

Scholarly Contributions to the Development of Arabic Rhetorical Terminology and the Challenges of Reception and Interpretation

A Study of Epistemic Authenticity and the Demands of Contemporary Renewal

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Received: 01.02.2026

Accepted: 09.06.2026

Publishing: 26.07.2026

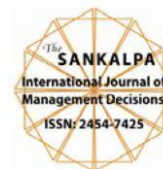
Abstract

This study examines the evolution of Arabic rhetorical terminology and the semantic shifts it has undergone under the combined influence of the epistemic authority of the classical rhetorical heritage and the pressures exerted by imported modern critical approaches. It explores the epistemological crisis affecting contemporary rhetorical scholarship, which arises from the indiscriminate influx of foreign terminology and the lack of conceptual standardization across the Arab world. The study also highlights the role of context and pragmatics in the formation of rhetorical terminology, drawing on the theoretical contributions of Maghrebi and other contemporary Arab critics to establish a balanced dialogue between a purely aesthetic conception of rhetoric and a functional, argumentative perspective. Ultimately, it proposes a reconciliatory framework that integrates the demands of contemporary scholarship with the textual authenticity and epistemic foundations of the Arabic rhetorical tradition.

Keywords: Arabic rhetorical terminology; conceptual-system crisis; pragmatic context; persuasive rhetoric; rhetorical renewal; poetic imagery.

Methodological Introduction

In the production of knowledge, terminology constitutes the cornerstone upon which a scholarly system is constructed. It is not merely an instrument of technical designation but



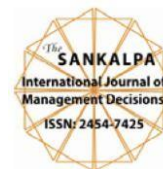
rather a philosophical condensation of a worldview and a mode of textual interpretation. Contemporary Arabic rhetoric faces a profound dilemma between two competing tendencies: one that privileges the inherited rhetorical tradition of *badī'* and *bayān*, which became firmly established following al-Sakkākī's later theoretical formulations, and another that hastily embraces the frameworks of Western linguistics and semiotics without sufficient awareness of the intellectual environments from which they emerged. This study adopts an analytical approach to the "crisis of the terminological system" by tracing the historical evolution of rhetorical terminology, identifying the gaps in linguistic term formation, and examining the role of the receiver in unlocking the complexities of the literary text. To achieve this epistemic objective, the study is organized into two principal sections: a theoretical section that deconstructs the underlying sources and concepts, as well as the crises of dependency and terminological generation, and an applied section that investigates the effectiveness of structures of imagery and functional rhetoric in both classical and modern literary texts. The following questions guide the study: How can Arabic rhetorical terminology meet the demands of contemporary discourse, particularly advertising and other communicative discourses, without sacrificing its epistemological distinctiveness and authenticity? And how does the pragmatic interpretation of elliptical and ornamental structures help revive the aesthetic efficacy of the text?

Part One: Theoretical and Epistemological Framework of Rhetorical Terminology

First: The Historical Evolution of Rhetorical Terminology and the Crisis of Conceptual Dependency

Arabic rhetorical terminology has never been merely a superficial lexical veneer or a classificatory instrument detached from the dynamics of creativity. Rather, at its core, it has reflected the critical and aesthetic consciousness of the Arab nation. A close examination of the historical development of these terminological efforts reveals their close alignment with rhetorical scholarship throughout its various structural transformations, to the extent that some scholars concerned with the historiography of critical thought have argued that these terms played a decisive role in the advancement of literary activity. Nevertheless, this historical stability and organic development have, in recent decades, undergone a profound epistemological disruption. Cultural interaction has become intertwined with civilizational dominance, and the prevailing trend has increasingly shifted toward the West. Authors, translators, and critics have drawn extensively upon foreign terminology, whether to claim intellectual distinction or to facilitate translation and Arabization, inevitably leading to "the dominance of foreign terminology and its excessive proliferation in published and translated critical studies."¹

This uncritical reliance on imported terminology has produced a form of semantic rupture, separating terminology from its indigenous intellectual environment and renewing the fundamental epistemological question of the nature and disciplinary boundaries of rhetoric in the present age. Where can rhetoric be found today? Is it the same rhetoric codified by the early scholars, or are we confronted with an entirely new semantic construct? Within this context, Mohammed al-Omari raises a series of probing questions that seek to address the epistemological predicament of contemporary rhetorical studies:



"After a lifetime devoted to research in rhetoric, in both its poetic and rhetorical dimensions, we find ourselves returning to the point of departure to ask: What is rhetoric? Or, at the very least, where is rhetoric to be found? Is there a single rhetoric, or are there multiple rhetorics? And if there are multiple rhetorics, is there any justification for establishing a general rhetoric that coordinates these particular rhetorics and speaks on their behalf within the broader community of sciences?"²

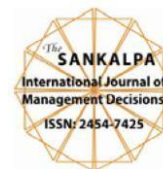
Al-Omari's questions reveal a genuine crisis in the scholarly identity of contemporary rhetoric. The transition from the singular form, *rhetoric*, to the plural, *rhetorics*, is not merely a linguistic variation; it signals the fragmentation of the field and its expansion into broader intellectual domains, including semiotics, linguistics, discourse analysis, and pragmatics. The absence of a coherent contemporary rhetorical vision, together with its oscillation between fidelity to tradition and fascination with imported paradigms, has led modern readers to encounter "a set of new terms that are indispensable for overcoming the confusion and disorder surrounding the construction of the rhetorical system we seek."³

This situation calls for a rigorous methodological warning against any superficial engagement with these imported or newly coined terms. As al-Omari observes, "the reader should not seize upon these central terms like a wandering bird pecking from the dome of its sky; the issue concerns the crisis of a system, not a tour of words."⁴ The "crisis of the system" signifies that importing terminology without understanding its philosophical and epistemological foundations results in a distorted intellectual structure in which terminology becomes nothing more than ornamental language concealing a profound methodological void.

From this analytical perspective, it becomes evident that the decisive factor governing the evolution and historical trajectory of rhetorical terminology is context in its comprehensive pragmatic sense. Context is not merely an external circumstance surrounding discourse but a fundamental structural principle that governs the formation of Arabic vocabulary and the generation of terminology.

The ultimate objective of rhetorical terminology is to achieve communicative effectiveness by conveying meaning in accordance with the linguistic and rhetorical competencies of both the sender and the receiver, while remaining responsive to the psychological and social circumstances surrounding the act of communication. Within this contextual dynamism, "context has at times required the substitution of certain terms belonging to the same conceptual field, either to emphasize specificity for example, the replacement of *circulation* by *argumentation* in the context of the new rhetoric of persuasion, or the replacement of both by the term *bayān* in discussions of al-Jāhiz."⁵ This terminological substitution demonstrates that terminology is a living entity that responds to the intellectual climate of the age in which it emerges. For al-Jāhiz, *bayān* encompassed an entire philosophy of knowledge, existence, and communication, whereas *argumentation* has become indispensable in the contemporary era under the influence of democratic and communicative discourse.

Amid this tension between tradition and modernity, some poets and critics have combined classical and contemporary terminology within their creative and critical practices. This synthesis often reflects, on the one hand, a commitment to preserving the heritage and



safeguarding the linguistic identity of the Arab nation, and, on the other, a response to the demands of contemporary intellectual thought and modern poetic and critical schools that require continual renewal. In this context, Shawqi Dayf consistently emphasized the principle of refined stylistic formulation and strongly endorsed the views of the classical and neoclassical schools, maintaining that a poet cannot attain excellence or establish a distinctive artistic identity without first acquiring a precise, informed understanding of the stylistic formulations of the great poets who preceded him.⁶ For Dayf, authenticity constitutes the indispensable gateway to genuine modernity.

Second: Approaches to Critical Renewal and the Crisis of the Multidimensional Terminological Gap

Despite the successive waves of modernism, some contemporary poets and critics have maintained that the intellectual authority and aesthetic influence of the classical tradition continue to shape Arab literary taste. Consequently, they have deliberately employed classical rhetorical terminology and stylistic forms to achieve the desired aesthetic effect and creative distinction. As one scholar observes, "Discussion of the relationship between the contemporary poet and the poetic heritage reveals considerable variation. Indeed, the adoption of the new poetic form represented an attempt to break free from the old form, and this new form succeeded in granting the poet greater freedom of movement and choice, reducing the monotony of meter and rhyme, creating new images and symbols, and penetrating the various forms of conflict characteristic of modern civilization. Nevertheless, some poets who adopted this form continue to incline toward the use of traditional structures, and rhyme still retains considerable authority."⁷ This divergence reflects a profound awareness that a complete rupture with the rhetorical and poetic heritage entails the loss of aesthetic identity and that genuine renewal does not consist in demolishing the past but in assimilating and transcending it.

In addition to these considerations, it may be argued that such explanations and conciliatory perspectives are plausible to an extent; in other respects, however, they lack rigorous scholarly and objective support, as evidenced by the fact that, even in the twenty-first century, Arab intellectual circles continue to suffer from "a dual terminological gap: a gap in the generation of terminology, manifested in the inability of our mechanisms to keep pace with the ever-increasing demand for new terms, to which several thousand are added every day, and a gap in the standardization of terminology across the Arab countries."⁸

This dual gap places Arab intellectual culture in a state of conceptual disorder. A single term may be translated by one expression in the Arab East and by another in the Arab West, thereby obstructing the development of a coherent and unified body of knowledge.

Such a critical situation inevitably increases the burden borne by scholars of rhetorical terminology, for terminological research itself suffers from conceptual difficulties within the epistemological framework to which it belongs. It therefore becomes necessary to clarify and standardize classical terminology so that it may serve as a sound basis for generating and defining both the lexical form and the conceptual content of new rhetorical terminology.

Within this context, it is equally important not to overlook the common ground shared by intersecting disciplines. As has been observed, "Although all fields of knowledge share



certain common features in the generation of lexical items that designate precise concepts (terminology) within a single language, every branch of knowledge possesses distinctive characteristics. It is therefore unsurprising that linguistic conventions should produce extensive bodies of scholarship that differ from one scholarly mind to another."⁹ Recognition of the specificity of each discipline is what protects rhetorical terminology from complete assimilation into general linguistics or semiotics.

This explicit call for rhetorical renewal and rejection of rigid adherence to established models did not originate in the modern era. Rather, it continues a tradition of earlier appeals by scholars and critics in the intellectual centers of the Maghreb and al-Andalus. In the introduction to his celebrated work, the distinguished Andalusian critic Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Bassām al-Shantarīnī (d. 542 AH/1147 CE) wrote:

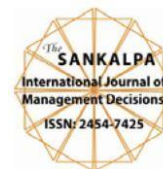
"Who, I wonder, has confined knowledge to a particular age and reserved excellence exclusively for the people of the East? . . . Excellence is not limited, nor is merit restricted to any particular era. It is difficult for genuine excellence to be denied, whether it appeared earlier or later. How much excellence has been buried, and how many worthy individuals have been neglected. Had later scholars confined themselves to the books of their predecessors, much knowledge would have been lost, and abundant literature would have disappeared."¹⁰

Al-Shantarīnī's statement constitutes a historically significant epistemological statement that establishes the legitimacy of intellectual renewal while simultaneously warning against reducing scholarship to the repetition of earlier authorities without renewed critical awareness, for such an approach inevitably leads to the fossilization of knowledge and the decline of literary creativity.

Third: The Dynamics of Contemporary Maghrebi Rhetorical Discourse and the Dominance of the Advertising Sphere

The modern era has witnessed rapid and far-reaching developments affecting nearly every material and intellectual dimension of human life. These civilizational transformations have necessarily extended to rhetorical and linguistic practice, enabling contemporary society to produce a rhetorical language suited to the pace of the age and responding to its challenges. One of the most significant manifestations of this development, as insightfully explained by the Tunisian critic and scholar Hammadi Samoud, is the emergence of new consumerist contexts founded upon "creating needs where none exist and enticing people to purchase commodities through innovations in either their appearance or their effectiveness. These innovations are artificial, yet they are presented in a persuasive manner. Thus, the modern age entered the realm of advertising rhetoric, opening the way for the return of oratory and the revival of the functions of persuasion and influence in a form previously unknown."¹¹

Samoud thus analyzes a fundamental transformation in the social function of rhetoric. Whereas rhetoric was once largely confined to literary elites and the appreciation of poetry, it has now become a pervasive force operating daily through the media and advertising.



Contemporary rhetoric, together with its emerging terminology, has shaped public taste and influenced both consumer behavior and intellectual orientations. It has also given rise to major institutions specializing in the techniques of contemporary advertising discourse.

Within this framework, it may be argued that the most influential vehicle for rhetorical influence in the contemporary world is the digital and communicative revolution. Globalization, in its various intellectual and economic manifestations, constitutes an extension of the new rhetoric. Through these sophisticated technological media, "ideas, conceptions, and imaginative constructs are transmitted in order to replace what already exists in the recipient's mind. The objective is to displace existing perceptions and substitute them with those we intend to implant, whether by stimulating admiration for what is imposed, or by generating shock, fascination, or persuasion."¹²

Modern rhetoric can thus become an instrument of ideological domination and the construction of alternative forms of consciousness, requiring contemporary rhetorical criticism to deconstruct these new terminological mechanisms to expose their ideological purposes. The continued development of scholarship has also played a decisive role in shaping contemporary approaches to the revitalization of rhetorical terminology, directing it toward an intensified functional dimension manifested in both visual and auditory forms of communication.

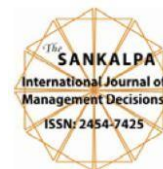
Fourth: Conceptual Intertextuality between the Legacy of Tradition and the Challenges of Critical Modernization

In his critical study of the writings and theoretical contributions of Mohammed al-Omari, the critic Mohammed Mishbal argues that the search for terminology capable of establishing a contemporary rhetoric requires recognition of two complementary realities: entirely new terms imposed by modern disciplines and classical terms that must be reformulated through new definitions compatible with the demands of the present age.

According to this view, what brought Arabic rhetoric to its current epistemological impasse between the old and the new was the prolonged stagnation of rhetorical inquiry, particularly following the period of rigid codification and didactic classification inaugurated by al-Sakkākī in *Miftāḥ al-ʿUlūm*. As al-Omari observes, "The suspension of inquiry into this rhetoric for centuries has made reconnecting it with contemporary developments in the field contingent upon rebuilding the bridges between its isolated islands and restoring what lost its significance through successive ages of reduction and impoverishment. Had Abū Ḥayyān's observations been combined at an early stage with Ḥāzim al-Qarṭājannī's theoretical framework, we would long ago have possessed a general rhetoric."¹³

It is this historical fragmentation that led al-Omari to acknowledge the difficulties of his own terminological enterprise:

"I had hoped to find familiar and widely accepted terminology. However, my decision to enter the field through modern theoretical systems and to engage directly with the Arab intellectual heritage without an intermediary compelled me to propose a number of terms, some entirely new and others classical terms whose reactivation required their redefinition so that they might respond to the



requirements of a coherent system whose components interact without ambiguity or overlap."¹⁴

Conversely, the scholar Aziz Adman attributes the weakness of contemporary Arab rhetorical scholarship, particularly regarding the regulation and standardization of terminology, to its delayed engagement with Western theoretical developments. Consequently, Arabic rhetoric remains in urgent need of a profound semantic reexamination of its terminology, one that recovers the original meanings established in the works of al-Jurjānī, al-‘Askarī, al-Qarṭājannī, and their successors.

The necessity of renewal arises from the fact that interpretation varies across historical periods. At the same time, meanings remain open to successive reinterpretations that enrich conceptual openness and accommodate multiple readings over time. As one scholar observes, "There is no doubt that the disturbance of the literary text's sources of meaning and the destabilization of its lofty status stem from the dissolution of meaning within an endless genealogical chain of interpretations that never reaches a stable conclusion. Whoever reflects upon the questions raised in this lengthy introduction soon realizes that a single underlying concern unites all these epistemological and critical anxieties: the ambiguity surrounding the concept of openness and the vagueness of its terminology."¹⁵

Contemporary rhetorical scholarship has therefore become increasingly aware that a common foundation unites the authenticity of the classical heritage with the modernity of critical methodology. At the same time, the contemporary revolution in information and communication technologies has often marginalized both the text and its author under the banner of "absolute openness." It is therefore essential to return critically to the intellectual heritage as the primary epistemological foundation while adhering to the legitimate principles of scholarly interpretation to produce a disciplined contemporary reading.

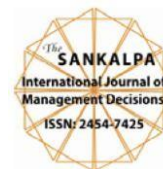
Part Two: Applied Framework and the Aesthetics of Rhetorical Discourse

First: The Openness of Linguistic Systems and Its Impact on Deconstructing Discourse

The terminological openness of rhetorical discourse, its flexible engagement with neighboring disciplines, and its capacity to draw on them intellectually, methodologically, and procedurally have strengthened contemporary Arabic rhetoric. This development rests on a flexible linguistic structure capable of derivational and semantic expansion and on an acceptance of interpretive plurality, one of the field's defining epistemological features. Consequently, rhetoric has remained open to interpretation and capable of continually renewing itself without sacrificing its authenticity.

As has been observed, "The linguists' examination of the various phenomena they classified under expansion, particularly ellipsis, led them to conclude that such expansion does not constitute absolute freedom permitting speakers to manipulate language at will. Rather, it must remain within limits that preserve the rationale for the language's existence and safeguard its primary communicative function."¹⁶

These scholarly constraints on linguistic expansion have protected rhetoric from unrestricted semantic fluidity. Hence, contemporary scholars such as Majdi Wahba and Kamel al-Muhandis devoted extensive studies to this lexical transformation, tracing the evolution of rhetorical terminology and the changes in its operational meanings as it passed through



different historical periods and intellectual contexts. Ultimately, rhetoric came to be understood not as a single homogeneous discipline but as a plurality of "rhetorics," for "rhetoric has developed into multiple forms, each concerned with the study of a particular dimension of the expressive process."¹⁷

Second: The Operational Application of Terminology between Aesthetic Centrality and Argumentative Effectiveness

In its most mature formulations, particularly in the works of al-Jāḥiẓ and al-Jurjānī, classical rhetorical thought regarded the application of rhetorical terminology and artistic devices as fundamentally determined by the demands of context and the communicative situation. Critical scholarship must nevertheless draw attention to the rigid scholastic codification that subjected rhetoric to intellectual stagnation, particularly during the period of al-Sakkākī and his later commentators. In later centuries, rhetoric was transformed into a dry pedagogical discipline and became largely incapable of identifying the living sources of beauty and aesthetic excellence within literary texts.

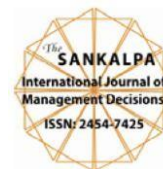
For this reason, contemporary scholarship has called for a renewed reading of the rhetorical heritage and for the identification of the fundamental principles and interrelationships shared by all rhetorical terms to account for both the argumentative force and the poetic creativity of the text. As one scholar explains:

"Classical rhetoric assumed that poetic discourse could not achieve completeness without the addition of what it termed aesthetic embellishments. According to the principles of traditional rhetoric, such embellishments were found only in creative literary texts. This conception remained dominant for a long period, especially during the flourishing of traditional rhetoric . . . Consequently, these forms or what traditional rhetoric designated as aesthetic embellishments can no longer be regarded merely as decorative ornaments appended to poetic discourse."¹⁸

Contemporary scholarship, however, regards these rhetorical embellishments as structural components that contribute to the construction of meaning and the articulation of the poet's philosophical vision.¹⁹ "Metaphor, for example, does not establish a relationship of resemblance between the referent of one object and that of another. Rather, it establishes a comparative relationship between the contents of different expressions. Consequently, it cannot be replaced by other linguistic expressions; instead, it places two expressions that are both present within the textual manifestations of discourse into a dynamic interaction."²⁰

The critical scholar thus identifies the text's genuine value in its argumentative and communicative dimensions. Productive rhetoric is that "which possesses both purpose and function and whose study yields tangible results. . . . The function of rhetoric lies in its capacity to serve as an instrument for conveying a particular message and idea in a persuasive and effective manner."²¹

At this point, Ahmad Darwish draws attention to a methodological principle that has long been neglected in contemporary Arabic rhetorical thought. He argues that the application of rhetorical terminology must take into account the cultural origins and epistemological context in which the term was first formulated. This is also the objective pursued by modern Western



rhetoric through the development of what has come to be known as the *New Rhetoric* (*Nouvelle Rhétorique*), whose innovative terminology is intended to establish argumentation and interactive persuasion.²² Classical rhetoricians likewise established rigorous conditions governing eloquence and rhetorical expression to ensure that rhetoric fulfilled its fundamental social and political function, namely persuasion, for "persuasion is a dialogue between two parties in which one is led to accept the opinion of the other."²³

Third: An Applied Reading of Elliptical Structure and Poetic Imagery: *The 'Ayniyyah* of Abū Dhu'ayb al-Hudhalī as a Case Study

Epistemological analysis confirms that rhetorical terminology cannot be understood independently of its application within the text. To demonstrate the effectiveness of "semantic openness" and the "role of the receiver" in completing meaning through the mechanisms of ellipsis and figurative construction, this study turns to an illustrative poetic example drawn from the enduring corpus of classical Arabic poetry.

A sound understanding of rhetorical terminology emerges from integrating contemporary perspectives with the classical tradition while "taking into consideration the textual material and its capacity for such semantic expansion."²⁴ The receiver (reader) has likewise assumed a central role in textual aesthetics and the creative process, for the reader is an active participant in generating and completing meaning. As one scholar observes, "it is indispensable to examine the role of the receiver in the creative process, since the receiver constitutes an active element in shaping the act of reading."²⁵

Contemporary critical studies have also recognized the subtle structural role played by the creator (the poet) in producing aesthetic and psychological effects upon the receiver through the seemingly spontaneous distribution of rhetorical devices and stylistic phenomena. Thus, "the receiver's sense of delight and intellectual satisfaction originates in the poet's arrangement of the poetic lines through the redistribution of the components of the poetic text on the basis of structural devices such as mention and ellipsis, indefiniteness and definiteness, repetition, and inversion, thereby generating meaning."²⁶

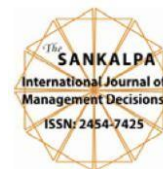
The analytical validity and practical significance of this principle are clearly illustrated in the celebrated *'Ayniyyah* of the *mukhaḍram* poet Abū Dhu'ayb al-Hudhalī, who employs simile with remarkable depth and sophistication.²⁷ He writes:

I recognized the deserted dwellings as though they were the inscription
upon an inkwell,
Engraved by a Ḥimyarite scribe.
With tracings and ornamentation, just as they were adorned
By the branding mark upon a splendid she-camel. ²⁸

Applied Analysis of the Rhetorical Structure of the Two Verses

1. The Composite Simile

In these two verses, the poet produces a profound rhetorical effect and a powerful aesthetic response in the receiver by likening the obliterated dwellings to writing inscribed with the ink of an inkwell (*ka-raqm al-dawāh*). He then skillfully guides the receiver from the initial comparison to an expanded and ornamented image ("just as it was adorned by its branding



mark upon the splendid she-camel"), thereby intensifying the visual and imaginative dimensions of the poetic image.

2. The Strategy of Ellipsis and Selection

From an analytical perspective, the most significant feature is that the poet deliberately omits the point of similarity (*wajh al-shabah*), leaving it open to interpretive inquiry and critical reflection. This strategy broadens the imaginative and figurative scope of the text, inviting multiple possibilities of interpretation.

3. The Generation of Meaning in the Receiver

Through this deliberate ellipsis, the contemporary scholar can discern the text's underlying structure, which embodies intellectual, civilizational, religious, and historical values. This structure also generates a broad semantic openness that has influenced modern critical discourse by allowing new meanings to emerge through successive acts of reading. Although these readings may not always correspond literally to the explicit wording of the text, they nevertheless seek to uncover its subtle, implicit, and aesthetically significant dimensions.

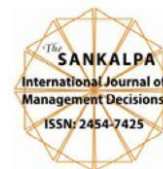
Fourth: The Dialectic of Taxonomic Rigidity and the Future of Rhetorical Renewal

Some contemporary scholars and critics, among them al-Shafi' al-Sayyid, maintain that the classification of Arabic rhetoric into distinct and rigid disciplines (*ma'ānī*, *bayān*, and *badī'*), as established by al-Sakkākī and perpetuated by his successors, seriously undermined the essence of rhetorical scholarship and failed to achieve its intended critical objectives. Al-Shafi' al-Sayyid argues:

"In reality, this classificatory tendency caused considerable harm to rhetorical studies. Its most significant consequence, particularly with respect to *badī'*, was the marginalization of its role within the semantic structure of the text and the reinforcement of the notion that the criteria of rhetorical analysis and its diverse artistic devices are separate from one another, as though each functioned on an isolated island. Such a view is rejected by careful examination and critical reflection."²⁹

The creative text is an integrated living entity, and fragmenting it into isolated disciplines inevitably diminishes its poetic vitality. It therefore becomes a scholarly necessity to return continuously to the flexible legacy of classical Arabic rhetoric and reinterpret it in light of contemporary scholarship. As one scholar observes, "We often forget that these rhetorical figures genuinely signify something. Since linguistic research has assumed the character of a scientific discipline, it has become necessary to provide these figures with a new interpretation, for the old interpretation has lost its explanatory value."³⁰

Such a modernizing approach does not imply a rupture with the past. Rather, it represents "the deconstruction of a message that exists independently. Heritage itself is an autonomous linguistic entity, a structure composed of interrelated signifiers, and rereading it constitutes a renewed deconstruction of its message across time, thereby affirming the continuity of its existence."³¹ Therefore, critics advocate a systematic integration of contemporary scholarly efforts with the foundational contributions of the early pioneers to avoid intellectual alienation and epistemological fragmentation.³²



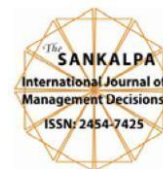
Regardless of variations in terminology and conceptual boundaries, rhetorical terminology generally develops within two principal perspectives: the structural-aesthetic perspective and the argumentative-pragmatic perspective. Abdessalam al-Massadi identifies these complementary approaches by observing that the phenomenon "must sometimes be approached from an aesthetic perspective, at other times from an argumentative perspective, or from both simultaneously. On this basis, rhetorical analysis of figurative forms is undertaken. By this expression is meant what Western rhetoric refers to as rhetorical or stylistic figures and what Arab rhetoricians sometimes designate as *muḥassināt* (rhetorical embellishments). Despite differences in terminology, these rhetorical figures may be phonological and rhythmic, syntactic, semantic, or pragmatic in nature."³³

Contemporary Maghrebi scholarship has developed its conceptual framework through direct engagement with classical Arabic rhetoric, which "constructed its concepts, in most instances, in dialogue with Arabic rhetoric, whose achievements in establishing interconnected terminological networks, together with their precise definitions and subdivisions, had reached an advanced stage."³⁴ Mohammed al-Omari exemplifies this approach by explaining that the term *ṣūrah* (image) "was not originally employed as a rhetorical term but rather served as the title of a chapter or a book in the Arabic rhetorical tradition prior to the modern period, although its essential concept was already present. Within this framework, *image* encompasses everything resulting from simile, analogy, metaphor, and metonymy when interpreted in light of modern linguistics, together with all forms of description and personification."³⁵ This understanding accords with the comprehensive conception of language as encompassing the entirety of the act of discourse.³⁶

Research Findings

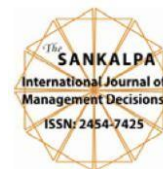
The theoretical and applied analyses undertaken in this study of rhetorical terminology and the challenges of its reception and interpretation yielded the following eleven epistemological and conceptual findings:

1. **The Necessity of an Epistemological Reassessment of the "Crisis of the System."**
The study demonstrates that the current epistemological problem in Arabic rhetorical studies does not stem from any inherent inadequacy of the Arabic language itself. Rather, it originates from a profound "crisis of the system" brought about by the indiscriminate and inadequately regulated translation of imported Western terminology, resulting in the fragmentation of rhetorical concepts and the absence of a unified, comprehensive vision of the literary phenomenon.
2. **The Functional Integration of Poetic Eloquence and Pragmatic Argumentation.**
The study reveals that the historical transition, or terminological substitution, between *bayān* in al-Jāhiz's classical conception and *argumentation* in contemporary pragmatic theory does not constitute a rejection of the rhetorical heritage. Instead, it expands the functional scope of rhetoric, transforming it from a discipline concerned solely with aesthetic refinement into one capable of exercising persuasive influence within modern communicative discourse.
3. **The Authority of Pragmatic Context in the Formation and Regulation of Terminology.** The findings indicate that context, understood in its comprehensive



pragmatic sense, is the principal determinant of terminological meaning and lexical substitution. Rhetorical terminology is therefore a dynamic entity that evolves in accordance with the communicative situation, the psychological and social conditions surrounding discourse, and the linguistic competencies of both the producer and the receiver.

4. **Moving Beyond Taxonomic Rigidity and Critiquing Fragmentary Approaches.** The study demonstrates that the rigid separation of the three branches of Arabic rhetoric (*ma'ānī*, *bayān*, and *badī'*), reinforced by later pedagogical commentaries following al-Sakkākī, has weakened the semantic structure of the literary text by reducing rhetorical devices to isolated ornamental features. Contemporary critical renewal instead requires viewing the literary text as an integrated living entity whose constituent elements function as an inseparable whole.
5. **The Threat Posed by the Dual Terminological Gap to Epistemological Integrity.** The study shows that contemporary Arabic criticism suffers from a dual terminological gap: first, the inability of existing Arabic mechanisms to keep pace with the accelerating global production of terminology; and second, the lack of terminological standardization across the Arab world, particularly between the Mashriq and the Maghreb. This situation underscores the urgent need for specialized institutions dedicated to terminological standardization based on the intellectual foundations of the Arabic scholarly tradition.
6. **The Flexibility of Linguistic Systems and the Phenomenon of Expansion through Ellipsis.** The applied analysis demonstrates that Arabic possesses remarkable structural flexibility, allowing semantic expansion through mechanisms such as explicit mention, ellipsis, inversion, and postponement. Rhetorical ellipsis is therefore not merely the omission of linguistic material but a productive strategy that prevents semantic closure and enables the continuous generation of multiple meanings.
7. **Redefining the Receiver as a Structural Participant in Meaning Construction.** The study concludes that the receiver is not a passive recipient of discourse but an active participant in the production of meaning. The displacement created by elliptical structures and composite similes stimulates the reader's aesthetic perception and encourages the reconstruction of the implicit dimensions of the classical text through contemporary interpretive awareness.
8. **Digital Rhetoric and the Dominance of Contemporary Advertising Discourse.** The findings demonstrate that digital communication technologies have revived classical rhetoric in the form of advertising rhetoric centered on creating consumer needs, persuasion, and the dissemination of ideological representations. This development requires contemporary rhetorical criticism to employ modern analytical approaches capable of uncovering the persuasive and ideological objectives embedded within such discourse.
9. **A Methodological Reconciliation between Classical Authenticity and Contemporary Methodology.** The study confirms that exclusive adherence to the classical tradition results in intellectual stagnation. In contrast, the wholesale rejection



of that tradition in the name of modernity produces alienation and conceptual distortion. The most appropriate methodological approach, therefore, lies in conceptual intertextuality: interpreting the foundational works of classical rhetoricians such as al-Jurjānī and al-Qarṭājannī through the analytical frameworks of contemporary linguistics, pragmatics, and semiotics.

10. **The Effectiveness of Poetic Imagery in Bridging Theory and Application.** The analytical reading of Abū Dhu'ayb al-Hudhalī's 'Ayniyyah demonstrates that terminological theories ultimately derive their validity from textual application. The poem's composite similes constitute a compelling example of how classical poetic imagery generates aesthetic pleasure while simultaneously producing historical, religious, and cultural meanings that continue to evolve through successive acts of interpretation.
11. **The Need to Establish a General Rhetoric Accommodating Diversity and Plurality.** The study concludes that the shift from the singular conception of rhetoric to the plural conception of rhetorics necessitates the development of a comprehensive theory of general rhetoric. Such a framework should coordinate the various specialized rhetorics, including poetic, oratorical, advertising, and political rhetoric, while preserving the linguistic and cultural distinctiveness of the Arabic text.

Endnotes

1. Ahmad Matlub, *Mu'jam al-naqd al-'Arabī al-qadīm* [Dictionary of Ancient Arabic Criticism] (Baghdad: Dār al-Shu'ūn al-Thaqāfiyyah al-'Āmmah, 1989), introduction, 1:26.
2. Mohammed al-Omari, *al-Balāghah al-jadīdah bayna al-takhyīl wa-al-tadāwul* [The New Rhetoric between Imagination and Pragmatics], 2nd ed. (Casablanca: Ifriqiyyā al-Sharq, 2012),
3. Al-Omari, *al-Balāghah al-jadīdah*, 8.
4. Al-Omari, *al-Balāghah al-jadīdah*, 8.
5. Al-Omari, *al-Balāghah al-jadīdah*, 8.
6. See Shawqi Dayf, *Fī al-naqd al-adabī* [On Literary Criticism], 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1966), 114–15.
7. Ihsan Abbas, *Ittijāhāt al-shi'r al-'Arabī al-mu'āṣir* [Trends in Contemporary Arabic Poetry], 'Ālam al-Ma'rifah (Kuwait: National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters, 1998), 117.
8. Ali Nabil and Nadia Hijazi, *al-Fajwah al-raqamiyyah: Ru'yah 'Arabiyyah li-mujtama' al-ma'rifah* [The Digital Divide: An Arab Vision of the Knowledge Society] (Kuwait: 'Ālam al-Ma'rifah, 2005), 351.
9. Abdessalam al-Massadi, *al-Muṣṭalaḥ al-naqdī* [Critical Terminology] (Tunis: Mu'assasat 'Abd al-Karīm 'Abd Allāh, 1994), 10.
10. Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Bassam al-Shantarini, *al-Dhakhīrah fī mahāsīn ahl al-jazīrah* [The Treasury of the Merits of the People of al-Andalus], ed. Ihsan Abbas (Libya–Tunisia: al-Dār al-'Arabiyyah lil-Kitāb, 1981), 1:12–14.
11. Hammadi Samoud, *Min tajalliyāt al-khiṭāb al-balāghī* [Manifestations of Rhetorical Discourse] (Tunis: Dār Qarṭāj, 1995), 133.

12. Samoud, *Min tajalliyāt al-khiṭāb al-balāghī*, 86.
13. Mohammed Mishbal, *al-Balāghah wa-al-khiṭāb* [Rhetoric and Discourse] (Rabat: Dār al-Amān, 2014), 41.
14. Mishbal, *al-Balāghah wa-al-khiṭāb*, 41.
15. Aziz Adman, *Dirāsāt fī al-balāghah al-‘Arabiyyah wa-al-naqd al-adabī al-mu‘āṣir* [Studies in Arabic Rhetoric and Contemporary Literary Criticism] (Irbid, Jordan: ‘Ālam al-Kutub al-Ḥadīth, 2011), 166.
16. Hammadi Samoud, *al-Taḥkīm al-balāghī ‘inda al-‘Arab: Ususuḥu wa-taṭawwuruḥu ilā al-qarn al-sādis (Mashrū‘ qirā‘ah)* [Rhetorical Thought among the Arabs: Its Foundations and Development to the Sixth Century (A Reading Project)], 2nd ed. (Manouba, Tunisia: Faculty of Arts, 1994), 104.
17. Majdi Wahba and Kamel al-Muhandis, *Mu‘jam al-muṣṭalaḥāt al-‘Arabiyyah fī al-lughah wa-al-adab* [Dictionary of Arabic Terms in Language and Literature], 2nd ed. (Beirut: Maktabat Lubnān, 1984), 79.
18. Mohammed al-Qasimi, *Qaḍāyā al-naqd al-adabī al-mu‘āṣir* [Issues in Contemporary Literary Criticism] (Amman: Dār Yāfā, 2010), 80–81.
19. Abdessalam al-Massadi, *al-Taḥkīm al-lisānī fī al-ḥaḍārah al-‘Arabiyyah* [Linguistic Thought in Arab Civilization], 2nd ed. (Tunisia–Libya: al-Dār al-‘Arabiyyah lil-Kitāb, 1986), 13.
20. Abd al-Salam Athir, *Indamā natawāṣal nughayyir: Muqārabah tadāwuliyyah ma‘rifīyyah li-āliyyāt al-tawāṣul wa-al-ḥijāj* [When We Communicate, We Change: A Cognitive-Pragmatic Approach to the Mechanisms of Communication and Argumentation] (Casablanca: Ifrīqiyyā al-Sharq, 2006), 115–16.
21. Mohammed Shadi, *al-Balāghah al-waṣṭīyyah* [Functional Rhetoric] (Mansoura, Egypt: Dār al-Yaqīn, 2011), 6.
22. Ahmad Darwish, *al-Naṣṣ al-balāghī fī al-turāth al-‘Arabī wa-al-‘Urūbī* [The Rhetorical Text in the Arabic and European Traditions] (Cairo: Dār Gharīb, 1998), 7.
23. Darwish, *al-Naṣṣ al-balāghī*, 9.
24. Adman, *Dirāsāt fī al-balāghah al-‘Arabiyyah*, 168.
25. Adman, *Dirāsāt fī al-balāghah al-‘Arabiyyah*, 63.
26. Adman, *Dirāsāt fī al-balāghah al-‘Arabiyyah*, 65.
27. Classical rhetoricians were cautious in their use of simile because of the ambiguity and strangeness that could surround it; they often stopped at its outer limits. This constitutes the missing link in the study of simile in the Arabic rhetorical heritage.
28. *al-Shu‘arā’ al-Hudhaliyyūn, Dīwān al-Hudhaliyyīn* [The Dīwān of the Hudhayl Poets], arranged and annotated by Muhammad Mahmud al-Shinqiti (Cairo: al-Dār al-Qawmiyyah lil-Ṭibā‘ah wa-al-Nashr, 1965), 1:64.
29. Shafī‘ al-Sayyid, *Asālīb al-badī‘ fī al-balāghah al-‘Arabiyyah: Ru‘yah mu‘āṣirah* [Figures of Embellishment in Arabic Rhetoric: A Contemporary Perspective] (Cairo: Dār Gharīb, 2006), introduction, 3.
30. Tzvetan Todorov, *al-Adab wa-al-dalālah* [Literature and Signification], trans. Muhammad Nadim Khashfa (Aleppo, Syria: Maktabat al-Asad, n.d.), 90–91.

31. Al-Massadi, *al-Taḥkīm al-lisānī*, 12.
32. Mustafa Nasif, *al-Lughah wa-al-balāghah wa-al-mīlād al-jadīd* [Language, Rhetoric, and the New Birth] (Kuwait: Dār Su‘ād al-Ṣabāḥ, 1992), 158.
33. See Mishbal, *al-Balāghah wa-al-khiṭāb*, 105 (adapted).
34. Al-Omari, *al-Balāghah al-jadīdah*, 201.
35. See al-Omari, *al-Balāghah al-jadīdah*, 201–4.
36. Al-Tahir Boumezbar, *al-Tawāṣul al-lisānī wa-al-shi‘riyyah: Muqārabah taḥlīliyyah li-naẓariyyat Roman Jakobson* [Linguistic Communication and Poetics: An Analytical Approach to Roman Jakobson’s Theory] (Algiers: Manshūrāt al-Ikhtilāf, 2007), 13.

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