REDUPLICATION IN JORDANIAN ARABIC

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1. INTRODUCTION.

In Jordanian Arabic, reduplication as a morphological process whereby ‘the phonological form of the affix is determined in whole or in part by the phonological form of the base (Wiltshire:2000) has not yet been studied. Early Arab scholars dealt with reduplicative words as part of their studies of the lexicon of the language. Ibn Duraid (1985) provided a list of reduplicative words arranged alphabetically. Occurrence or non-occurrence of a reduplicative word in the Arabic language was attested by giving citations from a narrow range of texts identifiable within certain fields, e.g. poetry and idiomatic expressions. Along the same framework of presentation, Ibn Manthoor in his classic dictionary, Mu’jam Lisan Al Arāb (1997) and Ibrahim Mustafa et al. (1989) in Al Mu’jam Al-WasiTi were not so much concerned with the organizing principles of reduplicative word-formation as with lexical entries and word ‘senses’.

A major drawback of traditional dictionary entries is that the many ‘senses’ given for the reduplicative words listed are either non-existent in the mental lexicon or they are different from those that could be retrieved from the mental lexicon. However, our knowledge of what reduplicative words are stored in the mental lexicon is relatively scant although most adult speakers could fairly quickly echo the typical reduplicative template pattern CVC-CVC in which the second syllable reiterates the phonological form of the first syllable.

2. Objectives:

The following objectives are set out:

(a) to identify the recurring reduplicative forms which are stored in the mental lexicon,
(b) to classify non-occurring but possible forms
(c) to study the differences in meaning between reduplicative dictionary entries and meanings attached to reduplicative forms in the mental lexicon
(d) to study the various organizing principles underlying reduplicative word-formation in Arabic

3. Method

Arabic reduplicative forms are distinguished from other quadrilateral patterns (i.e. patterns which typically consist of four consonants/roots) in that they have basically a bilateral root, i.e. two compatible consonants which form the stem of the reduplicative pattern. The initial CVC is copied; the reduplicative suffix has a skeletal CVC representation and obtains its full phonological specification by copying the
CVC segments of the base, e.g. **tam-** is the base of the reduplicative word **tamtam**. The resulting word signals an increase in intensity, frequency size, speech defect, speech indistinctness, dullness, recurrence either immediate or at short intervals and other ‘emotive’ functions.