense.

From a syntactic point of view, parataxis is salient for Arabic, whereas subordination is more salient for English - which is Johnstone’s (1994:13) evidence for Arabic speakers using more repetition and having a greater tolerance of repetition in interaction than do speakers of other languages

It is also useful to consider the possible interactional effects of using repetition. The main point I want to make is that because repetition has so many possible functions, a moment of repetition creates a moment of ambiguity and evokes increased inferencing from the hearer. That is, on hearing a repeat, the hearer needs to distinguish which of many possible functions the repeat expresses. Increased dependence on contextual or extra-lexical meanings is a marker of a high-context communication preference (Hall & Hall 1990) and it is reasonable to accept that using a potentially multi functional resource like repetition is a high-context communication resource. Having to disambiguate and use contextual cues in order to do this can also be interpreted as also related to indirection.

Emphatic repeating, then, can be seen as a resource for being indirect in interaction and engaging the hearing in inferencing activity. On the other hand, using an intensifier, or a word or phrase with INTENSITY as part of its denotation makes emphasis more explicit, and is related to low-context communication strategies. In sum, with repeating, mutual comprehension relies on the hearer drawing the right inferences, whereas words with an INTENSITY component have less propensity for ambiguity and comprehension relies chiefly on the choices made by the speaker.

Even though the Arabic data demonstrated shared communication norms in how speakers repeated and emphasized there was intra-linguistic variation reflecting social motivations for using this linguistic resource (repeating for emphasis). Although only two of the Arabic speakers used stretches of Modern Standard Arabic (the High form), neither intensified nor repeated to any great extent. This suggests that Holes (1995b) is right in his claim that repetition is one aspect of contemporary spoken Arabic that increasingly indexes the speaker as uneducated or rural. These points suggest that image production is an important factor that influences whether or not a speaker emphasizes which highlights the possibility of culture-specific connotations associated with emphasizing.

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<sup>11</sup> Ten Have (1999) is a good basic introduction to this paradigm.

The findings indicate that a considerable amount of Arabic repetition is not pragmatically motivated, and that there is a range of types of emphatic repetition used to creative effect in Arabic conversation. This includes lexical couplets which are often restricted to more literary genres in other languages and emphatic repetition of semantic components through codeswitches for bilingual speakers.

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