BG Pulse Journal USA
ISSN:1947-2536 http://www.bgpulseusa.com/index.php/bg
BG PULSE JOURNAL

CONCEPTS OF TRUTH AND METAPHORS - THE BASES OF ARABIC RHETORIC

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https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20558166

Abstract. Arabic rhetoric studies the various ways of expressing human thought and conveying the same meaning through different linguistic structures. Its main concepts include comparison, literal and figurative meanings, metaphor, and irony. This article analyzes the stylistic features of literal and figurative meanings of lexical units and their role as expressive linguistic devices. It examines different forms of figurative language, including metaphor, metonymy, cognitive and figurative metaphors, as well as explicit and implicit metaphors. The study is based on examples from classical Arabic literature, verses of the Quran, and works of Uzbek writers, enabling a comparative analysis. The article also highlights the theoretical foundations, practical applications, and the logical, aesthetic, and didactic functions of figurative expressions in Arabic rhetoric.

Keywords: Arabic rhetoric, figurative meaning, literal meaning, metaphor, figurative language, stylistics, expressive devices, classical Arabic literature.

Introduction

Language plays a crucial role in portraying the human soul and its spiritual world. It is a powerful means that enables people to express their thoughts and ideas in various ways. Sometimes individuals convey their thoughts clearly, concisely, and directly, without artistic embellishment, while at other times they employ sophisticated literary devices to achieve a more expressive and aesthetic effect.

Figurative devices are manifested either in the form or the meaning of words; therefore, both formal and semantic rhetorical arts are widely used in literary expression. In the formation of semantic rhetorical devices, the main subjects of the science of *Bayān*—namely simile (tashbīh), metaphor (istiʿāra), and irony/allusion (kināya)—play a central role. For example:

Your teeth are pearls, your lips are coral, your stature is a flower, your writing is basil; Your face is a heavenly beauty, your hair is ambergris, your speech is honey, your beauty spot is a jewel. Your beauty spot is a jewel, your speech is honey, your hair is ambergris, your face is a heavenly beauty; Your writing is basil, your stature is a flower, your lips are coral, your teeth are pearls. (Babur, 1996)

In this quatrain, parts of the human body are compared to various precious objects and natural elements. Thus, it represents an example of eloquent simile (tashbīh balīgh). Moreover, the third line is arranged inversely to the second, and the fourth inversely to the first, creating the rhetorical device known as masnūʿ, which further emphasizes the meaning.

Such rhetorical devices have been widely used in Arabic literature since the pre-Islamic (*Jāhiliyyah*) period. For instance:

هل لك من ليلة بيضاء مقمرة
كأنها فضة ذابت على البلد(Ibn al-Mu‘tazz)

Have you ever seen such a bright moonlit night,

As if silver had melted over the land?

In this verse by Ibn al-Muʿtazz, the full moon shining in the sky is compared to molten silver flowing across the land. Through the image of the radiant white moon, the poet depicts the tranquility of his homeland at night. Since the color white symbolizes peace and prosperity, the simile serves to convey the serenity and calmness of the country.

Another example is:

وَإِذَا الْمَنِيَّةُ أَنْشَبَتْ أَظْفَارَهَا
أَلْفَيْتُ كُلَّ تَمِيمَةٍ لَا تَنْفَعُ

When death sinks in its claws, You realize that no amulet can save you.

In this verse, the word al-maniyyah means "death," while aẓfār means "claws." By speaking of the "claws of death," death is personified as a ferocious beast, although the word "beast" itself is not explicitly mentioned. Similar expressions can be found in Uzbek literature, such as "death struck its claws," "death drew him into its trap," or "the messenger of death knocked at the door," all of which emphasize the terrifying nature of death.

Likewise, the Arabic sentence "Aḥmad baytuhu maftūḥ" literally means "Ahmad's house is always open." However, the implied meaning is not simply that the door remains open; rather, it conveys the idea that Ahmad is a generous and hospitable person. This is an example of kināya (allusive expression).

The emotional state of a mother anxiously waiting for her child can be expressed through the phrase, *"Until you arrived, I died and came back to life a thousand times."* Similarly, a person nearing the end of life may describe a difficult existence by saying, *"My entire path was a desert; I found neither shade nor a place to rest."* Thus, depending on the meaning they convey, words and sentences in a language may possess either literal (haqīqī) or figurative (majāzī) meanings.

Materials and Methods: The present study investigates the stylistic and semantic features of figurative language (*majāz*) within the framework of Arabic rhetoric (*balāghah*), with particular emphasis on the concepts of literal meaning (*ḥaqīqah*), figurative meaning (*majāz*), metaphor (*istiʿāra*), metonymy (*majāz mursal*), and irony (*kināyah*). The research is based on a comprehensive corpus consisting of Qur'anic verses, classical Arabic poetry, prose texts, and scholarly works on Arabic rhetoric, supplemented by examples from Uzbek literary sources for comparative purposes.

The primary source materials include classical rhetorical treatises by prominent scholars such as Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani, Al-Sakkaki, Al-Qazwini, and Ahmad al-Hashimi. In addition, examples drawn from the Holy Quran and classical Arabic literary texts were analyzed to identify the mechanisms through which figurative meaning is constructed and interpreted. Selected examples from Uzbek literature were incorporated to reveal similarities and differences in the use of figurative language across linguistic and cultural traditions.

The methodological framework of the study is based on an interdisciplinary approach combining linguistic, stylistic, semantic, and rhetorical analysis. Several complementary research methods were employed.

First, the **comparative-historical method** was used to trace the evolution of the concepts of *ḥaqīqah* and *majāz* in the Arabic rhetorical tradition and to examine how the understanding of figurative language has developed from early rhetorical scholarship to contemporary linguistic studies. This method made it possible to identify both continuity and change in theoretical approaches to figurative expression.

Second, the **comparative-typological method** was applied to compare rhetorical devices found in Arabic and Uzbek literary texts. Through this approach, similarities and differences in the

semantic structure, stylistic function, and pragmatic use of figurative expressions were identified, allowing for a broader understanding of the universal and culture-specific aspects of rhetorical language.

Third, the **system-structural method** was employed to investigate the internal organization of figurative constructions and the semantic relationships between literal and figurative meanings. Particular attention was paid to the role of *ʿalāqah* (semantic relation) and *qarīnah* (contextual indicator) in the interpretation of figurative expressions. This method enabled the classification of various types of metaphorical and metonymic structures according to their semantic and rhetorical characteristics.

Fourth, the **descriptive-analytical method** was used to identify, classify, and interpret examples of figurative language found in the selected corpus. The analysis focused on the linguistic forms, semantic mechanisms, and stylistic functions of figurative expressions, as well as their contribution to the aesthetic and communicative effectiveness of discourse.

The study also employs elements of **contextual and discourse analysis**, which facilitate the examination of figurative expressions within their broader textual and cultural environments. This approach allows for a more accurate interpretation of rhetorical devices by considering their communicative purpose, stylistic impact, and relationship to the surrounding discourse.

The analytical procedure consisted of several stages. First, relevant examples containing literal and figurative meanings were extracted from the selected sources. Second, these examples were classified according to the principles of Arabic rhetoric. Third, their semantic structure, stylistic function, and rhetorical effect were analyzed. Finally, the findings were compared across different textual traditions in order to determine common patterns and distinctive features in the use of figurative language.

Through the integration of these methods, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the linguistic and stylistic mechanisms underlying figurative meaning in Arabic rhetoric and to demonstrate the role of figurative expressions in enhancing the logical, aesthetic, persuasive, and didactic functions of language.

Results and discussion: The findings of this study demonstrate that *majāz* (figurative language), one of the fundamental concepts of *Bayān*, plays a significant role in the expression of meaning and the enhancement of stylistic effectiveness. The analysis of Qur'anic verses and literary texts reveals that figurative language functions not only as an aesthetic device but also as a cognitive and communicative mechanism that enables the transmission of complex ideas in a concise, expressive, and persuasive manner. The process of semantic transfer is realized through the interaction of *qarīnah* (contextual indicator) and *ʿalāqah* (semantic relation), which guide the reader or listener from the literal meaning to the intended figurative interpretation.

The results indicate that figurative language in Arabic rhetoric reflects both linguistic creativity and cultural cognition. The examined examples demonstrate that the use of *majāz* is closely connected to social, religious, and cultural contexts, where figurative expressions serve as effective tools for shaping perception, evoking emotions, and strengthening rhetorical impact. Through semantic extension and conceptual association, figurative language allows speakers and writers to communicate abstract concepts, psychological states, and philosophical ideas with greater clarity and aesthetic appeal.

The analysis further reveals that *majāz* can be classified into two principal categories: lexical figurative language (*majāz lughawī*) and intellectual figurative language (*majāz ʿaqlī*). Lexical figurative language is based primarily on lexical substitution and semantic similarity, whereas intellectual figurative language relies on logical relationships and contextual interpretation. In

majāz lughawī, a new meaning emerges through resemblance, imagery, and symbolic association. By contrast, *majāz ʿaqlī* is formed through logical connections between concepts, where meaning is transferred according to contextual and cognitive relations. The study shows that both categories contribute significantly to semantic enrichment, enabling language users to express ideas with greater precision, elegance, and rhetorical sophistication.

Particular attention was paid to the structural varieties of lexical figurative language. The findings demonstrate that explicit metaphor (*istiʿārah taṣrīḥiyyah*) and implicit metaphor (*istiʿārah makniyyah*) differ in the degree of directness with which the figurative image is presented. Explicit metaphor openly replaces the intended object with the metaphorical image, whereas implicit metaphor suggests the image indirectly through one of its characteristic features. Both forms enhance the expressive potential of discourse by creating vivid mental representations and emotional resonance.

The study also examined the various forms of metonymy (*majāz mursal*), including causative (*sababiyyah*), resultative (*musabbabiyyah*), partial (*juz'iyyah*), universal (*kulliyyah*), locative (*maḥalliyyah*), and attributive (*ḥāliyyah*) relations. The frequent occurrence of these semantic relations in the analyzed texts demonstrates the complexity and flexibility of Arabic rhetorical expression. These forms reveal the internal logical mechanisms of language, whereby meanings are transferred not through resemblance but through various associative relationships. Such semantic processes enable the compression of meaning and contribute to the stylistic richness of discourse.

The analysis confirms that these rhetorical devices are widely employed in classical Arabic literature and attain their highest level of eloquence in the Holy Quran. Qur'anic discourse provides numerous examples in which figurative language serves theological, ethical, and aesthetic purposes simultaneously. The rhetorical precision and semantic depth of Qur'anic figurative expressions illustrate the remarkable capacity of *majāz* to convey multiple layers of meaning within a single linguistic structure.

Furthermore, the results demonstrate that figurative expressions constitute one of the most important semantic factors influencing the emotional and psychological impact of language. The examined examples show that figurative meaning not only enhances aesthetic appreciation but also facilitates deeper cognitive engagement with the text. Through metaphorical and metonymic constructions, readers are encouraged to participate actively in the process of interpretation, thereby enriching their understanding of the intended message.

From a stylistic perspective, the findings suggest that *majāz* should be regarded not merely as a component of Arabic rhetoric but also as a central mechanism of meaning construction and conceptualization. Figurative language serves as a medium through which aesthetic, logical, philosophical, and cultural meanings are expressed simultaneously. In particular, *majāz ʿaqlī* possesses a strong analytical and cognitive dimension, allowing speakers to illuminate complex conceptual relationships through logical reasoning. Conversely, *majāz lughawī* primarily functions as an artistic and emotional device that strengthens imagery, expressiveness, and literary beauty.

Overall, the study highlights the intricate relationship between language, thought, meaning, and expression. The findings confirm that figurative language represents a fundamental element of rhetorical communication, enabling speakers and writers to transcend the limitations of literal expression. By revealing the semantic, stylistic, and cognitive dimensions of *majāz*, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the aesthetic principles underlying classical Arabic rhetoric and its enduring significance in linguistic and literary studies.

Conclusion: This study examined the stylistic and semantic characteristics of *majāz* (figurative language) within the framework of Arabic rhetoric (*balāghah*) and explored its role in

the expression of meaning through examples drawn from the Holy Quran, classical Arabic literature, and comparative literary sources. The findings demonstrate that figurative language is not merely an ornamental feature of discourse but a fundamental mechanism for constructing, enriching, and transmitting meaning.

The analysis revealed that the distinction between literal (*ḥaqīqah*) and figurative (*majāz*) meaning forms the basis of rhetorical expression in Arabic. The interpretation of figurative meaning depends on the interaction between *ʿalāqah* (semantic relation) and *qarīnah* (contextual indicator), which guide the recipient from the literal sense toward the intended meaning. This process enables language to convey complex intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic content in a concise and effective manner.

The study further showed that the two principal categories of figurative language—*majāz lughawī* (lexical figurative language) and *majāz ʿaqlī* (intellectual figurative language)—perform complementary functions in discourse. While lexical figurative language primarily contributes to imagery, emotional appeal, and artistic expression, intellectual figurative language operates through logical and contextual relations, allowing deeper conceptual and cognitive meanings to be communicated. Both forms significantly enhance the expressive capacity of language and enrich the semantic structure of texts.

The examination of metaphor (*istiʿārah*) and metonymy (*majāz mursal*) demonstrated that these rhetorical devices function as effective instruments for creating vivid imagery, strengthening persuasive impact, and conveying abstract concepts through concrete linguistic forms. Their extensive use in Qur'anic discourse and classical Arabic literature confirms their central role in the Arabic rhetorical tradition and highlights the sophistication of classical approaches to meaning construction.

The findings also indicate that figurative language possesses important aesthetic, cognitive, communicative, and didactic functions. Through figurative expressions, language not only reflects reality but also shapes perception, influences interpretation, and facilitates the transmission of cultural and intellectual values. Consequently, *majāz* should be viewed as both a linguistic phenomenon and a cognitive tool that connects language with human thought and imagination.

In conclusion, the study confirms that figurative language occupies a central position in Arabic rhetoric and serves as one of the most powerful means of expressing meaning. By revealing the intricate relationship between language, thought, and interpretation, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of rhetorical theory and demonstrates the continuing relevance of classical Arabic rhetorical concepts for contemporary linguistic and literary studies. Future research may further explore the cognitive, pragmatic, and cross-cultural dimensions of figurative language in Arabic and other linguistic traditions.

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