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RHYTHMIC AND RHYMING STRUCTURES IN ARABIC LITERARY SPEECH: AN AESTHETIC PERSPECTIVE.

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ABSTRACT: In this article, the nature and rhetorical functions of several stylistic devices that hold an important place in Arabic stylistics—such as antithesis, rhymed prose (as-saj‘), and quotation (iqtibās)—are analyzed. The role of antithesis in the process of meaning formation, along with its simple and complex forms, is explained through illustrative examples. Additionally, the aesthetic significance of rhymed prose, which is widely used in Arabic proverbs, and its psychological impact on the listener is highlighted. The article also demonstrates the role of quotation in presenting meaning convincingly, and examines the influence of Qur’anic verses and Hadiths on Arabic discourse. The study concludes that these stylistic devices possess significant artistic and functional value in the culture of Arabic speech.

Keywords: antithesis, rhymed prose (as-saj‘), quotation (iqtibās), stylistics, proverb, artistic speech.

Antithesis, or oppositional speech (mu‘āraḍat al-kalām), is a stylistic device based on comparing concepts, images, objects, phenomena, or ideas that stand in contrast to one another. This figure of speech is used to reveal social contradictions, uncover the dialectics of the human mind, and express the author’s attitude toward the characters or events depicted in a work.

Antithesis may be simple or complex. Oppositional speech belongs to the complex type of antithesis, as it involves listing one set of words or expressions and then opposing them with another set of terms that carry opposite meanings in the same structural order. In other words, a group of words (a phrase or sentence) is presented, followed immediately by another group of words whose components are entirely opposite in meaning to the first group.[1]

The Aesthetic Significance of the Art of Pattern and Rhyme Structure in Arab Literary Speech is a scholarly study devoted to examining the aesthetic role of rhythmic and rhyming devices in Arabic literary discourse. The research explores how sound patterns, balanced structures, and rhyme contribute to the artistic beauty, emotional impact, and persuasive power of Arabic prose and poetry.

The study focuses on the concepts of saj‘ (rhymed prose), parallelism, phonetic harmony, and rhythmic organization, demonstrating their importance in classical Arabic rhetoric (Balāghah). These stylistic features not only beautify literary texts but also strengthen semantic coherence, facilitate memorization, and enhance the listener’s emotional and intellectual engagement.

Particular attention is given to the works of classical Arab scholars and rhetoricians who regarded rhythm and rhyme as essential components of eloquent speech. The research analyzes examples from the Qur’an, classical Arabic prose, poetry, and oratory to illustrate how these devices function as aesthetic and communicative tools.

[1] Стариченок В.Д. Большой лингвистический словарь. – Ростов на Дону: Феникс, 2008. – С. 52.

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The study concludes that pattern and rhyme structure are not merely ornamental elements; rather, they play a crucial role in conveying meaning, emphasizing ideas, and creating a unique artistic style. Their effective use reflects the richness of Arabic literary heritage and the sophistication of Arabic rhetorical traditions.

كدر الجماعة خير من صفو الفرقة .[2]

"The muddiness of togetherness is better than the purity of separation."

In this sentence, there are two pairs of antonyms: kadar "turbidity" and ṣafā' "clarity," as well as al-jamā'ah "unity/community" and al-furqah "division/separation." Thus, the phrase consists of only two lexical units: kadar al-jamā'ah meaning "the turbulence of unity" and ṣafw al-furqah meaning "the clarity of division." Therefore, such a structure contains three, four, or more words arranged in parallel contrast. As stated in the Qur'an:

يأمرهم بالمعروف و ينهاهم عن المنكر

"…He enjoins upon them what is right and forbids them what is wrong…" (Surah 7, Verse 157).

Below are some examples of how proverbs function in speech:

اِحرَصْ على الموت تُوهَب لك الحياة[3]

"Fear death, and life will be given to you."

اِقرِش الأبْيَض يَنْفَعُ في اليوم الأسود[4]

"Save for a rainy day."

يُمسي على حرّ، يُصبح على بارد[5]

"A warm evening brings a cold morning."

Rhymed prose (السَجْعُ) is a form of expression in which the endings of phrases end with similar sounds. The most effective type of rhymed prose is that which is divided into short, balanced semantic segments with an equal number of words. The primary purpose of rhymed prose is to create a harmony of sound that pleases the ear and provides a sense of ease and aesthetic enjoyment to the listener.

Examples of sound harmony are widely found in the Qur'an and in Arabic poetry. As for proverbs, rhymed prose can be observed in nearly all of them.

رَحِمَ الله عَبْدًا قال خَيْرًا فَغَنِمَ أَو سَكَتَ فَسَلِمَ

"May God have mercy on the one who speaks well and succeeds, or remains silent and stays safe."

In this expression, the final rhyming words of each part, غَنِمَ"achieved success" and سَلِمَ"found safety," are called فاصلة(literally: "separation marker"). These words are usually pronounced with sukūn, so غَنِمَand سَلِمَmay be pronounced as غَنِمْand سَلِمْin accordance with the rhythmic structure.

From the perspective of linguistic stylistics, prose that is divided into segments of equal length is considered an exemplary form. For example:

الحَسَد صَدأُ القُلُو ب و اللَّجاجُ سَبَبُ الحُرُو ب

"Envy is the rust of hearts, and stubbornness in argument is the cause of wars."

حَفْظُ اللسان راحة الإنسان

"Guarding one's tongue brings peace to the soul."

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[2] المدني الفضل ابو .الميداني الفضل ابو الامام الامثال مجمع .افيةص ام .بيروت .ص ٢٠١٠

[3] ابو الفضل المدني . مجمع الامثال الامام ابو الفضل الميداني . ام صافية . بيروت ٢٠١٠. ص 19

[4] O'sha joyda.-B.21

[5] O'sha joyda.-B.9

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Quotation (الإقتباس) refers to the verbatim inclusion of a fragment from any text. Quotations are an important stylistic device that help express the main idea more rationally and convincingly, while also adding emotional coloring to the statement. A quotation explains or supports the idea being presented, but does not merely repeat it. In Arabic stylistics, the term "iqtibās" refers to incorporating passages from the Qur'an or statements of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) into prose or poetry. Moreover, authors often do not indicate the source from which these passages are taken. In such cases, making slight modifications to the quoted text is permissible. For example, we can cite a quotation from a hadith — the words of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him):

لا تُعادِ الناسَ في أوْطانِهِم قَلَّما يُرعَى غَريبُ الوَطَنِ
و إذا ما شِئْتَ عَيْشا بَيْنَهُم خالِقِ الناسَ بِخُلْقٍ حَسَنٍ[6]

Do not show hostility toward the people of your own homeland, For rarely will a stranger ever care for you. And if you wish to live among them in peace, Then treat people with kindness.

The final part of the poem is taken from the words of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him): "Treat people with kindness." [7]The first part of this quatrain is a well-known proverb. The inclusion of passages from the Qur'an and Hadith in speech enriched with proverbs makes the expression more persuasive, as Arabic speakers do not reject the truths conveyed by the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Moreover, the verses of the Qur'an and the Hadiths are distinguished by their inherent beauty, which is why eloquent speakers often use this stylistic method to adorn their speech. In addition, Arabic proverbs and aphorisms are characterized by conciseness.

Conclusion

The analyses above demonstrate that antithesis, rhymed prose, and quotation hold an important place in Arabic stylistics not only as artistic expressive devices, but also as significant rhetorical techniques that create harmony between meaning and sound. Antithesis enhances the depth of meaning by contrasting opposing concepts; rhymed prose adds rhythm and memorable musicality to speech; and quotation increases the credibility of the message while adding religious and ethical nuance. In particular, the use of Qur'anic verses and Hadiths as quotations in Arabic discourse elevates its cultural, moral, and spiritual significance. Thus, these stylistic devices serve as fundamental mechanisms that ensure the unity of form and meaning both in Arabic proverbs and in artistic expression.

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