

An Appraisal of the Effectiveness of Repetitions used in HIV and AIDS Posters

*Clemenciana Mukenge**

Abstract

Public communication of HIV and AIDS matters is challenging, given the sensitivity and complexity of the topic, hence the employment of various linguistic strategies. This study appraises the effectiveness of repetitions employed as lexical devices in ten PSI Zimbabwe HIV and AIDS posters. These posters were selected using a purposive sampling technique, based on observed manifestations of linguistic redundancy. The study was guided by Halliday and Hasan's (1976) Cohesive model for conceptualising texts. Data was analysed using the Content Analysis method, through establishing the categories of repetitions used and their frequencies, followed by presenting numerical data in the form of tables. The results indicated that there was overuse of repetitions in HIV and AIDS posters, predominantly employing stylistic non-conceptual repetitions, as opposed to conceptual ones, promoting unwarranted redundancy and poor readability. Recommended is the minimal use of repetitions, particularly the non-conceptual ones, in order to eliminate redundancy and achieve effective communication.

Key words: *HIV and AIDS posters, repetition, appraisal, cohesion, effectiveness*

Introduction

Lexical repetition has been studied in various fields of linguistics, including stylistics, rhetoric, translation and discourse studies. From a linguistic perspective, repetition is a broad phenomenon that is of interest to phonologists, morphologists, syntacticians, psychologists, discourse analysts and pragmatists (Jucker, 1994). The focus of this study is on appraising the repetitions used in the discourse of HIV and AIDS posters. There are several types of communication that fall under the rubric of HIV and AIDS communication, varying from one community to another, based on specific intervention needs as exemplified below.

In Zimbabwe, modes of HIV and AIDS communication and their subcategories include: Mass media-print (press releases, articles such as newspapers, journals, newsletters and magazines); mass media-electronic platforms (websites postings, electronic forums, television and radio shows and airings, mobile or cellular phone text-messages, audio tapes, video tapes, DVDs, and CDs and

* Lecturer, Linguistics Department, University of Zimbabwe, P.O. Box MP 167, Mount Pleasant, Harare, Zimbabwe, E-mail: cmukenge@gmail.com

documentaries and films); organisational-administration and programming (minutes of meetings, progress and evaluation reports of activities or projects or programmes, proposals, action and implementation plans, organisational profiles, contracts or terms of reference or memoranda of understanding, good or best practices and case studies, abstracts, conference papers, poster presentations and oral presentations); community and target specific-information, education and communication (IEC) (brochures, posters, and stickers, books and booklets, manuals and trainings packages, fact sheets, banners and drama scripts) and advocacy (position papers, sign on letters and petitions) (SAFAIDS, 2009).

This study is interested in the community and target specific-information, education and communication (IEC) category, notably posters produced by Population Services International/Zimbabwe (PSI Zimbabwe), under various themes intended for HIV and AIDS education. Posters were chosen as the subjects of the study based on the use of repetition as a lexical device. The selected posters display linguistic redundancy, employing repetition as their most discernible lexical feature, thereby motivating the study's interest. Since this study's focus is on the written texts of the poster messages, it systematically excludes the multimodal aspects of the texts, which constitute a rich area of investigation by a separate study.

The decision to carry out this study is an outcome of the observation that the repetitions used in HIV and AIDS materials are mostly ineffective as they result in unwarranted linguistic redundancy, as well as the perceived need to determine the basis of this problem. Repetition as a lexical device, has been criticised for its inclination to arouse humour, irony and redundancy, leading to reader/hearer fatigue, and mostly, for its cliché tendencies. Regrettably, it was observed that most of the repetitions used in HIV and AIDS communication materials give rise to some of these problems, hindering effective communication. As such, the general aim of this study is to appraise the lexical value of the repetitions employed in the selected HIV and AIDS poster messages. The following are the specific objectives:

- To determine, the types and consistencies of lexical repetitions used as cohesive devices in each of the selected HIV and AIDS posters.
- To establish the patterns of occurrence of these categories of repetitions across various poster messages.

- To evaluate the communicative efficacy of the repetitions employed in the studied posters, based on the basis of their use as lexical devices.

Significance of the Study

HIV and AIDS communication materials are among the key intervention programmes designed to prevent and manage HIV and AIDS through education in Zimbabwe and the sub-Saharan region, and their communicative efficacy depends on their level of comprehensiveness to their audiences. Studying cohesion in HIV and AIDS communication materials is therefore a worthwhile academic exercise that interrogates their linguistic soundness and whether or not they sufficiently achieve their communicative objectives. To determine cohesiveness in the selected posters, this study examined lexical repetition which is a subcategory of reiteration. The results of the study would indicate the extent to which the cohesive device of repetition is effectively used to achieve the intended communicative goals. Recommendations made based on these results are expected to improve the current linguistic tailoring of these messages. Also, although the topic of cohesion has largely been studied in academic discourse researches, there is hardly any research in Zimbabwe or in the African region that focuses on cohesion in HIV and AIDS information. Thus, the importance of studying cohesion in HIV and AIDS posters is clear given that the study makes a significant contribution towards filling the knowledge gap in this area.

Lexical Repetition: Definition, Function and Significance

Repetition is a subject of discussion in multiple disciplines, yet there seem to be dearth of literature on this topic (Curl, 2002 and Curl, Local and Walker, 2006). In general terms, research on repetition is less profound and Jackson (2016: 1) argues that it is “an understudied muddle”. Most scholars who attempt to review the phenomenon of repetition often carry out a surface analysis, and to the best of the researcher’s knowledge, very few scholars have engaged in an in-depth discussion of repetition. In addition to this concern, as Aitchison (1994) notes, there is no clear-cut definition of the term repetition, and hence what could be considered as repetition is vast. Aitchison, for instance, extricates various classifications of self repetition based on manner of production by the speakers. He posits that the phenomenon of repetition incorporates imitations (when children repeat), stuttering (when non-fluent speakers repeat), cohesion (when writers repeat), echolalia (when brain damaged individuals repeat statements), reduplication (when

morphemes repeat) and reiteration (when conversations repeat). As such, types of repetitive figures of speech include alliteration, assonance, iteration, parallelism, epizeuxis, rhyme and shadowing (Aitchison, 1994:16).

Although there are numerous definitions for the term repetition, Persson (1974) notes that when it comes to defining repetition, the term is quite self-explanatory. According to McArthur (1992: 826), repetition can be described as "...doing, saying or writing the same thing more than once". Similarly, Reynolds (1995: 185) states that "repetition is multiple instances of an idea or word..." and Tannen (2007:2) refers to it as "the recurrence of words and collocations of words in the same discourse". Aitchison (op.cit.) adds that, given that there are various types of repetitions, "language itself depends on repeated patterns" (1994: 15-16). According to these definitions, it is apparent that repetition refers to a systematic recurrence of linguistic items in a text. Tannen (1989) makes a significant proposition on delineating the scope of repetition when he asserts that repetition varies from restating exact words and phrases, paraphrasing other disparities involving repetition with a change in grammatical aspects such as person, tenses or word structure. Tannen is later echoed by Cuddon and Preston (1999: 742) who affirm that repetition "...may consist of sounds, particular syllables and words, phrases, stanzas, metrical patterns, ideas, allusions and shapes".

Repetition is broadly classified into 'self' repetition in which the speaker repeats what he/she has said and 'other' or 'allo' repetition where the speaker repeats what has been uttered by someone else (Tannen, 1989; Murata, 1995; Mlambo, 2009 and Johnstone., 1994). 'Self' repetition is also known as 'same-speaker' repetition whereas 'other' repetition is termed 'second-speaker' (Norrick, 1987). In addition to these broad categories, Tannen further breaks down repetition into three types: exact repetition, repetition with variation and paraphrase. Exact repetition also known as "verbatim" or "full repetition" (Brody, 1994:5), encompasses repeating exactly the words that were previously uttered. Repetition with variation occurs when words are repeated with a slight change in their original structure and appearance. Paraphrase repetition occurs when the speaker expresses the same idea using different words or simply restating of a text (Tannen, 1989). Tannen's categories correspond to Johnstone (1994: 14) classification of exact and non-exact repetition. Whereas exact repetition is termed and interpreted the same by both scholars,

Johnstone's non-exact repetition is parallel to Tannen's paraphrase repetition.

As Bazzanella (2011) asserts, repetition varies in its form and function based on the context of use. Whereas it is true that there are abundant functions of repetition, Tannen (2007) notes that it is fruitless to attempt to capture all forms and functions. Hence, the focus here is on what is expounded by Tannen (1989) as the key functions of repetition. Tannen (*ibid*) states that there are four main functions of repetition: production, comprehension, connection and interaction. Whereas production, comprehension and connection functions are concerned with constructing meaning in speech, the interactional function serves a social purpose in conversations. For example, repetition creates meaning by acknowledging the speaker, expressing points, summarizing utterances and repeating words or sentences to show agreement or disagreement (Tannen, 1989: 51).

Tannen (1989) summarises some of the interactional functions of repetition to achieve social goals in conversations as follows: "participatory listenership, which shows that the person is listening and accepting what has been uttered; ratifying listenership, which occurs when the speaker incorporates the repeated phrase into their own narrative; humor; savouring through, which a speaker appreciates the humor in a situation; stalling, a function that allows time to interlocutor to find what to say next; expanding, which is the reformulation of an utterance followed by on-going talk; and repetition as participation, which helps develop the conversation" (Tannen, 1989:47–52). Therefore, the interactional function of repetition has a strictly social purpose, useful for establishing common ground amongst interlocutors, creating sustainable dialogue. Thus, drawing insight from the outlined functions of repetition, the current study sought to evaluate the stylistic value of those used in HIV and AIDS messages, with the view to ascertain their effectiveness in enhancing their communicative goal.

Although it is agreeable that repetition is a functional linguistic tool, there is however, a scholarly debate on its usefulness in interactional discourses. Some scholars (Halliday and Hasan, 1976; Leech and Short, 1981; Norrick, 1987; Tannen, 1987; Tyler, 1994; Murata, 1995; and Hsieh, 2011) argue that it is useful whereas some (Tannen, 1989; Simpson, 1994; Wilson and Sperber, 2002; Brody, 1986 and Norrick, 1987) are of the view that it spoils the communication process, and therefore undesirable. This debate is summarised by

Fowler when he postulates that “...we have instances of repetition that are good in themselves; we have repetition that are neither particularly bad in them, but that offend simply by recurrence” (Fowler, 1988: 211). Hence the observation that “Linguists are therefore faced with the paradox that repetition is widely used, yet widely avoided.” (Aitchison, 1994: 18). It is significant at this stage of the study to assess the value of repetition by engaging in this debate as this partly constitutes the basis for the justification of the study’s interest in this linguistic phenomenon. To follow up this debate there is need to present arguments from both scholarly positions.

Considering the good side of repetition, it is regarded as a useful linguistic phenomenon that enhances textual cohesion and helps facilitate fluency in speech (Halliday and Hasan, 1976; Leech and Short, 1981; Norrick, 1987; Tannen, 1987; Tyler, 1994; Murata, 1995; and Hsieh, 2011). Fluency is heightened by emphasis and reinforcement through repetition of words or phrases that have already been mentioned. Repetition is also useful in indicating cooperation and in some instances agreement among speakers created by repeating others’ words signalling understanding and collaboration (Coates, 1996; Johnstone, 1994 and Tannen, 1989). Moreover, since it signals cooperation, repetition is viewed as a ‘collaborative speech interaction’ that has the tendency to build a positive relationship amongst conversational participants based on what Brown and Levinson (1987) refer to as positive politeness.

The down side of repetition includes the claim that it is redundant and inefficient in upholding a normal interaction. According to Brody (1986: 255), it falls “under the rubric of communicative redundancy”. Redundancy is born out of the verbatim tendency of repetition which results in undesirable word for word recurrence of linguistic items in texts. As some scholars argue, it may lead to hearer or reader fatigue or in worse circumstances it may create unwarranted humour effect (Simpson, 1994). Similarly, repetition may have ironic effects and sarcastic meanings given that it imitates previous utterances (Tannen, 1989; Simpson, 1994 and Wilson and Sperber, 2002). However, Merritt (1994) argues that ironic negative connotations are likely to result only in cases where repetition of the same item is excessive and intense. Excessive repetition, according to Merritt, is boring as no new information is provided. Further, Norrick (1994) defends this position by accentuating that sometimes humour expressed through repetition is necessary as it helps cover up embarrassment, hence repetition should be viewed as a natural

phenomenon that facilitates communication in interactional discourse.

From the discussion above, the paradox of repetition is apparent, it is a double-edged linguistic manifestation which is both useful and undesirable in conversations. However, the undesirability of repetition arises mostly when this is overused leading to redundancy, sarcasm, irony or associated negative grammatical connotations, as Wilson and Sperber (2002) rightly put it. In this sense, it can be concluded that repetition warrants to be used moderately and tactfully to facilitate effective communication as it proves to be a valuable linguistic tool which interlocutors cannot do away with. Subsequently, this study is premised on the understanding that repetition needs to be used cautiously in order to enhance its communicative efficacy, particularly in non-stylistic texts.

Theoretical Framework

Halliday and Hassan's (1976) cohesive model is employed as a conceptual framework, used to conceptualise cohesion and its cohesive devices. Thus far, this model has made a great contribution towards the understanding of cohesion and coherence in English texts (Brown and Yule, 1983; Thompson, 2004). Cohesion in this article is defined as "relations of meaning that exist within the text, and that define it as a text" (Halliday and Hasan, 1976: 4). Various studies of written texts focus on determining cohesive signals that enhance the reader's perception of texts, and the present study is one such example. This study focuses on the use of repetition as a cohesive device in written texts, basing on Halliday and Hasan's linguistic scheme of cohesion. Halliday and Hasan's (1976) Cohesive model is premised on the assumption that a text is coherent with reference to its 'context of situation' (linguistic environment), as well as cohesive with respect to 'itself' (continuity of meaning). Hence, to produce a sound text, both coherence and cohesion are essential.

According to Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesive model, there are cohesive ties that exist within a text in which the interpretation of one linguistic item depends on another. Two broad categories of cohesive ties are presented, the grammatical and lexical. The grammatical textual ties incorporate relations of reference (exophoric and endophoric [anaphoric and cataphoric]), substitution, ellipsis (substitution by zero) and conjunction; whereas lexical ties include reiteration (e.g. repetition) and collocation. These five sub-categories of grammatical and lexical ties are used as parameters for measuring

cohesion in texts and are further broken down into several subcategories. Reference involves personal, demonstrative and comparative references; substitution includes nominal, verbal and clausal substitution; ellipsis consists of nominal, verbal and clausal ellipsis; conjunction comprises additive, adversative, causal and temporal conjunctions; and lexical cohesion includes the use of the same word, synonym, superordinate and general word. The presence or absence, or the manifestation of these cohesive ties denotes whether or not the texts under analysis are cohesive. According to Halliday and Hasan, cohesion in this context refers to “the continuity that exists between one part of the text and another” (1976: 299).

Halliday and Hasan's classification appears to be a valid and effective model for measuring cohesion in texts, hence this study adopts it. The study is interested in the notion of lexical cohesion and repetition in particular, which is a subcategory of reiteration. Guided by Halliday and Hasan's view of repetition as a cohesive device, the study's intention is to appraise its effectiveness in enhancing cohesion in selected HIV and AIDS posters. Also, since according to Halliday and Hasan (1976), cohesive devices are responsible for gluing the text together, semantically, the study evaluates the nature of repetitions used in these posters with a view of ascertaining their role in enhancing meaning. In order to collect data concerning the study of repetitions and to facilitate its analyses, the study employs various research methods as described in the next section.

Methodology

Sampling Method

Choosing a study sample is an important step in any research project given that it is not ethical, practical or efficient to study the whole population (Burns and Grove, 2001). Also, according to Burns and Grove, the selection of an appropriate method relies on the study's objectives. Qualitative research design normally requires a flexible sampling technique as its aim is to enlighten on understanding of certain complex social phenomena in order to answer the humanistic questions such as ‘why’ and ‘how’ of research. There are three key methods of sampling in qualitative studies such as the present; opportunistic (or convenience), theoretical and purposive sampling.

The study sample was drawn using the purposive sampling technique, also known as judgmental, selective or subjective sampling. A purposive sample is a non-probability sample selected

based on characteristics of a population and the aim of the study (Streubert and Carpenter, 1999). According to Streubert and Carpenter this is mostly used in qualitative studies and phenomenological inquiries. In this study, purposive sampling involved choosing a total of ten HIV and AIDS posters produced by PSI Zimbabwe, based on repetitive tendencies. Out of a wide range of HIV and AIDS posters produced under six major campaign programmes coordinated and launched by PSI Zimbabwe (Voluntary HIV Testing and Counselling, Prevention of Mother to child transmission, Protector Plus Condom, Sexual Networks, Male Circumcision, and Stigma), only those that display repetitive trends were selected for the study. This method allowed the researcher to select only those poster messages which discernible employ repetitions as lexical devices. As Patton (2001) puts it, purposeful sampling is useful as it allows the researcher to select only information rich cases for study purposes. It is also useful as it is shaped by the interests and aims of the study (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973).

PSI Zimbabwe is an organization that came into existence in 1996 and has collaborated with the Ministry of Health and Child Care to develop and scale up health innovations to improve public health. PSI was selected based on the fact that it spear-headed and is responsible for the launch of most of the HIV and AIDS campaigns in Zimbabwe up to date. Moreover, PSI systematically documents all the campaign and advocate information, making it conveniently retrievable for study and other purposes.

Data

Since the focus of the study is on the language used in selected PSI posters so as to appraise the use of repetitions, the written text of these posters comprises the data of the study. This includes words, phrases and sentences which embody the poster messages. As already mentioned, an analysis of written language systematically excludes semiotic features of the texts, which may be analyzed in a separate study.

Data Analysis Method

Content analysis is used as a data analysis method for exploring repetition in the studied HIV and AIDS posters. It is a common research method in the field of communication and media research (Krippendorff, 2004). The most prominent feature of content analysis as a method of research is that it gives a quantitative description of

the content of communication (Deacon et al, 1999 and Berelson, 1952, cited in Hansen et al, 1998). This is achieved through identifying trends or themes in the communication material, followed by categorizing, tabulating or classifying it into empirical data before interpreting it (Wimmer and Dominick, 1997). Thus, according to Wimmer and Dominick, content analysis basically involves scanning the content of communication to establish the presence or absence of particular themes, and then analyzing these to produce interpretive explanations of research phenomena. Despite the classifying feature of content analysis, Berg (1998) postulates the view that frequency in content analysis of a certain aspect or idea in a text is indicative of its persistence and hence is used to measure the same.

In this study, content analysis involved scanning through ten selected HIV and AIDS posters, in order to establish the categories of repetitions used and their frequencies. The results of the scanning process were then presented in the form of tables displaying numerical data, giving a quantitative description to the content of the poster messages. Numerical data were later interpreted using qualitative descriptions in order to accomplish the study's objectives.

Findings

This section presents the findings of the study whose purpose is to appraise the effectiveness of repetitions used in selected PSI Zimbabwe HIV and AIDS posters. Their effectiveness is determined by the extent to which they enhance communication within their contexts of use. Below is Table 1, showing the categories of repetitions and their frequencies as used in each of the ten studied posters. The posters are numbered along a 1-10 scale, each representing the following: Poster 1 (Get Real Poster); Poster 2 (Voluntary HIV and AIDS Testing Poster); Poster 3 (Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission 1); Poster 4 (Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission 2); Poster 5 (Seatbelt Condom Poster) Poster 6 (Sexual Networks Poster); Poster 7 (Umbrella Condom Poster); Poster 8 (Male Circumcision Poster 1); Poster 9 (Male Circumcision Poster 2) and Poster 10 (Stigma Poster). Tabulating thematic data is a typical content analysis method whose convenience is grounded on ease of analysis and interpretation.

Table 1: Showing the Categories of Repetitions in Ten HIV and AIDS Posters and their Frequencies

Repetition Category	Poster 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Synonyms	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Anaphoric	2	3	2	2	2	2	6	4	2	3
Parallel	2	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	2	0
Root	4	2	2	2	0	0	2	0	2	4
Framing	2	2	2	6	0	2	0	0	2	0
Epiphoric	2	2	3	0	2	0	3	0	0	0
Alliteration	0	5	0	0	4	2	8	3	3	4
Polysyndeton	0	3	0	4	2	2	0	0	0	0
Mesodiplosis	0	2	0	6	0	3	3	0	6	0
Anadiplosis	0	4	4	4	0	2	0	0	0	0
Antistasis	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	2
Scattered	0	0	2	9	0	3	0	5	0	0
Total Repetitions	14	23	17	33	14	18	22	14	19	13

According to Table 1 above, there is a total of 12 categories of repetitions observed in the ten posters, namely; anaphoric, epiphoric, root, synonymy, framing, alliteration, antistasis, mesodiplosis, anadiplosis, parallelism, polysyndeton, and scattered. Anaphoric repetition is the repetition of a word or a phrase at the beginning of two or more consecutive sentences and epiphoric, the opposite of anaphoric, involves placing the same word or phrase at the end of consecutive phrases, clauses or sentences (Kemertelidze and Manjavidze, 2013). In root repetition, it is not the same words that are repeated, but the same root, hence it is conceptualised as the repetition of words in a different form (Preminger and Brogan, 1993). According to Short (2007) synonymous repetition occurs when one word or phrase is replaced by its synonym and framing repetition is a type of repetition that is arranged in the form of a frame (headline, body and tagline) (Leanne, 2009). Leanne explains that, the initial parts of a syntactical unit (in most cases headlines or first paragraphs) are repeated at the end of it (tagline).

In Osborn's (2006) view, alliteration involves repetition of the same sound (usually consonants) at the beginning of words close together, and antistasis is the repetition of words or phrases in the opposite sense. Whereas mesodiplosis repetition is defined as the recurrence of the same word in the middle of every sentence or clause, anadiplosis is viewed as a figure of speech which consists of the repetition of the same word or phrase at the end of one clause or sentence and at the beginning of the following (Kemertelidze and

Manjavidze, 2013). Parallelism is “the repetition of identical or similar syntactic patterns in adjacent phrases, clauses or sentences” (Preminger and Brogan, 1993: 877). Baldick, (2001) on the other hand defines polysyndeton repetition as a “term for repeated use of conjunctions to link together a succession of words, clauses, or sentences” (p. 199). Further, scattered repetition, as defined by Leanne (2009), is whereby a word, phrase, clause or sentence is restated throughout the text, several times, with no particular order of recurrence.

In terms of frequency, repetition is shown to be generally a prevalent linguistic feature of the studied posters as it appears at least 185 times. For instance, as indicated in Table 1, the minimum repetitions recorded in a single poster that is composed of an average of ten sentences is 13, and the maximum is 33. It is also revealed that there are multiple types of repetitions used in a single text and across different texts that were analysed. For instance, Table 1 shows that there is more than one type of repetition used in each poster message. The least number of repetition types recorded in one poster is 4 (Poster 8), and the highest is 9 (Poster 2 and 6). This is evidence of high frequent uses of various repetitions in individual posters. To find out the relative frequencies of the categories of repetitions employed across all ten posters, Table 2 below provides a summary of this information.

Table 2 Showing the Relative Frequencies of Categories of Repetitions used across Ten HIV and AIDS Posters

Categories of Repetitions	Frequency	Relative Frequency (%)
Synonymous	6	3.2
Anaphoric	28	15.1
Parallelism	8	4.2
Root	16	8.6
Framing	16	8.6
Epiphoric	12	6.5
Alliteration	29	15.7
Polysyndeton	11	6
Mesodiplosis	20	11
Anadiplosis	14	7.6
Antistasis	6	3.2
Scattered	19	10.3
Total	185	100

The frequencies of repetitions used in the ten posters vary as indicated in Table 2. However, there are some which are more dominantly used than others, such as alliteration (15.7%), anaphoric (15.1%), mesodiplosis (11%) and scattered (10.3%). The least frequently used repetitions recording below 5% are; synonymous (3.2%), antistasis (3.2%) and parallelism (4.2%).

Discussions

Given the high frequency of their occurrence within brief poster messages, it is correct to argue that there is overuse of lexical repetitions in the studied HIV and AIDS materials. An example is that of the *Male Circumcision* poster where a total of ten repetitive instances and eight types of repetitions are occurring in a single text consisting of five lines as follows:

- Reduces** the risk of cervical cancer in females
Reduces risk of cancer of the male organ. (Anaphoric)
- Reduces the **risk** of cervical **cancer** in females
 Reduces **risk** of **cancer** of the male organ. (Mesodiplosis)
- Reduces the risk of cervical cancer in **females**
 Reduces risk of cancer of the **male**organ. (Antistasis)
- Reduces the risk of cervical cancer in females**
Reduces risk of cancer of the male organ. (Parallelism)
- Male circumcision is **S**imple, **S**afe and **S**mart. (Alliteration)
- After **circumcision**, abstain, be faithful or always use condoms.
 Be smart get **circumcised** today! (Root repetition)
- Male circumcision is simple, safe and **smart**. (headline)
 Be **smart**get circumcised today! (tagline) (Framing repetition)
- Male **circumcision** is simple, safe and smart.
 After **circumcision**, abstain, be faithful
 or always use condoms. (Mesodiplosis)

The example above demonstrates multiple uses of unsolicited and hence superfluous repetitions within limited textual space, producing linguistic redundancy and other negative semantic connotations. Whereas recurrence of words, phrases, clauses or sentences may

have a lyrical effect and an emphatic role (Johnstone, 1994 and Tannen, 2007), in this case it gives rise to reader fatigue, given that these are non-stylistic texts and repetition of some words could have been avoided. Overemployment of repetitions is also evident in the *Sexual Networks* poster consisting of six lines, where a total of eleven repetition uses and five types of repetitions are present.

I decided to get real early so
I know how to maintain my HIV negative status
I have made it in life because of my family's support
I have invested my resources where
I get great good profits... (Anaphoric)

I have made it in life because of my family's support
I have invested my resources where I get great good profits...
 (Parallelism)

I have made it in life because of my family's support
 I have invested my resources where I getgreatgood profits
 (Alliteration)

I have made it in life because of my family's support
 I have invested my resources where I get great good profits...
My family and my business. (Mesodiplosis)

I decided to get real early so I know how to maintain my HIV negative status (headline)

Get Real Early. Visit a New Start Centre today. (tagline)
 (Framing)

Another example is that of the *Umbrella Condom* poster which reads: "I love my partner and I love my life/ our safety, our lives, ourlove, and our life". Here there is overuse of the word 'love' and the pronoun 'our', producing a witty effect. This playful use of language is evident in most of the studied materials. For instance, in the examples above, witticism is apparent where alliteration is used: "Simple, Safe and Smart" (*Male Circumcision* poster) and "get great good profits" (*Sexual Networks* poster). Thus, the examples above indicate not only the fact that there are high frequencies of repetition uses within brief texts, but that in most cases these repetitions, meant for emphasise, produce witticism. This is alarming given the urgency of HIV and AIDS information in Zimbabwe, designed to educate for the

purposes of eradicating the pandemic. Thus, overemployment of repetitions in non-stylistic texts such as HIV and AIDS messages, a form of public health announcements, impacts negatively on audience coherence.

Redundancy is generally defined as an unsettling excessive repetition of an idea or term in a text. Smith (1988) distinguishes between various types of redundancies, and indicates that these are present in the orthography (word or surface level), the syntax (grammatical level), the semantic (meaning level), or in a combination of these. Although Hsia (1977) argues that redundancy enhances communication and is essential as it improves text readability and hence understanding, this study maintains that orthography redundancy is unwanted as it gives rise to overuse of words and hence clichés. Orthography redundancy is likely to lead to information overload as it arbitrarily repeats words at a surface level.

In addition to overuse of repetitions in HIV and AIDS posters, an observation of positioning and placement indicates that various categories of repetitions are clustered in a single text. This means that diverse types of repetitions overlap each other within the same clause (phrases or sentences) such that each individual sentence or clause contributes to an occurrence of one or several types of repetitions. For example, in the *Get Real* poster, four types of repetitions are overlapping in the same text as follows:

You will learn ways to protect yourself, such as being faithful to one uninfected partner.
You will also learn how to maintain your HIV negative status as a couple. (Anaphoric)

You will learn ways to protect yourself, such as being faithful to one uninfected partner.
You will also learn how to maintain your HIV negative status as a couple. (Parallel)

You will **learn** ways to protect yourself, such as being faithful to one uninfected partner.
 You will also **learn** how to maintain your HIV negative status as a couple. (Mesodiplosis)

You will learn ways to protect yourself, such as being faithful to one **uninfected** partner.

You will also learn how to maintain your **HIV negativestatus** as a couple. (Synonymous)

Another example of repetition clustering is shown in the *Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission* (1) poster, where there are eight instances of repetition uses within six clauses that constitute the message. The poster reads:

We decided to get real early for our baby. (headline)

We now know how to ensure that our baby can be HIV negative.

An HIV **positive** mother can have an HIV **negativebaby**.

At New Start Centres **you will** receive professional **counselling** and personal **advice** on prevention of HIV transmission to your **baby**.

You will learn about free treatment options and safe infant feeding methods to ensure a healthy **baby**.

Get Real Early. Visit a New Start Centre today. (tagline)

Anaphoric repetition is used in sentence 1 and 2, where the pronoun “We” is repeated at the beginning of the sentences. In the same sentences, parallelism (structural repetition) is demonstrated by the similarities of the forms of both sentences. Similarly, several types of repetitions are used in sentences 3, 4, and 5. For example, epiphoric repetition is presented by the repeated use of the noun ‘baby’ at the end of the three sentences. In addition, sentence 3 displays the use of antistasis repetition, embedded in the words; “positive” and “negative”. Further, synonymous repetition is present in sentence 4, indicated by the interchangeable use of the synonyms “counselling” and “advice”. Moreover, there is use framing repetition displayed in sentences 1 and 6 where the phrase “get real early” is repeatedly used. In this analysis, given the examples above, it can be argued that the overlapping repetitions within the same texts are indicative of the overwhelming usage of the repetitive style in the analysed materials.

Further, the frequently employed repetitions in the studied HIV and AIDS materials are word for word repetitions (non-conceptual, as opposed to conceptual repetitions), which are stylistic and useful for

enhancing the style and form of the text. According to Tannen (1989), word for word repetition of language constitutes what is known as exact repetitions, whose purpose is to ensure comprehension, referred to as emphatic function (Murata, 1995). Non-conceptual repetitions include, alliteration, anaphoric, scattered, anadiplosis, polysyndeton, epiphoric, framing, root and mesodiplosis. At this point it is important to distinguish between conceptual and non-conceptual repetitions. According to Cushing (1994), conceptual repetitions repeat aspects such as meaning, themes, ideas, discourse forms, voice, tense, aspect, speaker or prosody, depending on the type of repetition, rather than mere words. They repeat by replacing a word with another one which has an equivalent meaning. Non-conceptual repetitions disregard meaning and focus on vocal or written symbols, as they broadly repeat utterances (Cushing, 1994 and Johnstone, 1994).

Anaphoric repetition is one example of non-conceptual repetitions, used in the *Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission* (2) poster. It reads: “**We** took a positive step to protect our baby from HIV/ **We** were also taught how to keep her safe during breast feeding/ **We**’re proud we took the right steps to protect our baby”. In this message the consistent repetition of the pronoun ‘we’ is not adding any new meaning to the text, but is causing unnecessary redundancy. The sentences could have been combined to avoid pointless repetition. Another example of non-conceptual repetition is alliteration, used in the *Protector Plus Condom* poster in the following lines: “We use **P**rotector **P**lus for our **l**ove and our **l**ife/ **P**rotector **P**lus for the **l**ove of your life!”. The essence of alliteration here is word play achieved through repeating syllables, producing flowery language. A third example of non-conceptual repetition is scattered repetition as observed in the *Male Circumcision* (1) poster that reads:

MC protects you against **HIV**...After MC...making it difficult for **HIV** and STIs to penetrate. MC does not provide 100% protection against **HIV**

...**HIV**prevention methods including...Defend Yourself from **HIV**.

In this poster there is repeated use of the term HIV, scattered everywhere in the text, without introducing new information or enhancing textual meaning. This certainly leads to linguistic redundancy. Framing is another dominant form of non-conceptual

repetitions that appears to be present in the majority of the studied posters. It incorporates restating in taglines, particular words and phrases used in the headlines of the poster messages. Examples of repetitions forming frames, employed in text headlines and taglines are illustrated below: “New **Life** Post Test Support Centre” (headline)/ “**Life** is worth it, so live it” (tagline) (*Voluntary HIV Testing and Counselling* Poster); “I am a winner because I have been **circumcised**” (headline) / “Defend yourself from HIV. Get **Circumcised**” (tagline) (*Get Real* Poster); “We took **positive steps** to **protect** our **baby from HIV**” (headline) / “Take **positive steps** today and **protect** your **baby from HIV**” (tagline) (*Prevention of Mother to child Transmission* (2) Poster); “Male circumcision is simple, safe and **smart**” (headline) / “Be **smart** get circumcised today!” (tagline) (Male Circumcision Poster) and “We decided to **get real early** for our baby” (headline) / “**Get real early...**” (tagline) (*Prevention of Mother to child Transmission* (1) Poster). In addition, the phrase “Get Real Early” forms framing repetition in the *Sexual Networks* Poster where it features in the headline and in the tagline of the message. Framing repetition, amongst other non-conceptual ones, is certainly a prominent linguistic feature of HIV and AIDS posters.

Basing on the deliberations made thus far, it is apparent that there is dominant use of non-conceptual repetitions, perhaps meant to enhance the style and form of the texts, in order to appeal to audiences. Although, as already mentioned, it is true that these are powerful instruments for enriching style in artistic texts, it is also true that they are inappropriate for non-creative discourses such as health information texts. Thus, whereas word for word repetitions are useful for genres such as poetry and prose where meaning is achieved through creative style, in non-stylistic texts they are interpreted as linguistic redundancy and are likely to result in target audience dispossessions. Again, as proposed by Tannen (1989), word for word repetitions can effectively achieve their emphatic role if they only repeat the key words that carry the intended message, rather than repetition of words for the sake of repetition, as appears to be the case in the studied materials.

Moreover, whilst HIV and AIDS materials predominantly employ non-conceptual repetitions, conceptual repetitions are used minimally. These include, parallelism (4.2%) synonymous (3.2%) and antistasis (3.2%) which are the least employed categories of repetitions in this study. An example of parallelism conceptual repetition is observed in the *Prevention of Mother to Child*

Transmission (1) Poster which reads: “We decided to get real early for our baby/ We now know how to ensure that our baby can be HIV negative”. Another example is drawn from the *Sexual Networks* poster: “I have made it in life because of my family’s support/ I have invested my resources where I get good profits...”. A third example comes from the *Stigma* poster which reads:

I have felt and seen a lot of suffering and discrimination because people are ignorant about HIV.

I have been living positively with HIV over 15 years and I help provide support to others.

In these examples, as the term parallelism signals, only the syntactic patterns in adjacent sentences are repeated, as opposed to words themselves. This form of repetition is useful for developing the structure of the text as well as avoiding word for word repetitions which lead to linguistic redundancies. Examples of synonymous conceptual repetitions include the following: “Visit a New Start Centre today to receive professional **counselling** and personal **advice**” (*Get Real* poster); and “We’re proud we took the **right** steps to protect our baby/ Take **positive** steps today-and protect your baby from HIV” (*Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission* (2) Poster). Synonymous repetitions work by replacing a word or phrase in an utterance with an equivalent as shown in the above examples. Again, these are crucial for eliminating linguistic redundancy whilst they enhance textual meaning. For instance, ‘right’ is repeated as ‘positive’ in the example above, enhancing semantic meaning.

Antistasis repetitions also function in similar ways. However, this type of repetition is the least used amongst all categories identified in the studied texts. Examples of antistasis repetitions are found in the *Stigma* poster’s popular slogan, “Don’t be **negative** about being **positive**” and similarly in the *Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission* (1) Poster where it says “An HIV **positive** mother can have an HIV **negative** baby”. These antistasis repetitions are produced by repeating words in the opposite sense. The focus on sense or meaning qualifies this category of repetition as conceptual. In antistasis, meaning is built through arousing irony by use of contraries to force the reader to look and think deeper on issues, as seen in the negative/positive sense relations in the above examples.

The conceptual repetitions used in the studied messages have an emphatic function as they emphasise on the development of textual concepts and ideas. Although they are rarely used, these cautiously emphasise and reinforce ideas through repetition of intended meanings carried in the poster messages as opposed to mere word for word repetitions, observed in the non-conceptual categories. Conceptual repetitions reinforce by drawing attention to a concept and arousing emotion (Persson, 1974). As part of their emphatic role, and as indicated in the cited examples, these focus on repeating meaning, ideas, discourse structures and other extra linguistic elements rather than the actual words of an utterance. In addition, clichés are minimized through use of conceptual repetitions, making communication clearer and motivating to read. Hence, whenever meaning enhancement is intended in HIV and AIDS materials, conceptual repetitions would be the most suitable for this task. Nevertheless, it is unfortunate to note that, as indicated above, these materials are more preoccupied with stylistic non-conceptual repetitions, hindering meaning development.

Conclusions

Summing up the arguments raised above, it is important to note some key points that emerged during the implementation of the objectives of the study. Firstly, it was established that each of the studied posters employs abundant and varied types of repetitions. It was also founded that there are numerous types of repetitions used across all the studied materials, namely; synonymous, anaphoric, parallelism, root, framing, epiphoric, alliteration, polysyndeton, mesodiplosis, anadiplosis, antistasis and scattered. These are further categorised into conceptual (those which repeat meaning) and non-conceptual (word for word repetitions), and it was discovered that HIV and AIDS materials employ more non-conceptual repetitions than conceptual ones. Amongst the mostly employed non-conceptual repetitions are alliterations, anaphoric and scattered repetitions; and the least used conceptual repetitions are antistasis, parallelism and synonymous.

The study concludes that there is overemployment of repetitive language in HIV and AIDS posters, which gives rise to unnecessary linguistic redundancy. Redundancy is unwanted as it leads to poor readability of texts and negatively impacts on text coherence. In line with this argument, it was indicated that although excessive repetitive language is a rich stylistic technique for artistic authorship, it is inappropriate for non-stylistic texts such as the

studied public health information posters. Another important conclusion drawn is that the predominantly used non-conceptual repetitions are less effective as they are mere repetitions of words irrespective of the meanings of the expressions. Contrarily, the less commonly employed, conceptual repetitions, are more effective as they shift focus from simple repeating words for emphatic purposes. These replicate aspects such as meaning, themes, ideas, discourse forms, voice, tense, aspect, speaker or prosody, thereby enhancing and developing textual meaning.

To fortify the view of conceptual repetitions as effective repetitive forms, and non-conceptual ones as less effective in developing textual meaning, Biber et al. (1999) and Aitchison (1994) distinguish effective repetitions as those that serve a lexical function to enhance meaning of a text, and ineffective repetitions as those that do not add any meaning value. Similarly, Holmes and Stubbe (2003) and Hsieh (2011) assert that effective repetition involves intensifying meaning by adding new information to the text. Hence, as conceptual repetitions enrich the semantic base of the text, non-conceptual repetitions employed in HIV and AIDS posters have little lexical value as they do not heighten meaning, however, as already explained, these are powerful strategies for enhancing form in artistic texts.

Recommendations

Whilst it is appreciated that repetition in HIV and AIDS information is widely used for emphatic purposes, given the persuasive objective of this type of communication, the study recommends cautious use of this linguistic device so as to enhance simplicity as well as avoid textual redundancy. This partly entails generally limiting use of repetitive language whenever permissible, bearing in mind that these are not literary texts. This may be achieved through a systematic method of authorship that considers need and necessity of this device rather than a mere arbitrary use as would be the case in creative writing.

Also, given that there is predominant use of non-conceptual repetitions in HIV and AIDS materials, as opposed to conceptual ones, resulting in linguistic redundancies, suggested is the reversal of this practice. This necessitates the need to employ more conceptual repetitions and less non-conceptual ones in order to allow content to take precedence over structure, especially given the informative role of HIV and AIDS communication. Conceptual

repetitions are instrumental in intensifying meaning and understanding of the text, hence using more of these would certainly support the informative role of these messages and would help achieve their specific communicative goals.

In essence, embracing conceptual repetitions would permit producers of HIV and AIDS communication materials to elaborate, explain and emphasise or stress the truth of propositional content as well as convince the readers of specific viewpoints, without adverse negative semantic associations. The augmentation of conceptual repetitions should be done without entirely excluding the non-conceptual ones, considering, as already mentioned, the latter's universal stylistic significance.

References

- Aitchison, J. (1994). Say it again, Sam. In A. Fischer (ed.). *Swiss Papers in English Language and Literature Repetition*. Tuebingen: Gunter Narr Verlag: 15–34.
- Baldick, C. (2001). *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bazzanella, C. (2011). Redundancy, Repetition, and Intensity in Discourse. *Language Sciences*, 33(2): 243–254.
- Berg, B. (1998). *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. Boston: Ally and Bacon.
- Biber, D., Johansson, S., Leech, G., Conrad, S., & Finegan, E. (1999). *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. London: Longman.
- Brody, J. (1994). Multiple Repetitions in Tjal'ab Conversations. In B. Johnstone (ed.). *Repetition in Discourse: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation: 31–4.
- Brody, J. (1986). Repetition as a Rhetorical and Conversational Device in Tojolabal, Mayan. *International Journal of American Linguistics*, 52(3): 255–274.
- Brown, G. & Yule, G. (1983). *Discourse Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, P. & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness. Some Universals in Language Use*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Burns, N. & Grove, S. K. (2001). *The Practice of Nursing Research*. Philadelphia: Saunders.
- Coates, J. (1996). *Women Talk*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Cuddon, J. A. & Preston, C. E. (1999). *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. London: Penguin.

- Curl, T. S. (2002). The Phonetics of Sequence Organization: An Investigation of Lexical Repetition in Other-initiated Repair Sequences in American English. PhD Thesis, University of Colorado.
- Curl, T. S., Local, J. & Walker, G. (2006). Repetition and the Prosodypragmatics Interface. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 38(10): 1721–1751.
- Cushing, S. (1994). Air Cal Three Thirty-Six, Go Around Three Thirty-Six, Go Around: Linguistic Repetition in Air Ground Communication. In B. Johnstone (ed.). *Repetition in Discourse*. New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation: 53–65.
- Deacon, D. H., Pickering, M., Golding, P. & Murdock, G. (1999). *Researching Communications*. London: Arnold.
- Fowler, C. A. (1988). Differential Shortening of Repeated Context Words Produced in Various Communicative Contexts. *Language and Speech*, 31(2): 307–319.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Hasan, R. (1976). *Cohesion in English*. New York: Longman.
- Hansen, A., Cottle, S., Negrine, R. & Newbold, C. (1998). *Mass communication Research Methods*. London: Palgrave.
- Holmes, J. & Stubbe, M. (2003). *Power and Politeness in the Workplace*. Harlow: Pearson Education.
- Hsia, H. J. (1977). Redundancy: It the Lost Key to Better Communication? *AV Communication Review*, 25(1): 63–85.
- Hsieh, F. (2011). Repetition in Social Interaction: A Case Study on Mandarin Conversations. *International Journal on Asian Language Processing*, 19(4):153–168.
- Jackson, R. C. (2016). The Pragmatics of Repetition, Emphasis and Intensification. *PhD Thesis*, University of Salford, UK.
- Johnstone, B. (1994). Repetition in Discourse: A Dialogue. In B. Johnstone (ed.). *Repetition in Discourse: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation Advances: 2–23.
- Jucker, A. H. (1994). Irrelevant Repetitions: A Challenge to Relevance Theory. In A. Fischer (ed.). *Swiss Papers in English Language and Literature Repetition*. Tuebingen: Gunter Narr Verlag: 47–60.
- Kemertelidze, N. & Manjevidze, T. (2013). Stylistic Repetition, Its Peculiarities and Types in Modern English. *European Scientific Journal*. 2013 Special Edition.
- Krippendorff, K. (2004). *Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology*. California: Sage Publication, Inc.

- Leanne, S. (2009). *Say it Like Obama: The Power of Speaking with Purpose and Vision*. New York: RR Donnelley.
- Leech, G. N. & Short, M. H. (1981). *Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose*. London: Longman.
- McArthur, T. (1992). *The Oxford Companion to the English Language*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Merritt, M. (1994). Repetition in Situated Discourse: Exploring its Forms and Functions. In B. Johnstone (ed.). *Repetition in Discourse Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation Advances: 23–36.
- Mlambo, M. (2009) Using the Type-Token ration in the Study of Repetition Patterns in the Second Language Lexical Development of Learners from Two Different English Language Backgrounds. *Zimbabwe Journal of Educational Research*, 21(3): 340–357.
- Murata, K. (1995). Repetitions: A Cross-Cultural Study. *World English*, 14: 343–356.
- Norrick, N. R. (1987). Functions of Repetition in Conversation. *Text*, 7(3): 245–264.
- Norrick, N. R. (1994) Repetition as a Conversational Joking Strategy. In B. Johnstone (ed.). *Repetition in Discourse Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation: 15–28.
- Osborn, S. (2006) Reconsidering Elizabeth Bowen. *Modern Fiction Studies*, 52(1): 187–197.
- Patton, M. Q. (2001). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. California: Sage Publications, Incorporated.
- Persson, G. (1974). *Repetition in English*. Uppsala: University of Uppsala.
- Preminger, A. & Brogan, T. V.F. (eds.). (1993). *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Reynolds, D.W. (1995). Repetition in Non-Native Speaker Writing. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 17(2): 185–209.
- SAFAIDS (2009) *HIV and AIDS Documentation and Communication Skills. A Focus on Best Practices. A Course Guidebook*.
- Schatzman, L. & Strauss, A. L., (1973) *Field Research: Strategies for a Natural Sociology*. Englewood: Prentice-Hall.
- Short, M. (2007) *Style in Fiction*. London: Longman.
- Simpson, J. M. (1994). Regularized Intonation in Conversational Repetition. In B. Johnstone (ed.). *Repetition in Discourse: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation: 41–49.

- Smith, F. (1988) *Understanding Reading*. New Jersey: Erlbaum.
- Streubert, H. G. & Carpenter, D. R. (1999). *Qualitative Research in Nursing*. Philadelphia: Lippincott.
- Tannen, D. (1987). Repetition in Conversation as Spontaneous Formulaicity. *Text*, 7(3): 215–243.
- Tannen, D. (1989). *Talking Voices: Repetition, Dialogue, and Imagery in Conversational Discourse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tannen, D. (2007). *Talking Voices: Repetition, Dialogue, and Imagery in Conversational Discourse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Thompson, G. (2004). *Introducing Functional Grammar*. London: Hodder Education.
- Tyler, A. (1994). The Role of Repetition in Perceptions of Discourse Coherence. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 21(2): 671–688.
- Wilson, D. & Sperber, D. (2002). Relevance Theory. *UCL Working Papers in Linguistics*, 14: 249–287.
- Wimmer, R. D. & Dominick, J. R. (1997). *Mass Media Research: An Introduction*. London: Wadsworth.