FUNCTIONS OF REPETITION
IN TWO WESTERN LANGUAGES: ENGLISH AND SPANISH

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the functions of repetition in two Western languages: English and Spanish. We argue that Johnstone's use of only one language to establish a contrast between Arabic and Western languages, English, raises two important questions. 1) Are all *Western* languages alike? 2) What are the functions of repetition in English and how do they compare to, or contrast with types and functions of repetition in spanish? These questions are addressed by this study.

Introduction

Johnstone Koch (1983a) argues that Western modes of argumentation are based on a syllogistic model of proof while Arabic argumentation is characterized by repetition and paraphrasing of the arguments. She claims *(1987a) that the most salient feature* of Arabic persuasive discourse is structural and paraphrastic repetition. She notes that repetition creates presence and its pragmatic effect is persuasion. Finally, she suggests that repetition as a persuasive strategy is not used as frequently in English, at least in formal contexts.

Johnstone uses only one language to establish a contrast between Arabic and Western languages: English. This raises two important questions. 1) Are all *Western* languages alike? 2) What are the functions of repetition in English and how do they compare to, or contrast with types and functions of repetition in Spanish? These questions are addressed by this study.

The purpose of this study was to examine the functions of repetition in two Western languages: English and Spanish.[1] The data for this research consist of a total of eighty editorials collected from four newspapers, two of them from the United States: *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times,* the other two from Costa Rica: *La Nación* and *La República*. The editorials were collected at random from September to November 1987.

Theoretical considerations

An important consideration in this type of study is related to the classification of the types of repetition. For example, what constitutes lexical repetition, what repetition with variation and what paraphrase? The determination of what type of repetition has occurred is relative; the difference between one type and another is not always clear-cut. The following excerpt from an editorial of the *New York Times* illustrates that sometimes repetition may be viewed as lexical repetition, repetition with variation, or even paraphrase. This editorial supports the decision made by the Nobel committee of the Norwegian Parliament to award President Arias of Costa Rica the Peace Prize in 1987. It also criticizes President Reagan for

having made only a terse comment when he learned about this decision.

4   It's perfectly true, as nettled American
5   conservatives complain, that Oslo is a long way
6   from Central America. Doubtless the Nobel
7   Committee of the Norwegian Parliament knew it was
8   taking a chance in bestowing the prize on
9   President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica. After all, the
10   regional peace plan he put forward doesn't
11   even go into effect until Nov. 7. Still, the
12   committee's timing makes this award especially
13   important.
14   The prize goes to the elected leader of an
15   exemplary democracy whose citizens decided four
16   decades ago to abolish their armed forces. Costa
17   Ricans as a people have long since earned this
18   prize. How much better if President Reagan had
19   said as much, instead of *his grudging three words*
20   for Mr. Arias, "I congratulate him." As *those*
21   *cold words* suggest, the new pact needs all the
22   help it can muster.

It could be argued that the phrase in italics in lines 20-21 above is a repetition with variation of line 19 at the phrase level. The variation exhibited in this repetition consists of maintaining the head-noun, *words,* while changing the possessive adjective *his* in line 19 for a demonstrative adjective, *those* in line 20. Then, the modifier *grudging* in line 19 is substituted by another modifier in line 21: *cold*. Finally, the ordinal *three* in line 19 is deleted in line 21. Thus, *his grudging three words* is repeated with variation as *those cold words.* The similarity in rhythm also makes it feel like a repetition.

At the word level, it could be argued that only one item has been actually repeated: *words.* Therefore, this constitutes lexical repetition.

At another level, semantic, the second phrase underlined in the excerpt, *those cold words,* may be considered a paraphrase of the proposition, *his grudging three words.* It conveys

the idea, in both cases, of a comment made un-willingly and unemotionally.

To summarize, the difference between exact repetition, repetition with variation, and paraphrase is not always clear-cut. The same instance of repetition may be analyzed from different perspectives.

Another theoretical consideration is raised by the classification of the functions of repetition as cohesive and persuasive. To contrast these two functions does not mean they are mutually exclusive. The same instance of repetition can serve the two purposes; it may strengthen the argument at the same time that it links two parts of the discourse semantically. However, there is a reason to analyze these two functions as if they were separate: their primary function in the discourse. When the main function of repetition is to establish a semantic relationship to a previous element in the text, it is cohesive. In this case, it is very difficult to avoid repetition without affecting the cohesiveness of the text and confusing the reader. Nevertheless, the fact that something is being repeated, or paraphrased, carries some emphasis. On the other hand, when something is reiterated mainly for intensification, its primary function is persuasion. This type of repetition could be avoided without affecting the cohesiveness of the text. What is repeated, with a persuasive function, also relates semantically to a previous part of the text and, therefore, also has a cohesive function. Consequently, repetition which functions primarily to keep the text cohesive has a 'side effect' which is emphasis, and repetition with a persuasive function is automatically cohesive. Therefore, the differences established between the English and Spanish newspaper editorials with respect to the cohesive and persuasive functions of repetition refer to the primary, not to the secondary, function of lexical and syntactic repetition.

Why the study of repetition is important

There has been a recent upsurge in the study of repetition that ranges from the use of repetition in language acquisition and socialization to face to face interaction and written texts.

In oral discourse, "repetition contributes to coherence ... this in turn contributes to a sense of coherence in the world (Tannen 1987a: 576)." Repetition, Tannen (1987a) claims, links the participants in conversation and also creates talk. Repetition also simplifies production (Norrick 1987).

Becker (1984:435) argues that, "the actual a priori of any language event –the real deep structure– is an accumulation of remembered prior texts." In written discourse, particularly in Arabic prose, Johnstone Koch (1983a:47) claims that repetition is not only ornamental intensification but "the key to the linguistic cohesion of the texts and to their rhetorical effectiveness." Repetition is also, according to Johnstone (1987b), "a powerful persuasive strategy and an essential cohesive strategy."

Repetition is very important in language acquisition. It creates and maintains social and linguistic interaction while children develop essential communicative skills (Schieffelin 1979). It also helps the acquisition and development of language and sociocultural knowledge (Watson-Gegeo and Gegeo 1986). Children repeat as an attempt to respond appropriately to certain types of utterances (Keenan 1977). Repetition plays a crucial role in the earlier stages of speech development to assure comprehension (Scollon 1979). Hatch, Peck, and Wagner-Gough (1979) demonstrate, among other things, that in second language acquisition, the learner benefits from highly repetitious input from conversations with adults and conversations with other children when they play. Shepherd (1985) claims that the use of repetition in creoles has been encouraged and reinforced historically. She suggests that repetition for humorous effect may have originated here. Tannen (1987a) argues that repetition is relatively automatic in conversation and observes that this automaticity contributes to production of more and fluent speech and facilitates comprehension. Following Becker (1984) she argues that repetition creates coherence. Tannen (1987b:237) claims that imitation and repetition serve the fundamental human purpose of learning. She believes that automaticity is essential to a sense of self. She concludes that the view of language as somewhat prepatterned supports a holistic view of language. Tannen (in press) argues that some conversational aspects of discourse "are at the basis of coherence in both conversational and literary discourse." One of these aspects is repetition. She also argues that conversation is inherently poetic because of its structure and use of figures of speech.

Norrick (1987) claims that repetition simplifies production and helps create textual coherence. Same-speaker repetition can be used to stall the conversation and plan the next utterance; in this case it signals the speaker's intention to hold the floor. These functions of repetition are also discussed by Tannen (1987a) who claims that repetition can slow down the conversation, contributes to interaction and signals the participant's intention to get or keep the floor. Inside adjacency pairs, Norrick argues, second-speaker repetition can be used to inquire about a previous utterance, to answer a question, to clarify and expand, and to show agreement.

Jefferson (1972) analyzes two types of repeats in conversation: questioning repeats and the laugh token repeat. The difference is that the first generates talk and shows some type of disapproval; it makes the speaker go back to the object of discussion and correct the mistake. The laugh token repeat shows some sort of approval and does not cause an interruption; the speaker is free to continue with the discussion. She concludes that the participants in a conversation have two options when they perceive something as a mistake: one is to challenge the speaker by repeating the word or phrase perceived as wrong; the other is to let the speaker continue without paying attention to the mistake. If the first option is taken, the participant is imposing on the speaker the task of correcting and initiating a side sequence. The side sequence is over when the speaker has accomplished his task of clarification, and the speaker acknowledges it.

Another study of repetition in face to face interaction is that of Schiffrin (1982) who discusses four functions of non-adjacent paraphrase, a type of semantic repetition, in conversation. These functions, she argues, are not mutually exclusive: one paraphrase may have

more than one function. These functions are: 1) intensification of the previous proposition, 2) "subordination of the intervening discourse" by the proposition and its paraphrase. The intervening discourse supports the main point expressed in the proposition and the paraphrase. 3) Transition marking; the paraphrase seems to lead into a new phase of the discourse (p.8) in which the speaker uses the proposition in a slightly different way. 4) Conversational indexing. The speaker's paraphrase responds to a request for information. She concludes that to explain the discourse strategies employed by speakers in a conversation, it is necessary to "focus more on the relationships between sources of discourse cohesion-relationships between what is meant, what is said, and what is done (p.12)."

Johnstone Koch (1984) argues that paraphrase functions rhetorically in conversation in two ways: to make an interactional point and to create knowledge. In making an interactional point, the speaker uses paraphrase to get or keep the floor, to be funny or to make sure s/he is being understood. In creating knowledge, the second statement clarifies or defines the first; she calls this content rhetorical. Self-paraphrase of the content rhetorical type creates a pragmatic or semantic shift. A pragmatic shift consists of a re-definition of the speech situation as the speaker is delivering his/her message. A semantic shift changes the logical perspective of the event, from positive to negative for example. She concludes (p.258) that "Paraphrase is absolutely essential for the reorganization and creation of language in discourse."

Johnstone (1987b) claims that repetition is a widespread phenomenon which is characteristic of poetry, prose, and everyday talk. She argues that repetition makes the units of language, and the rules for using them in conversation, overt through repetition. She claims that repetition is never exact. This contrasts with Tannen's (1987a) classification of the types of repetition which include not only repetition with variation but also exact repetition. Johnstone (1987b) argues that repetition is never exact because it involves some kind of similarity or difference which can be linguistic or contextual. She also notes that

repetition is a way to create categories; it is a mechanism which helps integrate the new to the old. New items, she claims, become part of underlying linguistic and cultural categories through repetition in discourse. She concludes that all discourse is structured by repetition.

All these studies highlight the important role repetition plays in discourse, particularly in conversation.

Despite the great concentration of studies on repetition in oral discourse, some concentrate not only on written prose but at the same time on persuasive discourse. The following studies are relevant to the analysis of repetition in newspaper editorials precisely because the data are from written persuasive discourse.

Barbara Johnstone Koch (1983a, 1983b, and 1987a) focuses on the use of repetition in written discourse. Johnstone Koch (1983a) describes some of the linguistic and cultural factors in Arabic discourse which condition a rhetorical strategy she calls *presentation*. She argues that in Arabic argumentation the presentation of an idea is persuasive and not the logic behind the words as in the Western world. This strategy is characterized by repeating and rephrasing one's request or claim. At the sentence level, she found frequent use of lexical couplets, morphological parallelism and repetition of morphological roots. Above the single clause, she found cumulative parallelism, which creates momentum in the text, paraphrase and very frequent use of reverse paraphrase: description of the same event from two opposing perspectives. Johnstone Koch (1983a) concludes that argument by presentation has its roots in the history of Arab society.

Johnstone Koch (1983b) argues that repeated juxtaposition in written discourse may account for synonymy. She analyzed a corpus of lexical couplets which were classified into semantic classes. One of the difficulties she encountered was to decide when two words were synonymous; the reason was that sometimes these words were synonymous in the couplet but not elsewhere. She found out that the more often the two words appear in couplets, the more synonymous they become. Examining her data

from a diachronic perspective helped her discover the process through which juxtaposition accounts for synonymy. Couplets are originally modificational: either the first element modifies the second or the second modifies the first, but they become frozen with time.

Johnstone (1987a) argues that the linguistic factors on persuasive strategies are as significant as the historical and psychological ones. Sometimes, a repetitive or paratactic structure is used because the writer has no other choice; that is, the grammar of Arabic does not allow freedom of choice. She also argues that the most salient feature of Arabic persuasive discourse is repetition, structural and paraphrastic. She notes that Arabic uses some persuasive strategies also employed in English, like visual metaphors and the present tense, the style she calls presentation. She concludes that paratactic juxtaposition of ideas and parallel words characterizes Arabic discourse and that repetitive juxtaposition creates presence, its pragmatic effect being persuasion. She thinks that this persuasive strategy is not used as frequently in English, at least in formal contexts, where persuasion is the result of proof through subordination of ideas and not through presentation.

This study is important because it contributes to our knowlegde of repetition in written discourse in two Western languages: English and Spanish. It demonstrates that repetition is used primarily for cohesion in the American newspaper editorials while in the Costa Rican newspaper editorials it functions mainly as a persuasive strategy. This contrast affects the dichotomy Western/non-Western in accounting for repetition. It seems that repetition used mainly for persuasive purposes, in argumentative written discourse, is not characteristic of Arabic only; it is also used in Spanish.

Functions of repetition

Four functions of repetition were found in the newspaper editorials in English: humor, expansion, cohesiveness, and persuasion. Of these only humor was not present in the twenty editorials of the Spanish newspapers.

The cohesive and persuasive functions of repetition are the most important contrast between English and Spanish with respect to the use of repetition in newspaper editorials. In English, repetition is used mainly for cohesive purposes while in Spanish its use is mostly for a persuasive effect.

The Cohesive use of repetition

The use of repetition for cohesive purposes in written persuasive discourse has been discussed by Johnstone Koch (1983a). She considers that repetition in Arabic persuasive discourse plays an important role not only in achieving a persuasive effect but also in the linguistic cohesion of the text.

Cohesion is defined by Halliday and Hasan (1976:8) as "a semantic relation between an element in the text and some other element that is crucial to the interpretation of it." Elaborating on this definition, they write, "Where the interpretation of any item in the discourse requires making reference to some other item in the discourse, there is cohesion (p.11)."

To illustrate the cohesive function of repetition, I will take excerpts from an editorial of *The New York Times* published on October 12, 1987. This editorial argues that testing a new submarine missile, called Trident II, with more warheads is a bad idea because of the problems it creates: one is a complication of the nuclear arms reduction talks; the other is the retaliatory capability of the U.S. which will be affected by a rule for counting missiles.

The primary function of many of the words and phrases repeated, with and without variation, in this editorial is to establish a semantic relationship between elements in the discourse; this semantic link is important in the interpretation of previous words and phrases. This type of repetition, lexical and syntactic, helps create and maintain the textual cohesion of the editorials. The use of anaphoric pronouns, the definite article, and demonstrative pronouns is another way to establish and maintain cohesion according to Halliday and Hassan (1976); however, this is not always possible. Words like

missile, warhead, Trident, and *the D-5* are frequently mentioned throughout the editorial. It is practically imposssible to replace them with anaphoric pronouns without confusing the reader. For example, the first occurrence of the word *Trident* is in the title; then it is repeated in line 2.

Title: *Trident* Mischief, or Worse

It makes no sense for the Pentagon to
2   test the new *Trident* submarine missile with
    more and more warheads.

The first repetition of *Trident* in line 2 is important to identify the type of submarine missile, a Trident, to be tested.

The second paragraph of the editorial refers to the effect that testing the submarine missile will have on arms control talks. The word *Trident* is repeated again in line 12.

12 *The Trident testing issue* is no mere
    technical question for strategic experts

This is another case where the repetition of *Trident* is important. It tells the reader what the testing is referring to: the Trident. It also makes the reference more specific; for example, *the testing issue* would be very general as opposed to the specificity of line 12 above: the *Trident* testing issue. It ties the *testing* to the *missile*.

In the third paragraph of the editorial, which refers to the capabilities of the Trident II, the repetition of *Trident* is essential to identify a) the type of missile, line 19,

19 The initial version of *the Trident II missile,*

b) and type of submarine, lines 21 and 25.

21 is set for deployment on *Trident submarines*

25 *The Trident sub* can hold 24 such missiles.

Probably to avoid too much repetition, the word *submarine* is shortened to *sub* the second time it is mentioned in the third paragraph, line 25. In this same third paragraph, the words

missile and *warhead* need to be repeated to maintain a cohesive text.

19 The initial version of the Trident II *missile,*
20 also called the D-5, is set for deployment on
21 Trident submarines in 1989. *Each missile* will
22 carry *eight warheads* of sufficient accuracy and
23 explosive power to destroy *a Soviet missile* in a
24 hardened silo. The Trident sub can hold 24 *such*
25 *missiles* for a total of 192 *warheads per sub*. That
26 number was generally considered to be a sufficient
27 concentration of force on one sub.

Deleting the word *missile* in line 20 to avoid repetition would leave *The Trident II,* a phrase which could be interpreted by the reader as a reference to the Trident submarine, not the missile. This same word, *missile,* repeated again in line 21 cannot be avoided because the word *each* which precedes it would change to a pronoun referring to *Trident submarines,* its antecedent in the paragraph. The semantic interpretation would then be altered since the reference here is *missile* not a type of submarine.

Similarly, the word *warheads* which was first used in line 3, if deleted in line 23, could be interpreted as a reference to *missile:*

21 each missile will
22 carry eight *warheads* of sufficient accuracy

Therefore, to maintain the cohesiveness of the text, and the paragraph, the word *warheads* needs to be reiterated.

The fourth paragraph of the editorial starts by making reference to how the Secretary of Defense felt about what is considered a sufficient concentration of force on one submarine.

31 *Mr. Weinberger* apparently felt otherwise. In
32 September, he ordered the D-5 to be
33 tested with 10 warhead places.

In line 32, replacing *Mr. Weinberger* with the personal pronoun *he* would make the reference to the Secretary of Defense Weinberger,

who is mentioned in lines 5 and 7 of the editorial, practically impossible because an entire paragraph is placed between the two semantically related elements. However, when there is no interference, as a paragraph, between the pronoun and its antecedent, the semantic relationship between the two elements is easily established. This can be seen in lines 31 to 33 where the personal pronoun *he* replaces *Mr. Weinberger.*

31   *Mr. Weinberger* apparently felt otherwise.
32   In September, *he* ordered the D-5 to be
33   tested with 10 warhead places.

The semantic relationship between *Mr. Weinberger* in line 31 and *he* in line 32 has been easily established without repetition, perhaps as a result of the proximity between the two elements.

Another frequent repetition in the editorial is the alternate name of the Trident submarine missile: *the D-5*. It is first mentioned in line 20.

19   The initial version of *the Trident II missile,* also called *the D-5,*

It is repeated later in line 32.

32   He ordered *the D-5* to be tested

It is also repeated at the beginning of the fifth paragraph in line 38.

38   Testing *the D-5* with 12 warheads any time soon would create substantial verification problems

Once again, pronouns cannot be used to substitute for the phrase *the D-5* because other sentences are placed between the two semantically related elements. It would be difficult for the reader to find what the pronoun is referring to. This can be confusing and would disrupt the cohesiveness of the text.

To summarize, I have used excerpts from an editorial of an American newspaper to illustrate the cohesive function of repetition in English. I have argued that devices to maintain cohesiveness, such as personal pronouns and

demonstratives, could not be used to avoid repetition because of the presence of a sentence, or even a paragraph placed between the first occurrence of an item and the second occurrence. A pronoun would avoid repetition but would also break up the cohesiveness of the text. One way to prevent this from happening in the editorials is repetition. Another way would consist of reordering the statements in such a way that pronouns could be employed to avoid the repetition of lexical items or repetition of phrases without sacrificing cohesiveness.

Repetition to maintain cohesiveness is also used in Spanish newspaper editorials but to a lesser degree than in the newspaper editorials in English.

I will illustrate the cohesive function of repetition in Spanish with excerpts from an editorial published by *La República*, a Costa Rican newspaper. This editorial argues that the re-opening of the newspaper *La Prensa* in Nicaragua symbolizes access to the truth, and restoration of freedom, democracy and peace. The Nicaraguan newspaper *La Prensa* had been closed down by the Sandinista Government for some time. After the five Central American countries signed the Arias Peace Plan in Esquipulas, Guatemala, in 1987, the Sandinista Government authorized the newspaper to renew its publication.

The first paragraph of the editorial, lines 2-3, mentions for the first time *el Canciller costarricense* (the Costa Rican Chancellor).

1   Si   extraordinariamente   importante, excepcional, es
2   el triunfo alcanzado por *el Canciller*
3   *costarricense* quien logró la reapertura de "La
4   Prensa"

1   If extraordinarily important, exceptional is the
2   triumph reached by *the Costa Rican*
      Chancellor who
3   succeeded in the re-opening of "La Prensa"

The phrase *el Canciller costarricense* is repeated with variation in the fifth paragraph, lines 67 to 69.

67   se pondrá a prueba la sinceridad con que ha
68   dictado la medida brillantemente lograda por
69   *nuestro Canciller*

67   the sincerity with which (it) has dictated the
68   brilliantly achieved measure by *our Chancellor,*
69   will be tested.

Replacing the phrase *nuestro Canciller* with the personal pronoun *él* (he) would not be the best choice to avoid repetition in line 69 because the first reference, in line 3, is separated from the second by four paragraphs. The semantic link between the two elements would be lost. The only way to maintain this semantic relationship is by repeating the phrase, with variation in this case. Therefore, the repetition of *nuestro Canciller* (our Chancellor) in line 69 plays an important role in establishing a semantic relationship with *e l Canciller Costarricense* in line 3.

The most usual alternative to the use of the definite article in a phrase to indicate a cohesive relationship is the demonstrative adjective (Halliday and Hassan 1976:275). An excerpt of the editorial illustrates this point. In line 59, the first instance of *el respaldo* (the support) occurs. Four lines down, line 62, the second occurrence of the phrase is used but substituting the definite article for the demonstrative adjective: *ese respaldo* (that support). This paragraph claims that it has not been possible to measure the support for the Nicaraguan Government, but the reopening of *L a Prensa* will serve as an indicator of this support.

58   Hasta ahora no ha sido posible medir por signos
59   exteriores *el respaldo* al sistema político actual
60   de Managua en la población que permanece en el
61   país. "La Prensa" marcará la existencia o falta de
62   *ese respaldo*.

58   Until now it has not been possible to measure by
59   external signs *the support* of the current
60   political system of Managua in the population
61   which lives in the country. "La Prensa" will
62   indicate the existence or lack of *that support*.

The cohesive relationship is established in this example by the demonstrative adjective. A demonstrative pronoun could not be used here to avoid repetition because the closest antecedent is *el país* (the country). Thus, *ese* (that) would refer to *país* and not to *respaldo*.

An important part of the argument intensified throughout the editorial is the significance of the reopening of La Prensa to values like *democracia* (democracy) and *libertad* (freedom). These words are regularly repeated and have, most of the time, a persuasive function. However, the repetition of *libertad* in *libertad de expresión* (freedom of expression) in line 23 cannot be replaced with another word. The writer has no choice but repeat the lexical item *libertad*.

22   marcando así el inicio de la restauración en el
23   país vecino de *la libertad de expresión*

22   marking in this way the beginning of the
23   restoration of *freedom of expression* in our
24   neighboring country

A similar case is the repetition of *la prensa* in line 25. It is repeated throughout the editorial for persuasive purposes in phrases like *l a reapertura de La Prensa* (the reopening of La Prensa). However, in line 25, it refers to the Catholic press, not to the newspaper La Prensa.

25   porque los órganos de *la prensa* católica
      todavía continúan clausurados

25   because the Catholic *press* is still closed

In this case *la prensa* consists of a different type of repetition. It is only the form that is repeated, morphologically and phonemically; the referent is different. In line 25, it refers to the (Catholic) press; in other paragraphs of the editorial, it refers to a newspaper called *L a Prensa*. Repetition cannot be avoided.

I have shown examples of repetition which function cohesively in Spanish and argued that in these cases, it is difficult to avoid repetition. Using pronouns to avoid it could bewilder the reader because the semantic reference to the appropriate antecedents would be disrupted.

To summarize, one of the functions of repetition in newspaper editorials in English and Spanish is to maintain cohesiveness. The contrast between both languages with respect to this function of repetition is the higher frequency of its occurrence in English than in Spanish.

Another important difference between these editorials lies in the persuasive function assigned to repetition. The next section will focus on this difference. Although the cohesive and persuasive functions of repetition actually overlap, they are discussed here separately because one function is more prominent than the other in the two languages.

The Persuasive use of repetition

Repetition with a persuasive function has been discussed in detail by Barbara Johnstone (Johnstone Koch 1983a, 1983b; Johnstone 1987a). She has found that Arabic written texts are highly and complexly repetitious. This repetition is not only of form but of context also. One of the main differences between English and Arabic lies in the persuasive use of repetition. In Arabic, the presentation of an idea is persuasive, "not the logical structure of proof which Westerners see behind the words (Koch 1983a:55)." She concludes that presentation is the main mode of argumentation in hierarchical societies, as opposed to the canonical use of syllogistic argumentation in democratic societies where there is room for doubt. In these societies, truth is not universal.

I have shown, in the previous section, that in English repetition is used mainly to keep the text cohesive. However, repetition in English is also used as a persuasive strategy; it is rhetorical and the aim is to emphasize, as we can see in the following excerpts taken from the American editorial presented previously. Repetition with a persuasive function will be in in italics.

The first example of the persuasive function of repetition in this American editorial occurs in line 7. The phrase *Trident mischief* which is part of the title is repeated with variation in line 7 as *a mischievous effort* emphasizing or intensifying the negative aspect of testing the Trident submarine missile.

Trident *Mischief,* or Worse

6   Perhaps his decision represents *a mischievous effort* to complicate nuclear arms talks.

Another example is the repetition of *more* in line 3.

3   with *more* and *more* warheads.

An adjective like *additional* could have replaced both instances of *more.* This repetition which could be avoided intensifies the increasing number of warheads placed in the missiles.

The exact repetition of *The only way* in line 58, used previously in line 44, emphasizes the single option the United States and the Soviet Union have to verify nuclear weapons: a rule, which Mr. Weinberger did not like, for counting missiles.

44   *The only way* adequately to verify such a scheme has been to apply a simple counting rule

58   *The only way* to do that, however, is by the cumbersome process of inspecting every missile with a can opener

In most cases, as argued in the previous section, the repetition of lexical items like *warheads* is essential in keeping the text cohesive, leaving the writer practically no option but repeat. However, sometimes the author has a chance to avoid repetition without affecting the cohesiveness of the text and the reader's comprehension, but still repeats. The next excerpt is a case in point.

46   If a type of missile is tested with as many as,
47   say, 16 *warheads,* all missiles of that type will
48   be considered to hold 16 *warheads*. Thus, if the
49   D-5 is to be tested with 12 *warheads,* all D-5's
50   will be counted as carrying 12 *warheads*

The writer could have avoided the repetition of *warheads* by leaving the numbers only: 16, 12, in lines 48, 49, and 50, respectively.

Furthermore, the last instance of *12* could probably be replaced by *a dozen* and still keep the paragraph cohesive. Repetition of *warheads* is used here persuasively.

Another instance where there was an alternative to repetition involves the use of the possessive adjective *our* to replace the second reference to Americans in line 62. The adjective *American* in line 62 intensifies the nationality of the experts.

61 Conceivably, Moscow would let *Americans* look
62 inside its missiles. But *American experts*
63 certainly would not want to reciprocate.

If the possessive adjective *our* were used to avoid the rhetorical use of *American* in line 62, the excerpt above would then read

61 Conceivably, Moscow would let *Americans* look
62 inside its missiles. But *our experts* certainly
63 would not want to reciprocate.

A similar strategy could have been followed to avoid repeating *U.S.* four times in the seventh paragraph, after its first occurrence in the sixth paragraph.

64 *U.S. technology* is better and they rightly don't
65 like the idea of showing Moscow how to improve its
66 missiles.
67 In all likelihood, both sides will agree to
68 stick by the old counting rule. In that case, Mr.
69 Weinberger invites an even more serious problem
70 –a sharply reduced number of Trident subs, the most
71 survivable and reliable of all *U.S. retaliatory*
72 *forces*. If the new treaty ends up limiting *the*
73 *U.S.* to 3,500 submarine-launched ballistic
74 missiles, and if each D-5 counts for eight
75 warheads, *the U.S.* could field about, 18 Trident
76 subs. But if each D-5 counts for 12 warheads, *the*
77 *U.S.* could have only 12.

Before discussing how the repetition of *U.S.* could have been avoided, I will highlight this repetition by extracting those sentences where it occurs.

64 *U.S.* technology is better. (first time)

71 the most survivable and reliable of all *U.S. retaliatory forces.*

73 limiting *the U.S.* to 3,500 submarine-launched ballistic missiles

75 *the U.S.* could field about, 18 Trident subs.

77 *the U.S.* could have only 12.

In line 64, the first occurrence of *U.S.* is essential to establish a reference. In line 71, the possessive adjective *our* could have replaced *U.S.* In 73, the indirect object pronoun *us* could have been used while the personal subject pronoun *we* could have substituted *U.S.* in lines 75 and 77. Another option would have been to use a phrase like *our/this country* particularly in lines 75 and 77.

Where the writer has the option not to repeat but still does, the function of repetition is mainly persuasive. In this case, repetition does not expand, elaborate, or add semantic information; it does not play an essential role in establishing a semantic relationship; it primarily emphasizes or intensifies a particular point of the argument. By default, repetition refers to something previously stated. In this sense, even persuasive repetition functions, secondarily, cohesively. The opposite is true, too. Repetition identified as having a cohesive function also has to some extent a persuasive function because it emphasizes certain passages; it reminds the reader of the points of the argument being developed.

I have illustrated how repetition functions persuasively in English. The excerpts shown above support my claim that this type of repetition is used for emphasis; that it is not essential in establishing a semantic relationship, and that its function is not to expand, elaborate or add semantic meaning. I have also illustrated how

this type of repetition can be avoided without sacrificing the cohesiveness of the text.

I have shown the persuasive function of repetition in English and have argued that in those instances where repetition could have been avoided, but it was not, constitute persuasive repetition. I also claimed that repetition which functions primarily as a persuasive strategy also functions secondarily to maintain the text cohesive.

I will now turn to the persuasive function of repetition in Spanish. Excerpts from the editorial of the Costa Rican newspaper *La República* presented in the previous section will be used to illustrate this function of repetition.

Very noticeable in *El gran triunfador en la apertura nica* (The great victor in the Nicaraguan opening) is the repetition of *la reapertura de La Prensa* (the re-opening of La Prensa) sometimes with variation, as *la reaparición de La Prensa* (the reappearance of La Prensa). This type of repetition is not essential in establishing a semantic relationship; it is used to emphasize, in this editorial, the re-opening of the newspaper *La Prensa* as a step forward in the process of democratization and peace in Nicaragua. This is the persuasive use of repetition. This type of repetition, the same idea throughout the editorial, conforms to the presentational style discussed by Koch (1983a). Furthermore, every time a reference is made to the reopening of the newspaper, *La Prensa,* by the Sandinistas, the repetition is followed, or preceded, in the same paragraph by a reference to democracy, freedom, peace and/or truth. The next examples illustrate this point.

1.   *la reapertura de "La Prensa",* ... se le da acceso a *la verdad,* ... en el camino de *democratización.*
      the reopening of "La Prensa" ... it is given given access to the truth ... on the road to *democratization.*

2.   *La reaparición de "La Prensa"* ... *ideal democrático* que ha alentado la vida de ese diario.
      The reappearance of "La Prensa" ...*democratic ideal* which has fostered the life of that newspaper.

3.   Como símbolo externo y por su contenido interno de posibilidad de crítica y de *exposición de la verdad, la reapertura de "La Prensa"* es el paso más importante hacia la paz que se da desde que se inició *el actual proceso democratizador* en la primera reunión de Esquipulas.

As an external symbol and because of its internal capacity of criticism and of *exposition of the truth, the reopening of "La Prensa"* is the most important step to peace which has been given since *the current democratization process* began at the first meeting in Esquipulas.

4.   La admiración que hemos sentido por *"La Prensa"* implica ... cooperar con un proceso verdadero *hacia la democracia y hacia la libertad*

The admiration that we have felt for *"La Prensa"* implies to cooperate with a true process toward *democracy and toward freedom*

5.   que *la reaparición de "La Prensa"* signifique el nacimiento en Nicaragua de *una democracia verdadera, libre y pluralista.*

that *the re-appearance of "La Prensa"* mean the birth in Nicaragua of *a truly free and pluralist democracy.*

The association of the re-opening of the newspaper *La Prensa* and freedom, democracy and truth is intensified by repeating it throughout the editorial.

That the editorial writer evaluates the re-opening of the Nicaraguan newspaper as a victory is evident by the use of the phrase *El gran triunfador* (The great victor) in the title, later repeated with variation as *el triunfo alcanzado* (the triumph reached) in line 2 and repeated in lines 8-9 exactly as in the title.

El gran triunfador en la apertura nica

1   Si extraordinariamente importante,
2   excepcional, es *el triunfo alcanzado* por el

3   Canciller costarricense quien logró la reapertura
4   de "La Prensa", inconmensurable es el que
5   corresponde al pueblo de Nicaragua, al que,
6   después de muchos años, se le da acceso a la
7   verdad, con lo que viene a ser *el gran triunfador*
8   en la apertura positiva

The great victor in the Nicaraguan opening

1   If extraordinarily important, exceptional, is
2   *the triumph reached* by the Costa Rican
     Chancellor
3   who succeeded in the re-opening of "La Prensa",
4   incommensurable is the one which corresponds to
5   the people of Nicaragua, to which, after
     many
6   years, it is given access to the truth, with which
7   (it) becomes *the great victor* in the positive re-
8   opening

The idea of victory is highlighted here by repeating the word *triunfador* (victor) and repeating it with variation as *triunfo* (triumph). The translation, however, does not help in this case.[2]

Another claim the editorial intensifies through repetition is the sharing of this triumph which the re-opening of *La Prensa* means. Three different parties share the triumph: the people of Nicaragua, the Sandinista Government, and the Costa Rican Chancelor. The verb form *corresponde(n)* (correspond(s)) is repeated to intensify this idea of sharing. Referring to this triumph, line 5 of the editorial reads

5   inconmensurable es el que *corresponde* al
     pueblo de Nicaragua,

     incommensurable is the one which
     corresponds to the people of Nicaragua

Line 13 repeats the verb *corresponde* (corresponds) in the next excerpt to mention the other party which shares the triumph of the re-opening of *La Prensa*.

11   el régimen sandinista, al que también debe
     reconocérsele, sin regateos, la porción que
     ciertamente le *corresponde*

the Sandinista regime, which should also be recognized, without reservation, for the part which certainly *corresponds* to it

The other party sharing this triumph is the Costa Rican Chancelor. The verb form used above is repeated in line 18.

16   Fue gracias a la gestión personal y directa
     de don Rodrigo Madrigal Nieto, a quien
     corresponden los méritos

     It was thanks to the personal and direct initiative of don Rodrigo Madrigal Nieto, to whom the merit *corresponds*

Thus, the verb *corresponder* (to correspond) is being used here persuasively to intensify that the triumph belongs to three different parties. It was not necessary to repeat the verb *corresponder* in lines 13 and 18 if cohesiveness had been the aim. Other verbs like *merecer* (to deserve) or *otorgar* (to award) could have been used.

To summarize, the excerpts presented above illustrate the persuasive function of repetition in Spanish. I have argued that this type of repetition strengthens parts of the editorial. In this particular editorial, the repetition of lexical items and phrases with and without variation have functioned persuasively to emphasize the reopening of the Nicaraguan newspaper *La Prensa* as a symbol of, and a step toward, democracy, freedom, and peace. Repetition has also intensified the triumph which the reopening of this newspaper means. It has emphasized that three parties share this triumph. Finally, the function of repetition discussed here as having a persuasive effect also adds cohesion to the text.

Implications

Johnstone Koch (1983a) contrasted the use of repetition in Arabic persuasive discourse to Western modes of argumentation. Nevertheless, the only language she used for comparison was English. This implies that all Western languages use the same mode of argumentation and repetition.

This study of repetition in newspaper editorials in English and Spanish shows that the term *Western* is not sufficient to account for repetition in persuasive discourse of which newspaper editorials are an example. They are highly planned and intended to persuade. This study has demonstrated that Spanish, a Western language like English, uses repetition with a persuasive function much more frequently than English. From this perspective, it may seem that Spanish is more similar to Arabic, a non-Western language, than to English with respect to the main function of repetition. This clearly reveals that all Western languages do not favor the same functions of repetition and implies that repetition is not characteristic of Arabic persuasive discourse only. Each language favors certain functions of repetition depending on the sociolinguistic context. Perhaps, the main difference with respect to the functions of repetition lies in the diversity of contexts in which it is used. Ultimately, it is the speaker who choses from a range of the persuasive strategies basing his choice on the situation at hand, as Johnstone (forthcoming) recognizes it.

Conclusion

The purpose of analyzing repetition in newspaper editorials was to provide an answer to two important questions. One of these was whether all Western languages were alike (with respect to repetition). The second question was to identify the functions of repetition in these two Western languages and compare them.

The results of this analysis show that Western languages, particularly English and Spanish, are not alike with respect to repetition. The primary functions of repetition: cohesion and persuasion, differ in these two languages. Most of the repetition identified in English had a cohesive function, followed by repetiton with a persuasive function. In Spanish, the reverse was true. Most of the repetition employed in the newspaper editorials functioned persuasively; this was followed by a cohesive function of repetition. I also discussed the the relative difference between

the cohesive and persuasive functions of repetition. I argued that the two functions overlap. Repetition with a persuasive function automatically establishes a semantic relationship with previous elements in the discourse; therefore, persuasive repetition is also cohesive. Similarly, repetition with a cohesive function is at the same time persuasive because it carries some degree of intensification.

This study concludes that repetition is not characteristic of Arabic persuasive discourse only because repetition is used mainly for persuasive purposes, that is rhetorically, in Spanish, too. Related to this conclusion is that repetition cannot be addressed from a Western or non-Western perspective.

Notes

1.   The best option to answer this question would have to include more Western languages and compare them to English. However, time and money is a serious restriction at this moment. Nevertheless, this study provides another perspective by adding Spanish to the only model used by Johnstone: English.

2.   The translation is an obstacle here because Spanish has these two morphologically similar nouns 'triunfador' and 'triunfo' which English lacks. English has the morpheme 'triumph' which does not accept a suffix like -er to name the person who succeeds. This accounts for the difficulty of showing in English repetition with variation in Spanish.

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