A Comparative Literary Study of the Prosodic Systems of English and Arabic Poetry

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the similarities and differences between the prosodic systems of English and Arabic poetry. It is qualitative research on the two systems, where the methods of representation are explained, compared, and contrasted, with examples of words and lines from both languages' poetry. It supposes that music, as a common ground for the poetry of both languages, has given them the essential elements of having to do with the beat and rhythm, though these terms are slightly different in music. This is added to the fact that both are rhythmic languages, affected by the factor of rhythm as a common feature between them. Furthermore, the study attempts to prove that it is possible to have some examples of Arabic poetry represented through the English prosodic system and vice versa. This showed that there is much similarity between the two systems in the practical sense of depending on the vowels as fundamental to the existence and representation of syllables. The differences between the two prosodic systems were found in the significance of the level of the beats and the representation of consonants and long vowels.

Keywords: Prosody; Rhythm; Beat; Syllable; Stress

INTRODUCTION

With the rise of comparative literature as a tool of interculturality and the heading of the world towards the exploration of the *unknown* and the *other* in a positive sense, it has become necessary for scholars who own the necessary tools to introduce the meeting points and discuss the differences between what different cultures have, particularly at the level of literature, art, and music. Poetry, being part of those cultural codes and a form of literature that is much closer to music, occupies a high position with its deeper effect on its specialised and unspecialised audiences. That is the main reason this study attempts to explore English and Arabic poetry from the musical point of view, and then to find the systematic similarities and differences.

The nature of poetic language makes it special, not only at the expressive level of meaning, where figurative language plays a role in taking the language of poetry further away from ordinary language, but also at the musical level, where the sounds are set in a special way that produces a frequency which brings it closer to music. This happens a little differently from the way it does in music, as music requires more attention to the element of time mutually responsible for creating its rhythm (Mazzola et al., 1998, p. 29). But still, the notions of the 'beat' and 'rhythm' as connected with a regularity that 'sets your toe tapping, … makes you want to move, or to dance' (Harnum, 2001, p. 60), are shared between poetry and music.

The question of the relationship between poetry and music is an old one. Hollander states: 'Since antiquity, however, literary history has been continually confronted with various analogical couplings of music and poetry' (1956, p. 232). The stress as an underlying element of the rhythm of poetry is there in music, where the *beat* is the term that talks about the regular intervals of sound and silence. In music, these elements are controlled by *rhythm.* This term, rhythm, concerns the

highness and lowness in poetry, but in music, it corresponds to *pitch*; as Benward defines it as 'the highness or lowness of a sound' and then, about pitch, frequency, and sound waves, he adds: 'Variations in frequency are what we hear as variations in pitch: The greater the number of sound waves produced per second of an elastic body, the higher the sound we hear; the fewer sound waves per second, the lower the sound' (Benward & Saker, 2009, p. xiv).

There is, practically speaking, a possibility of understanding, representing, and, further, creating the required musical effect of a piece of poetry when translating it between the two languages: English and Arabic. At this level, it becomes necessary to understand the effect of the different metres of both poetic prosodies and the tools each language's poetry has for the preservation of that music. This is to achieve the degree of musical *unity* such as that achieved through verse translations versus prose translations, as 'verse translations emphasise aesthetic qualities, particularly metre and rhyme, which embody poetic unity' (Farghal & Haider, 2025, p. 269).

Despite the difference in the terms used for different elements in poetry and music, the concepts of highness and lowness, regularity, repetition, and above all, organised sound are present in both. The variation is discernible at the points of deciding which element is more fundamental and which one distinguishes each of them. However, the core identity of poetry and music shows that, at the artistic level, they are inseparable, as Hollander states:

> We should also have to concede, however, that other units of language are akin to, and in some cases identical with, these musical building-blocks. Aside from the phonemes, or ultimate significant sounds of a particular language, there are those properties of relative stress, pitch, and duration that can only be perceived as members of a series.
>
> (Hollander, 1956, p. 232)

The two prosodic systems of English and Arabic poetry share the same background: music, at the heart of their theory, that organises the beats and rhythm. This is the product of two factors: one is the fact that both are rhythmic, falling under the category of stress-timed languages (Bertran, 1999, p. 105), and the other is that both have sets of additional rules for metrical poetry. This musicality, or at least the strictness of keeping it, might seem at some points higher in one system than the other, but a thorough investigation of their similarities and differences should have two results: first, more clarification of the points of comparison and contrast and second, finding what music, as a common ground, has given both prosodic systems, bringing forth an essence for a human speech musicality similar, though less discernible, to that of music.

The *metre* and beats, which make the starting point of the discussion, are physically defined in the light of strength and weakness, as Levitin has it:

> Metre refers to the way in which the pulses or beats are grouped together. Generally, when we're tapping or clapping along with music, there are some beats that we feel more strongly than others. It feels as if the musicians play this beat louder and more heavily than the others. This louder, heavier beat is perceptually dominant, and other beats that follow it are perceptually weaker until another strong one comes in. Every musical system that we know of has patterns of strong and weak beats.
>
> (Levitin, 2006, p. 59)

Both prosodic systems of English and Arabic poetry depend on the varied nature and the times of repetition of the beat. Time intervals are not significant here, which is one unifying factor. What matters is the high/low variation that produces the stressed/unstressed notion and patterns in English, corresponding to that of *sakin/mutaharrik* alteration of Arabic prosody. At first, seeing that the representation of the feet of English prosody and *taf'eelas* of Arabic prosody, researchers

might hesitate to go further into discovering the similarities, as the idea seems unapproachable. But, through scrutinising the essence of both systems, or at least their common ground, comparing and contrasting them becomes conceivable. According to music theory, the regular frequency of repetition (intervals) is its essence. Carter states: 'The property which concerns us most is the frequency, which we can define as: the number of pressure waves that repeat over a period of time' (Carter, 2018, p. 13).

The idea of the high and low tones corresponds in music, with some difference, to that of stressed and unstressed syllables through having the *intervals* classified into: Ascending, Descending, Harmonic, and Played in Unison. This classification of intervals in music goes with their movement from a high note to a low one, low to high, simultaneous, or the same, respectively (Carter, 2018, p. 23).

The term *Rhythm* in music involves the production of tones at specific *intervals,* which create different patterns according to the way they move. But the concept of rhythm in music, being totally connected with time, does not exist in poetry in that sense. In poetry, the term 'rhythm', dealing with the setting of high (stressed) and low (unstressed) syllables, corresponds to the term *beat* in music.

Al-Khaleel Ibn Ahmed Al-Faraheedi (718 - 791 AC) was passing by the blacksmiths in a local market when he noticed that their beating on the iron had a significant rhythm, especially with the interference of sounds when each blacksmith seemed to beat a piece of a certain thickness at certain intervals. He kept thinking of the relationship between the rhythm of beating the iron and that rhythm felt in the Arabic poetry, which led him to the suggestion of the whole traditional Arabic metrical norms, which he called *Buhur* (literally meaning: seas) (Ryding, 1998, p. 3). His theory supposes that all traditional Arabic metrical patterns turn around fifteen patterns (to which, his student Al-Akhfash ((755 - 830 AC)) later, added one pattern called *Almutadarak*). Al-Khalil wrote a book called *Al-A'rud* (Prosody), whose original text was lost. However, it is widely quoted and referred to by scholars who attribute the study of Arabic prosody to him as the founder of the scientific study of this field (Alamrawi, 2019, p. 24).

An interesting fact is that A-Khaleel wrote two books about music: *Al-eeqaa'* (Rhythm) and *Al-Nagham* (Tuning), as he was one of the scholars of musicology. Those two books were referred to by some scholars of his time and historians who talked about his legacy (Alamrawi, 2019, p. 24).

LITERATURE REVIEW

THE RELATION BETWEEN MUSIC AND POETRY

The relation between poetry and music is unquestionable. Speakers of different languages of the world have been able to distinguish poetry from ordinary speech since poetry was first made. But with the development of interdisciplinary studies and advancements in acoustics, more scientific research took place.

One of the earliest studies, Lowell (1920), discusses the sense of the word 'musical' used to describe poetry. She supposes that musicality exists in all poetic texture, whether it is singing poetry, lyric, or any poetry. The study focused on the rhythm of poetry as shared by prose as a feature of speech, but considered it as present and fundamental to poetry in a more organised style, particularly 'singing poetry' of a banging 'lilt'.

In another earlier study, Danbey (1927) traces the relation between poetry, music, and fine art. The study denies the existence of a common rhythm between poetry and prose, placing poetry with music in the use of rhythm, giving a measurement of time based on the notion of regularly repeated beats.

Hollander (1956) assumes that poetry and music are identical. The study traces the ancient relation between them and explores the ground on which both stand, starting from their building blocks and then including their common features concerning sound and its organisation.

Patel (2006) follows Hollander's steps in finding the common factors between poetry and music, focusing on rhythm. The study compares rhythm in language to the same term in music. It found that comparing the rhythm of different languages is facilitated by investigating their influence on the rhythm of their music.

Focusing on *Melody*, Menninghaus (2018) explores the musical pitch in some poems. The study further investigates the pitch and duration in poetry, considering poems as melodic as songs and music. It adds to its assumptions that the elements of rhyme and metre are essential to the interrelation of music and poetry.

With a similar basis as that of Danbey (1937), in a study that compares poetry to music and painting, Dayan (2006) connects poetry to the other two forms of art as aesthetic works. It assumes that there is a sort of fraternity of artists who fundamentally share the roots of aesthetic work as composers of great art.

COMPARISON OF ENGLISH AND ARABIC POETRY

Little has been written on this topic before the twentieth century, which makes it one of the many other topics of comparative literature that still require more exploration. In an early study of Arabic poetry from an English point of view, Arberry (1965) explores the metres of Arabic poetry in a primer for students of Arabic at Cambridge. Thus, the bulk of the study is given to the explanation of the prosody of Arabic poetry in a technical way approachable to his students. His study paved the way for further comparison of Arabic and English poetry and showed the possibility of studying Arabic poetry with the application of English metrical principles of the stressed/unstressed system of rhythm, though he assumes that Arabic rhythms are 'inimitable in any European language' (1965, p. 12).

Armstrong (2020) has referred to English versification in comparison to French versification, showing the differences through the fact that English is a stress-timed language, whereas French is a syllable-timed one. Its importance comes when further studies deal with English and Arabic poetry on the basis that both are stress-timed languages.

Hassan (2012) is concerned with investigating Arabic prosody in relation to *other* prosodies, mainly English prosody. The study focuses on explaining the Arabic prosodic system and then, in two parts out of eight, names and broadly defines some principles of English prosody. It gives the rest of the discussion to the negation of the influence of English poetry on Arabic.

Two studies, Ahmed and Ali (2022) and Lasim (2023), tackled the similarities and differences between classical English and Arabic poetry following two different methods. The former focused on extrametricality as one metrical parameter for comparing and contrasting classical English and Arabic poetry. It used examples of both English and Arabic poetry. The latter, being primarily a general analysis of the similarities and differences in style and metre, compares some examples from Arabic and English classical poetry, showing broad metrical differences and similarities.

Ghahramani et al. (2020) compared Arabic prosody with prosodies of other languages, mainly Turkish, and including English, classifying the different metres in the poetry of these languages into four categories, including the *qualitative* (e., English) and the *quantitative* (e.g, Arabic) plus other categories of *numerical* and *tonal* metres (2020, pp. 118–119).

COMPARING THE TWO SYSTEMS

MUSIC AS A COMMON GROUND

When we look at music as the common ground between the prosodic systems of both languages, English and Arabic, this logically leads to the investigation of the common aspect of what music has given to them, which is the *beat*. Both of these languages depend on the musical beat in speaking, though the representation of this in Arabic has shifted from the mere notion of the beat as a physical sound to a more linguistic representation that has a unique Arabic entity, with the difference in the concept of high syllables as a corresponding term to *stressed* syllables of the English system. Interestingly, the rhythm in the English poetry has kept what was observed in Al-khaleel's theorisation, exactly, the beating on different surfaces with the recognisable high and low patterns.

Despite the existence of such a great factor of the musical beat in both prosodic systems, rhythm in music has a special meaning connected to *time*. Unlike its notion in poetry, where it has to do with high and low beats, it is defined in music in terms of time as 'a pattern of uneven durations. While the steady beats of the meter combine to form measures, a rhythm may be a pattern of almost any length' (Benward & Saker, 2009, p. xiv). This element is absent from both the prosodic systems of English and Arabic, where the speaker can wait, pause, speed up, or slow down, or even have irregular intervals of time between the units or syllables without affecting the prosodic pattern.

The vocal systems that produce the English and the Arabic sounds are broadly the same. They are, at least, similar in the anatomy of speech organs that constitute them, so the sounds have the same physical nature concerning their source and place of articulation. This sound is, to much extent, of a common background in acoustic phonetics, as it is practically possible to inter-imitate in these language (here English and Arabic) where even in some cases a sound might be absent from one language's phonological system of the vowels or consonants, such as /e/, /ɔ/, /p/ and /v/ which are absent from standard Arabic and the Arabic /x/ and /δ/ which are absent from English. But, in auditory phonetics, where the study of sound shifts its focus to the level of the recipient, these issues of the perception of high and low, strong and weak, come to the surface as clear differences between English and Arabic sounds. This is where the division occurs between the systems in labelling the items perceived as high or low, stressed or unstressed, and so on.

THE BEATS IN ARABIC AND ENGLISH PROSODIES

THE ARABIC SYSTEM

Having been inspired by the beating on iron, Al-Khaleel's patterns were consequently not based on the sound of the beating as only high and low, but on considering the three short vowel patterns (fat-hah, dhammah, and kasrah) corresponding to the vowels /ɪ, ʊ, and ə/ respectively, as *mutaharrik (*loud) syllables corresponding to the notion of stressed syllables in English. This is why the low and high syllables in Arabic prosody are illustrated with the signs of a dot and a slash

(. /) respectively, although they used the terms *mutaharrik* and *sakin,* which could be translated literally as the correspondents of *vowel* and *consonant,* respectively.

Musically speaking, there is a parallelism of the two systems of the *beat* in the English and Arabic languages, but this is not phonologically valid, as there is a conceptual difference between them in the identification of vowels and consonants. Orthographically speaking, this syllable (tu), for instance, is considered as including the consonant /t/ and the vowel /u/ of English, whereas in Arabic it is considered as one consonant with or without a symbol that can represent the vowel /u/, as the short vowels do not have an orthographic representation in Arabic, though they exist as vowel sounds.

Regarding the long vowels in Arabic, there are three ones: /æ/, /u:/, and /i:/ which are called *alif, waw, and yaa'* respectively, in the group named *al-mudood* (literally: the prolongations), as they come as a result of the prolongation of the three short vowels (fat-hah, dhammah, and kasrah) respectively. These three Arabic long vowels are metrically considered as *sakin* (literally: consonant) and therefore, represented in the Arabic rhythm by a dot (.) as the symbol (/) comes before them representing the short vowel. Thus, a word like *meet* is metrically represented as (/.) having a *kasra* on the *m,* and, thus, including both the consonant *m* and the short vowel *kasra* in one symbol (/) followed by the symbol (.) for the /i:/ sound, which makes the Arabic long vowel /i:/ metrically classified in Arabic as *sakin*, which leads to a sort of misunderstanding, and therefore, literally translating it as *consonant*.

THE ENGLISH SYSTEM

The English language has metrical patterns inherited from Greek and Latin with some modifications related to the adaptation of *stress* and *vowel* (Hollander, 2014, p. 35). This system depends on the setting of stressed and unstressed syllables in specific sequences. The six main sequence patterns (iambic, trochaic, anapestic, dactylic, spondaic, pyrrhic), which make units (*feet*), depend on the observation that there is usually one main stress in English words and that the place of that stress does not change in normal cases. This system comes from the natural rhythm of the language that creates the *high-low* variation in the sound when the words are pronounced, thus producing the natural music of speech, which is organised, through poets' choices, into the *metric* patterns which show and control English rhythm (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 1998, foot, metre).

THE BEAT AS A MUSICAL TECHNIQUE

The fact that both English and Arabic are rhythmic languages makes it easy to understand how they meet at this point of having high and low syllables. The setting of these syllables in regular patterns creates the rise and fall in the beats, which are the components of the natural music of speech in rhythmic languages, and therefore, their poetry.

Music has given both systems the technique of repetition of a specific unit for a specific number of times. In English, the poet's choice of a foot will be kept to the end of the line, with a difference only in the number of feet. So, a line of a set of iambs will either be iambic trimeter, tetrameter, pentameter, and so on, normally without mixing it with trochees or anapests, for instance. This musical pattern of regular repetition applies to a large group (eight out of sixteen) of the prosodic patterns of Arabic poetry, e.g. *Al-hazaj, Al-ramal* and *Almutadarak*.

The other eight patterns in Arabic have different foot patterns put together, as in *Albaseet,* where the first and third are identical and different from the identical second and fourth ones (Al-tabreezi, 1994, p. 39). But still, this variation is regularly repeated in all the lines, as follows:

/././/.   /.//.   +   /././/.   /.//.   /././/.   /.//.   +   /././/.   /.//.

THE POSSIBILITY OF UNIFYING THE SYSTEM OF REPRESENTATION

It is interesting that there are cases where the sounds and, potentially, the representation of specific prosodic patterns in English and Arabic are the same. In one example, consider the English 'dactyl', which can typically be detected in the Arabic pattern 'Bahr Almutadarak' in its full form, with the repetition of *fa' ilun.* The repetition of this Arabic rhythmic pattern four times produces a form exactly the same as that of the dactyl in English prosody (represented as / _ _). This happens when we apply the essence of the English prosodic feet, with their unstressed/stressed repetition, to the Arabic system of the vowels (with *fa' i lun)* having the word stress on the syllable *fa* followed by the two unstressed ones: *'i + lun*. Another form of the same 'Bahr Al-Mutadarak' with the dropping of the second syllable, to become *fa'lun* repeated four times, also corresponds to the pattern of the 'trochee' in English prosody represented as (/ _).

In the same way, the Arabic prosodic pattern of 'Al-Ramal' is composed of the repetition of *fa'ilatun* three times. Such a repetition results in a pattern similar to the English pattern of six trochees when we have it as: *fa 'i + la tun,* with the first stressed syllable followed by the second as unstressed, resembling the trochee (/ _). To prove the possibility of a meeting point, let us take an example of a line of Arabic poetry in 'Bahr Al-Mutadarak' by Khaleel Matran:

فرق في الأعلى والأدنى
Farqun fil aa'la wal adna

(Darweesh, 2010, p. 2496)

Which has the pattern (/ _) repeated four times, with the Arabic scansion corresponding to the English system if each two short vowels (Arabic: mutaharrik) are set together as one foot, including the stressed plus the unstressed syllables.

This line has been brought because it has a perfect form (in Arabic prosody: salim) of the rhythm almutadarak, showing all its taf'eelas (units) as without the lateral changes they are exposed to in the usual forms of the Arabic rhythms.

More examples of other metres can be found when we pay attention to the way the variation of the setting of sakin and mutaharrik creates those metres. Such uniform feet of regular Arabic metres as of the prosodic pattern bahr al-hazaj in Tarafa's line:

عفا من آل ليلى السَّهْب فالأملاح فالغمرُ
A'fa min 'ali Layla sahbu falamlahu falghamru

(Al-tabreezi, 1994, p. 73)

can be represented the same way as used with the Matran's line of almutadarak, using the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables, having eight feet as follows:

- / - / - / - / - / - / - / - /

This applies more smoothly to the group of Arabic metres called Al-mua'talif (the uniform), including circular metres such as al-rajaz, al-hazaj, ar-ramal, and almutadarak. A line attributed to A'teeq:

لانَ حتى لو مشى الذَّرُ عليه كاد يُدْميهْ

Lana hatta lau masha tharru alayhi kada yudmeeh

<div align="right">(Al-tabreezi, 1994, p. 86)</div>

is of ar-amal and can be represented as resembling eight feet of trochaic metre:

/- /- /- /- /- /- /- /-

The same practice can be reversed to represent an English rhythm pattern through the Arabic system using the same correspondence between the trochees and 'Bahr Al-Mutadarak'. Consider the opening line of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven:*

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary

<div align="right">(Poe, 1911, p. 7)</div>

Which includes eight trochees (Once u/ pon a/ midnight/ dreary/ while I/ pondered/ weak and/ weary). This can be seen as a line of 'bahr al-mutadarak' with the exact repetition of the 'tafiéelah' *fa'lun* eight times, applying all the rules of scansion to it. The notion of the foot can apply to *taf'eelah,* the corresponding term here.

Another example can be Byron's line in the first stanza of his poem The Destruction of Sennacherib:

And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,

<div align="right">(Byron, 1905, p. 222)</div>

This line, which includes three anapests (_ _ /) can also be represented through the full form fai'lun of almutadarak, to correspond to the form of (///.), where the three vowels (fa+ i' + lu) are followed by the sakin (n) which is counted only in Arabic prosody, without affecting the stress pattern in none of the prosodic systems of Arabic or English.

These successful attempts of inter-representation clearly show the similarity between the two prosodic systems in the underlying principles of sound units, despite the differences in the systems of representation of those patterns. The meeting points can be seen when the reader, either of Arabic or English lines of poetry, particularly in metrical form, pays attention to the musical beats of the lines. The terminological aspects of the stressed/unstressed or vowel/consonant do not make a significant difference when it comes to the notion of *music*. A loud reading of the lines makes this idea of the beats clearer than only reading them silently.

DROPPING THE CONSONANTS WITHIN A SYLLABLE IN PROSODIC REPRESENTATION

A common feature between the two systems of rhythm in English and Arabic is the dropping of the consonant in a syllable where the cluster is counted as one syllable. A word such as 'cast' in English is phonetically written as /kæst/, which has a structure of (CVCC), taking into consideration both the consonant of the onset and the two consonants of the coda. It is represented in English rhythm patterns by one rising tone (/) to illustrate the fact that it is stressed. The same concept applies to unstressed syllables: they might have complete phonetic spelling, such as the

word 'and' written as /ənd/ in one variation, but only one unstressed syllable (_) in English rhythm patterns to illustrate the fact that it is unstressed.

A similar practice of dropping some consonants, is in Arabic where a word such as 'misk' is phonetically written as /mɪsk/, whereas the coda including the two consonants /s/ + /k/ is counted as one unit represented by (.) and the onset /m/ is blended with the vowel / ɪ / to be represented by the rising tone (/) having the word represented as (/.), thus, dropping the consonants for the sake of focusing on the stress in both systems.

One slight difference here is that in the English rhythm pattern of a syllable all the consonant components are dropped, based on the fact that a syllable in English depends on the vowel (or syllabic consonant) only, whereas in Arabic, the consonants remain represented, but in a blended form of one consonant in the Arabic sense of *sakin* (not followed by a vowel)*,* not that of its articulation as a sound. This is based on the fact that the *short* vowel itself is marked on the consonant as *'fat-ha', 'dhamma', or 'kasra',* although they are (the consonant plus the vowel) phonetically written as separate.

CONTRASTING THE TWO PROSODIC SYSTEMS

There is a clear difference in the concepts of stress, vowel, and syllable division between the two languages, but this study is concerned with the stress in the sense of its function of creating the beat of the sound. Then it highlights the differences in the prosodic representation of the sounds classified into vowels and consonants. It considers that there is a clear difference between the nature of these sounds per se, as existent in both languages, with a similar, if not sometimes the same, place of articulation. The difference becomes tangible when it comes to the representation of these sounds in prosody. The metrical difference between English and Arabic rhythms is at three main points.

THE DIFFERENCE IN THE LEVEL OF THE BEAT

Concerning stress, the level of the beat can be described as varied in English prosody (stressed/unstressed) but treated as equal in Arabic. The English stressed/unstressed distinction is not related to the existence of a syllable, as the syllable (essentially based on the vowel) can be either stressed or unstressed. It is directly related to the rhythm of the language. That rhythmic nature of the English language is what creates the *feet* of the metre, and consequently, its representation in the English prosodic system.

The Arabic level of the beat (nabrah) is not involved in prosody as an element of classification of the feet (taf'eelas), yet they are additional tools that promote the vocalisation of poetry, particularly reflecting the rhythm of the language (Ayyad, 1978, pp. 50-51). The nature of the beats and their role in preserving intonational distinction does not mean that it is always kept in prosody. When the Arabic Taf'eelas are recited loudly or at the scansion of a line, the prosodic way of reading the scanted line's stresses does not reflect the natural way of saying the word.

Consider saying the Arabic verb *barada* (meaning: cooled down), which has the stress on the first syllable (as **ba**rada), and which cannot normally be pronounced with the stress on the second syllable, as it changes the sense of the word and can produce an effect similar to that of a long vowel. Despite this, you can shift its stress from the first syllable to the second one without affecting the prosodic pattern of the taf'eela in which it is used.

The act of shifting the stress in ordinary English language speech has the same effect on the meaning as it does in Arabic. A word such as 'alone' cannot normally have the stress on the first syllable, as that can similarly change the natural rhythm this word has in English as a rhythmic language. This is a common feature between English and Arabic. Yet, the difference is that this flexibility, or the limited effect of shifting the stress from one syllable to another, does not exist in the English prosodic system of representation for the feet, as they principally depend on the setting of stressed/unstressed syllables.

If the stress is put on the first syllable of the word 'alone', which is an example of the iambic foot as an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed one, represented as (_ /), this shift immediately makes it a trochaic foot instead, completely changing the metrical pattern. In the same way that a stress cannot shift to another syllable, a word cannot replace another one of a different stress pattern. The substitution of one word for another requires the same stress pattern, such as 'answer' and 'lonely', which have the same pattern of stress on the second syllable (/ _). Thus, a poet cannot replace such words as 'alone' with 'lonely' with the stress on the first syllable. This might appear as common sense in English prosody, yet in Arabic prosody, this is permissible. If the stress is put on the second syllable of the Arabic word 'barada', the prosodic representation of this word will not be affected, as it does not depend on the stress in the structure of the *taf'eela* which depends on the representation of the short vowel (mutaharrik) as (/) where the three syllables of this word are equally represented as (/ / /), without making any difference through changing the stress pattern. Similarly, the substitution of a word corresponding in its syllabic structure to the English word 'answering' represented as (/ _ _) such as the Arabic word 'lamasa' (meaning: touched) with the stress on the first syllable, for such as 'ar**a**da' (meaning the verb: wanted) does not make any difference in its representation as (/ / /) in both cases of the two Arabic words although the stress pattern of the latter is (_ / _) with the stress on the second syllable.

THE DIFFERENCE IN REPRESENTING LONG VOWELS

One of the significant differences is that of the prosodic representation of long vowels. A long vowel is considered in English phonology and prosody as one vowel following the consonant, whereas in Arabic, it is another sound independent from the short vowel preceding it, though it results from it in the case of *mudood* (corresponding to the long vowels: /æ/, /u:/, and /i:/). This equivalence particularly exists only in Arabic prosody (Hassan, 2012, p. 51) as Arabic phonology views them as dependent on short vowels. The articulation of a long vowel in English is counted as the result of the elongation of a short one. Here, the two languages meet at the point of the classification of these long vowels, yet, Arabic classifies a long vowel as *sakin* (here: silent) preceded by *mutaharrik* which is, in English, a consonant followed by a short vowel, as such a syllable as *ta* /tə/ is written in Arabic as one letter with *kasra* under it (تِ). The syllable / **sɪ:** / is represented as CV in English, whereas it is CVC in Arabic, as the letters *yaa', waw,* and *alif* are considered as *sakin* when they are not marked with *fat'hah, kasrah,* or *dhammah* on them.

This leads to the prosodic difference as the representation of long vowels in English prosody is the same as that of short vowels when those syllables are both possibly stressed or unstressed. The two syllables, such as in 'killing', with two short vowels, are similarly represented in English prosody like those two long vowels of the clause 'see me' as (/ _). In Arabic prosody, the existence of the long vowel, being considered as *sakin,* requires its being represented as (.) in words such as 'lamasa' لَمَسَ (he touched) represented as (/ / /) with an open ending and 'lamasaa' لَمَسَا (they ((two)) touched) represented as (/ / / .) with a closed ending. The taf'eela, which

corresponds to the word with a long vowel, requires a *sakin* letter to represent the long vowel. Thus, the former is *fa'ilu,* whereas the latter becomes *fa'ilun*.

The English prosodic representation of the vowel shows two vowels with their stressed or unstressed nature, such as (_ /) for the iamb, (/_) for the trochee, and (_ _ /) for the anapest. In Arabic, the rising symbol (/) is used for the short vowel, and the other one (.) only represents a consonant without a short vowel, including long vowels. For example, the sound of the word *cut* is prosodically represented in English as only (/) depending on the concepts of *stressed* (/) or *unstressed* (_) syllable, whereas it is (/ .) in Arabic, having one short vowel followed by a consonant 'sakin'. The source of this difference in Arabic prosody is the principle that generally, whatever is pronounced is written and whatever is silent is not written (Khalaf & Sabir, 2011, pp. 2-3).

THE DIFFERENCE IN REPRESENTING CONSONANTS

Both English and Arabic phonological systems do not practically treat a consonant as an independent sound that forms a syllable on its own without the existence of a vowel. Even when excluding the case of the syllabic consonant in English, its phonological system does not ignore the role of the vowel before dropping it from the syllable to create that type of syllable. This common feature does not unify the systems at the level of representation of consonant sounds. That difference is the result of the concept of consonant in Arabic on the one hand, and the focus of the English prosodic system on the stressed/unstressed quest rather than that of syllable existence, on the other hand.

In Arabic, the notion of *sakin* will be confused with that of the consonant if thought about within the English context, where the articulation of a vowel sound does not technically require the existence of a consonant, whereas in Arabic, it does. A sound such as / t / in Arabic cannot stand alone when it is *sakin*, so, the syllable / tɪ / is considered as a consonant with *kasrah,* which must either follow it or precede it on another consonant (such as the syllable بِثْ /bɪt/), symbolised under it, not as a separate sound, but as a sign to indicate its being *mtaharrik.*

The prosodic representation of consonants carries two differences between Arabic, where it is represented with a dot (.) and English, where it is totally prosodically unrepresented, as it is included in the syllable represented as stressed (/) or unstressed (_). The addition of the symbol in the Arabic system of prosodic representation is significant for two reasons: It distinguishes the type of *taf'eela* and how it was exposed to change, such as *fa'lun* (/ . / .) and *fa'ilun* (/ / / .), with the replacement of the (.) for the consonant with (/) for the short vowel. The representation of the existence or absence of the main stress in the English system does not require the distinction between consonants and vowels, since the whole syllable, including any consonants as part of it, is represented through its category of stressed/unstressed, regardless of its structure.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study show that English and Arabic prosodic systems meet at the point of having music as a background. Both are based on the principle of repetition of beats in regular patterns that create the rhythm of poetry. The two prosodic systems depend on theoretically different bases of the setting of the stressed and unstressed syllables in English, and the setting of the vowel (mutaharrik) and consonant (sakin) in Arabic, yet there is a possibility of further points of inter-representation and thus, deeper understanding and comparison of both systems. The underlying factor here is that the concept of stress, on which English prosody depends, and that of the vowel, on which Arabic prosody depends, exist in both systems.

Through the understanding of the similarities and differences, the metrical patterns of both systems come to be seen as musical variations represented through different codes. The difficulty of inter-representation and full understanding is there as a natural element behind the beauty of musical diversity caused by innovation in composition (versification here), yet still, such a study and any further comparative one are attempts to enhance appreciation and a degree of understanding of the poetic prosodies and their underlying principles.

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