A-2: Affirmation

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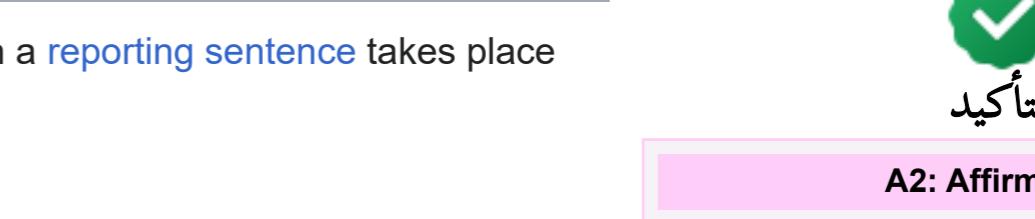
Definition

Affirmation of the communicator's proposition which is being conveyed in a reporting sentence takes place through the use of certain affirmatory constructions such as:

- The particle *inna* starting a nominal sentence.
- The particles *la-*, *ʾin*, *ʾan*, *mā*, *lā*, and *min*, and the prefix *bi-*.
- The construction *ʾammā ... fa-*.
- The future-tense prefix *sa-* and the future-tense particle *sawfa*.
- The use of *qad* before a past-tense verb.
- Explicit pronouns.
- Oath letters such as *wa-*, *bi-* or *ta-* prefixed to another oath word such as "Allah".
- Light affirmation with the suffix *-n* and heavy affirmation with the suffix *-nna*.
- Repetition of a negation.
- The particle *ʾinnamā*.
- Affirmative words such as *ḥattā*.
- Use of the negation followed by an exception.

Depending on the status of the addressee, reporting sentences may utilise 3 levels of affirmation:

1. **No affirmation**: The addressee is open-minded or neutral about the communicator's proposition: there is no requirement for affirmation.

سليم: أنا مريض.
Salim: I am ill.

2. **Light affirmation**: The addressee is doubtful or sceptical about the communicator's proposition, and there is a requirement for affirmation by using one affirmatory device.

سليم: إنَّني مريض.
Salim: Verily I am ill.

3. **Heavy affirmation**: The addressee is in denial about the communicator's proposition: there is a requirement for more intense affirmation by using two or more affirmatory devices.

سليم: إنَّني لمريض.
Salim: Verily I am truly ill.

For rhetorical purposes, the affirmative may be used in a way outside this scheme of escalation.[1][2][3]

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Examples

1) An open-minded or neutral addressee is addressed as if they are doubtful, with one affirmatory device

كريم: أنت جاهز للسفر؟
سليم: لا أريد أن أسافر اليوم. إنَّني مريض.
Karim: Are you ready to travel?
Salim: I do not want to travel today. Verily, I am ill.

2) An open-minded or neutral addressee is addresses as if they were in denial, with two or more affirmatory devices

كريم: أنت جاهز للسفر؟
سليم: لا أريد أن أسافر اليوم. إنَّني لمريض فلن أخرج من بيتي إلا عند الضرورة.
Karim: Are you ready to travel?
Salim: I do not want to travel today. Verily I am truly ill, and so I will not leave my house unless it was necessary.

3) An addressee in denial is addressed as if they were open-minded or neutral, without any affirmatory devices

كريم: كلنا جاهزون للسفر والسيارة جاهزة أيضاً. أين أنت؟ ننتظر إليك...
سليم: نصحني الطبيب بالبقاء بالبيت اليوم.
Karim: We are all ready to travel, and the car is ready too. Where are you? We are waiting for you.
Salim: The doctor advised me to stay home today.

References

1. ↑ Basil Hatim, *Arabic Rhetoric: The Pragmatics of Deviation from Linguistic Norms* 🔗, LINCOM Studies in Communication 04 (Munich: Lincom Europa, 2010), 136-146, ISBN 9780415386098.
2. ↑ Hussein Abdul-Raof, *Arabic Rhetoric: A Pragmatic Analysis* 📄 (Oxford: Routledge, 2006), 108-114, ISBN 9780415386098. DOI 10.4324/9780203965399 🔗
3. ↑ Ayman Amin Abd Al-Ghani, *Al-Kāfī fī al-Balāgha: Al-Bayān, wa al-Badīʿ wa al-Maʿānī* (Cairo: Dār al-Tawfīqiyya lil-Turāth, 2011), 401-407.

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