

Repetition, Parallelism, and Balance and Their Role in Persuasion in Arabic Argumentative Discourse

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ABSTRACT:

Logical and linguistic devices are the core structure of any argumentative text. Just as language serves as the verbal tool for conveying meaning or conclusions in any logical context, it also functions in argumentation as a means of asserting authority over others. This is done by guiding the audience toward the stated claim and convincing them of its credibility. While there have been efforts to explore non-linguistic alternatives in various non-argumentative contexts, here, the focus is on the linguistic strategies closely tied to persuasion and appeal. Specifically, structures such as repetition, parallelism, and balance are examined, analysing their different forms and roles in persuasive discourse.

Keywords: Repetition structure, parallelism structure, duality or balance structure, persuasive devices, argumentative discourse.

-Introduction:

This article aims to elucidate persuasive linguistic patterns. It focuses on studying and analysing these patterns without engaging with broader areas of linguistic and communicative research, which provides valuable insights into Arabic argumentative texts. From these areas, that features distinguish Arabic argumentative discourse from other types of texts were selected. This article will be limited to an exploration of three linguistic structures: repetition, parallelism, and duality or balance.

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1. Repetition Structure

Repetition is considered one of the key methods for reinforcing meaning. It functions as a semantic relationship that emerges through major propositions. Repeating a major proposition highlights the writer's insistence on a particular idea, and the attempt to convey it to the audience through specific aligning methods align, resulting in repetition (Rashiq, 2003, pp. 77-78). The repetition of that proposition emphasizes the writer's exaggerated appreciation of the audience, with the aim of persuasion. The unity of the subject and the alignment of the predicate form comprises the fundamental structure of the concept of repetition.

In linguistic terms, repetition is derived from the root *karrara*, which in Arabic means to reiterate or to repeat again and again (Academy of the Arabic Language, 2005, p. 788). In rhetorical terminology, repetition is defined as “the indication of a word repeatedly conveying the same meaning, as in the phrase that might be used to summon a certain person: ‘Hurry, hurry’ where the meaning is reiterated, yet the word remains the same” (Al-Athir, p. 110). According to Ibn Al-Athir, repetition is also divided into two categories:

- Repetition in both word and meaning.
- Repetition in meaning without the word.

Repetition may also be referred to as *tardad* (reiteration), as noted by Al-Jahiz. He restricted it by two conditions:

1. It must be appropriate to the audience and their capacity to comprehend; otherwise, there is no limit to it, depending on whether the audience consists of the general public or the elite.
2. The speaker must consider the context; half of the statement may suffice for comprehension without the need for repetition. If that is insufficient, then the speaker should repeat only to the extent that it prevents confusion or unnecessary elaboration. (Al-Jahiz, 1988, p. 91).

Repetition may also be referred to as *tardad* (reiteration), as described by Al-Jahiz, who restricted it by two conditions:

1. It should be proportional to the audience's capacity to understand and what they can conclude; otherwise, there is no strict limit, depending on whether the listeners are from the general public or the elite.
2. The speaker must consider the context; half of the speech may be sufficient for clarity without repetition. If more is needed, repetition should be used to the extent necessary, without causing confusion or excess. (Al-Jahiz, 1988, p. 91).

Al-Jahiz also mentioned two types of repetition: repetition of words and repetition of meaning, without providing further detail. He stated, “We have never heard of any orator who considered repeating certain words or reiterating meanings as a form of incapacity,” (Al-Jahiz, 1988, p. 105).

Repetition is, in fact, a linguistic phenomenon rarely absent from any text, and it is uncommon to find a writer who does not employ it. Rhetoricians and linguists have identified various types of repetition, such as the repetition of letters, words, sentences, and meanings. Each type serves its artistic and rhetorical function depending on the contexts and situations in which it is used. Abu Hilal Al-Askari emphasised that “repetition is meant to reinforce the argument related to the command,” (Al-Askari, p. 156).

There is always a central proposition that is expanded by introducing new information (such as attributes and actions). This illustrates the structural and semantic effects of repetition. Repeated words and sentences often help to highlight and distinguish the main proposition. “In general, repetition allows the speaker to restate something in succession, while adding a new dimension to it,” (Hoey, 1991, p. 52).

Argumentation theorists emphasise the importance of repetition as a means of presenting discourse in an argumentative manner, highlighting the strong presence of the idea intended for communication and impact. Repetition also serves to emphasise specific sections of the discourse. In addition to its syntactic function, such as its role in lexical cohesion, repetition also fulfils a communicative and persuasive function. For repetition to be effective within its argumentative and persuasive framework, it must be employed with clear intent.

Repetition acts as a form of anaphora, where the word refers back to its previous counterpart or a synonym refers to another synonym (Al-Batashi, 2009, p. 201). This gives the speaker the ability to produce varied linguistic images, which may aid in understanding the speaker's intent or further solidify their argument and stance.

It is possible for an article to be free of repetition, perhaps due to the tightly structured and concise logical construction that maintains the ideas connected. In such cases, no single idea is given more importance than its counterparts, particularly when there are multiple purposes in the text. Emphasising one idea over another could lead the reader to believe that the writer is pandering to a specific audience. Nevertheless, the writer may turn to alternatives other than repetition to clarify and highlight their position through the context of the discourse, such as by using synonyms, which may be a more acceptable substitute for the reader (Faraj, 2007, p. 109).

Several important points about repetition are summarised as follows:

1. Repetition serves multiple discursive functions such as facilitating understanding, clarification, emphasis, affirmation, and confirmation of meaning (Al-Athir, pp. 20-21).
2. Repetition is not merely the occurrence of the same word in speech multiple times, nor is it simply the restatement of the same meaning. For example, it does not count as repetition when a lengthy passage of speech requires the repetition of a word from the beginning due to the need for clarity in the later section. In such cases, the structure of the speech necessitates the repetition of the initial word to complete the meaning (Al-Abd, 2005, pp. 231-232).
3. In some cases, repetition is linked to influencing the behaviour of the listener such as urging them to take immediate action. For instance, saying "Hurry, hurry, hurry" conveys a strong, repeated command to act quickly in the present moment (Al-Athir, p. 3).
4. Ibn Al-Athir attempted to classify repetition into two types:
 - a. Repetition of both word and meaning, as in saying to someone, "Hurry, hurry."
 - b. Repetition of meaning without repeating the exact word, as in saying, "Obey me and do not disobey me," where the command to obey also implies a prohibition against disobedience.

Ibn Al-Athir argued that repetition in meaning indicates two aspects: specific and general, although he acknowledged that this is a very narrow and partial classification (Al-Athir, p. 27).

Repetition has also been addressed in text linguistics from the perspective of its role in lexical cohesion. However, syntactic repetitions fall outside the scope of the current study. In this analysis, the aim behind exploring the structure of repetition is its communicative and persuasive function.

Muhammad Al-Abd's classification of repetition into two types is adopted: repetition of form and repetition of content, among the various classifications available. Al-Abd's distinction between

repeating content versus repeating meaning lies in his assertion that “what is called repetition of meaning does not involve an identical repetition of meaning; rather, the meaning changes through specification, generalisation, or partial overlap. Thus, what is repeated here is the transmission of one general content,” (Al-Abd, 2005, p. 235). This is the approach followed in this study, applying it to the writings of Al-Bashir Al-Ibrahimi (the study corpus), where distinguish between repetition of form and repetition of content is made.

1. Repetition of Form

Of note, not every formal repetition necessarily leads to persuasion. The key point is that “repetition of form has no persuasive effect unless there is a deliberate intent behind it” (Al-Abd, 2005, p. 235). In some cases, the writer or speaker has no alternative but to repeat, and this type of repetition cannot be classified as persuasive formal repetition. For instance, the length of a passage may necessitate repetition because the initial part of the speech lacks sufficient clarity without it. Other cases also arise where cohesion in the text requires repetition.

At times, the writer or speaker has no choice but to use repetition, making it difficult to classify such instances as persuasive repetition. For example, a long passage may necessitate repetition when the initial part of the speech is incomplete or unclear without it, extending to other cases where the cohesion of the text requires repetition.

2. The Structure of Parallelism

Halliday differentiates between parallelism and structure. For him, parallelism refers to the connection between elements of equal status—a preceding element and a subsequent one connected to it. Both elements, the former and the latter, are characterised by independence or freedom, meaning each represents a fully functional entity and performs a complete function.

In contrast, structure differs from parallelism in that it involves the connection of elements that are unequal in action or state. In structure, there is a controlling element that is free, dominant, and independent, while the dependent element lacks autonomy and is linked to the first. Every utterance or discourse is a combination of balanced and structured sequences (Halliday, 1994, p. 221).

This classification presented by Halliday in his book *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* is considered the best approach for studying parallelism, as it is the most accurate and comprehensive to date. It has been adopted since it can be effectively applied to the Arabic language (Al-Abd, 2005, p. 254). This will be proven in this study, presenting his method briefly to facilitate understanding of parallelism in the study texts.

The logical semantic relations between the two elements—the preceding and the following—in the structure of parallelism, as defined by Halliday, consist of two main relationships: the first is *expansion*, and the second is *projection*.

The logical semantic relationships between the two elements, the preceding and the following, in the structure of parallelism—as defined by Halliday—can be summarised in two main relationships: the first being *expansion* and the second *projection*.

3. Expansion

Expansion refers to how the second sentence extends the first one in one of the following three ways:

3.1. Elaboration

In this method, the second sentence elaborates on the first either by reiterating the whole sentence or a part of it, rephrasing it, or defining it in more detail. It may also follow up on the first sentence by commenting on it or clarifying it, offering examples to enhance understanding (Halliday, 1994, p. 220). To illustrate:

Person X did not wait, he ran away.

1 = 2

In this case, the second sentence does not introduce new information but rather elaborates on an element that has already been mentioned. It provides more detail by confirming, clarifying, or refining it, or by adding specific or descriptive commentary (Al-Abd, 2005, p. 255). There are three forms of elaboration.

3.1.1. Presentation

In this form, the second sentence connects the subject of the first sentence using a different expression, offering another perspective or simply reinforcing the message without introducing any new information.

In cases of presentation, the relationship between the two sentences may be explicit, especially when using clear connectors such as *or*, *in other words*, or *it can be said*.

3.1.2. Clarification (Explanation) through Exemplification

In this type, the second sentence develops the proposition or hypothesis present in the first sentence by making it more specific or precise, usually through actual or real-life examples (Halliday, 1994, p. 226).

Explicit connectors are often used in this form, such as *for example*, *as an illustration*, *like*, and *especially*.

3.1.3. Elucidation (Clarification)

In this form, the second sentence clarifies the proposition in the first sentence through one of the methods of explanation or a clarifying remark.

Expressions commonly used in this form include *indeed*, *in truth*, *actually*, and *at least* (Halliday, 1994, p. 258). These connectors are not structural indicators of parallelism but rather serve as cohesive devices, and it is common for sentences to be adjacent without a connector (Al-Abd, 2005, p. 259).

3.1.4. Extension

Extension (addition), in which the second sentence extends the first by lengthening it, adding new elements, excluding elements, or offering an alternative (e.g., and, or), for example:

“Someone ran away, and another person hid behind him.”

1 + 2

Extension takes two forms: addition and distribution.

3.1.4.1. Addition

This involves adding one sequence to another or having one sentence adjacent to another, without requiring any causal or temporal relationship between them.

Parallel additions are often accompanied by cohesive elements such as also, likewise, in addition, besides, furthermore, and on the other hand (Al-Abd, 2005, p. 259).

3.1.4.2. Variation

In this form, the second sentence is presented as a full or partial alternative to another sentence.

Cohesive devices commonly accompanying this form include is instead, in contrast to, on the other hand, despite, however, and nevertheless.

Variation often appears in three forms, as outlined by Halliday (Al-Abd, 2005, p. 260).

Image	Meaning
Despite substitution (hand rope)	Not A but B
However, exclusion or projection	A but not every B
Or alternative	A or B

The symbol (A) in the previous table refers to the first sentence, and the symbol (B) refers to the second or subordinate sentence.

4. Magnification (Augmentation by)

The second sentence extends the first by elaborating or adapting it to a temporal or spatial context, cause, condition, or state, by referencing one of these aspects. The cohesive connectors typically associated with this type include thus, likewise, for this reason, however, although, even so, but, therefore, accordingly, then, and at that time (Al-Abd, 2005, p. 256). For example:

He was terrified, and for this reason, he ran away.

1

x2

5. Projection

refers to the idea that the second sentence is projected or designed according to the first sentence. The projected sentence can take two forms:

The First form is when it can be a verbal utterance (“he says”), involving direct quotation, where the second sentence is designed as a verbal expression or a speech act, for example:

He said: “I will run away.”

(A) (B)

As for the second form, it involves a thought (thinks) — an inner reflection (i.e., single quotation marks), where the second sentence is framed as an idea or a conceptual construct. For example:

He thought to himself, “I will run away.”

A 'B'

(Al-Abd, 2005, p. 256)

The logical-semantic relationships that govern the parallelism connection and the methods of these relationships are the same as those governing syntactic constructions. However, the nature of the relationship between the two parts of an utterance or the sentence/phrase construction distinguishes between parallelism and syntactic structures. (Al-Abd, 2005, pp. 257-258). The following table illustrates this distinction in the projection relationship.

Method	Parallelism	Structure
Utterance	X said, "I will run away."	He X said that he was running away.
	1 2	A B
Idea	X thought to himself, "I will run away."	X thought about running away.
	1 2	A B

In the previous table and through the examples, it is evident that:

1. The number 1 refers—in the relationship of parallelism—to the preceding clause, while the number 2 refers to the subsequent clause, with each being equivalent to the other.

2. The letter (A) refers—in the relationship of structures—to the governing clause, and the letter (B) refers to the governed clause; that is, the governing clause adapts the other governed clause.

6. Structure of Duality (Balance)

Balanced structures are syntactic constructions whose parts correspond in the number of units, the proportions of these units, and the grammatical structure, or the arrangement of these units; they also align in isocolon (Jalal, 1999, p. 62).

It is well known that "doubling" is a category of poetry, characterised by the use of two rhymes throughout the poem. In prose, duality is considered to be an authentic feature of the Arabic language, which has oral roots. It is not merely an imitation of poetry in a rhythmic structure that has a purely auditory and emotional impact on the listener. It was regarded by ancient Arab rhetoricians as one of the signs of quality in the craft of speech.

The term "balance" was mentioned by Al-Thaalibi in the section "Preserving Balance," where he noted that the Arabs add or omit words to maintain balance and prefer it. He illustrated the addition with the verse from the Quran. "Wa tathunnuuna billaahi ath-thunoonaa," (Quran 33:10) and for omission with "Wa al-layli idhaa yasri," (Quran 89:4), among others (Al-Thaalibi, 2003, p. 369). This is different from what was intended in this context.

Balance was also mentioned by him in the form we seek under the term following; as he described it "following the word by another word of the same rhyme, for the sake of emphasis, assurance, and expansion, such as their saying: Jaa'iq Na'i'q, Saaghib La'ghib, Atshan Na'tshan, Salb Solb, and Kharab Yabab," (Al-Thaalibi, 2003, p. 420), which translates to staggering hungry, parched thirsty, solid steel, barren ruin. However, the examples he provided were single words rather than phrases or sentences.

The concept of "balance" was also mentioned in the sense of following by Abu Hilal Al-Askari, where he stated: "The Prophet (peace be upon him) would follow words with similar words for the sake of balancing expressions and making words follow their companions... aiming for balance" (Al-Askari, p. 261). He also defined it as "doubling," saying: "Prose does not sound good nor is it pleasing unless it is doubled, and you can hardly find an eloquent speech devoid of doubling" (Al-Askari, p. 260). Abu Hilal Al-Askari equated balance with duality and rhyme, believing that the presence of duality aims for balance and is correct for rhyme.

Ibn Faris referred to it under the term alignment, defining it as "words are placed alongside each other, following the same weight in terms of wording, even if they differ," (Faris, 1993, p. 231), illustrating this with individual words and phrases from the Quran.

Ibn Al-Athir mentioned it as rhyme, discussing it in terms of balancing the two sentences in the number of units as well as the correspondence of the pause.

The division of *saj* (rhymed prose) is classified into three categories as follows:

- The first category consists of two equal parts, where neither part exceeds the other; this means there is complete correspondence between the two parts, which is considered the best according to him.
- The second category is where the second part is longer than the first, with a moderate length; otherwise, it is deemed a flaw and is criticised.
- The third category is where the last part is shorter than the first, which is considered a grave flaw in his view (Al-Athir, pages 255-257).

From what the ancients have mentioned about duality and the examples they have chosen from the Quran and the speech of the Arabs; the following can be deduced:

- 1- Duality consists of balanced verbal formations in terms of the number of their linguistic units, their arrangements, and their pauses.
- 2- Duality can also occur in two considerations at times, despite the differences between the parts in one of the three previous considerations.
- 3- If there is no balance between the parts in terms of length, it is preferable for the last part to be longer, even though the opposite has been noted in the speech of the Arabs.
- 4- Total balance among the parts is the most beautiful form of balance.

In addition to the positive auditory effect of balance in the elegance of speech, it is related to enhancing its meaning (Al-Abd, 2005, pages 268-269). The construction of balanced phrases and sentences at the level of form, along with synonymous or nearly synonymous meanings at the level of content, is considered the most important central area where structure and meaning interact and operate together in Arabic argumentative texts. Its various argumentative components are deliberately prepared to affirm justification or to convince the opponent and the audience in general of the truth of the argumentative claim (Al-Abd, 2005, page 273). The structure of balance is achieved when the four elements are present: balance in the number of units, their rhyme, their arrangement, and their pauses. It can also be realized by the absence of some of these elements or their incomplete presence.

-Footnotes:

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