Arabic Rhetoric and Public Rhetoric

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Abstract

Public rhetoric was established as an Arab rhetorical approach that aims to direct the attention of rhetorical research towards the responses produced by the audience in the context of public and personal communication.

It specializes in studying the relationship between these responses and the methods of forming, performing, and deliberating the discourse that responds to it, and providing targeted knowledge to the addressee/audience that enables him to produce an eloquent response. The establishment of public rhetoric was motivated by the lack of a knowledge field dedicated to serving the addressees (individuals and audiences), and it sought to remove the deep-rooted injustice suffered by the majority of people who formed an audience for discourse. Thus, it required the establishment of a knowledge field that belongs to them alone.

Keywords: *public rhetoric - the death of rhetoric - rhetoric across cultures.*

Introduction

Public rhetoric, principles and perceptions

Public rhetoric is the branch of science that studies the relationships between speech and its performance on the one hand, and the responses of the audience it receives on the other hand.

Public rhetoric aims to enable the audience to produce eloquent responses through which it can detect forms of misuse of speech such as: racism, hatred, manipulation, discrimination, oppression and subjugation, and resist these abuses, which prompts speakers, individuals and institutions, to monitor and rationalize their speeches and make them more righteous, humane and noble(1).

We find that some democratic societies imposing sanctions on those who produce racist, manipulative, incitement, or discriminatory speeches, as these systems and institutions encourage individuals to confront these speeches through criticism, accountability, and refutation, that is, by eloquent response. Especially since the fulfillment of the act of saying is not limited to those institutional social activities such as divorce, contracts, and marriage, the act of saying has its fulfilling effect through the interaction between the interlocutor and the addressee, as it is responsible for the continuity of the dialogue (2).

Dr. Emad Abdel Latif seeks from this rhetoric to take care of the responses produced by those present during the speech ((applause - cheering - boycott - confusion - resistance - throwing flowers or tomatoes...etc)) (3).

Public rhetoric is concerned with the linguistic and non-linguistic signs produced by large segments of marginalized people, which is a clear explanation, as the distinction between

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authoritarian and non-authoritarian discourses requires intensive understandings of the linguistic reality. The Arabic language is unique with various characteristics that distinguish it from other languages, and no two people disagree that science and language are two living organisms that are inseparable from each other. There is no life for science without a language that leads to it, and there is no way to advance it except by studying its language (4).

Thus, public eloquence goes beyond knowledge to action, as it is knowledge directed at action and behavior, and this is demonstrated by the rhetorical behaviors that (their owners) perform on the ground (5).

Thus, liberating the masses from the neck of authoritarian discourses that practice forms of misuse of discourse and resisting the influence of these discourses by producing counter responses is the ultimate goal sought by public rhetoric (6).

The importance of public rhetoric for Arabic rhetoric:

Dr. Imad Abdel Latif poses his question about the importance of public rhetoric for Arabic rhetoric and what it can offer?

In addition, he explains the reason why Arabic rhetoric studies higher texts and not others, because of its connection to the Qur'anic text. This is because knowledge derives its honor, as he put it, from the honor of the subject it studies. That is why scholars of Arabic rhetoric did not risk exposing their knowledge to desecration by studying the speech and texts of the mob, the common people, and the speeches and texts of daily life. In addition to their interest in elite texts and discourses and not in the reactions, whether verbal or non-verbal, produced by the recipients of these texts and discourses in different contexts.Our researcher excludes some rhetorical phenomena related to the recipients' responses, which are (7):

● The style of the wise man (Al-Hakim's style): As Al-Sakaki defines it by saying ((The addressee receives in a way other than what he expects or messages in a way other than what he requires)) (8), It is stated in the Holy Qur'an :))They ask you about the crescents. Say, "They are timetables for people, and for the Hajj."((, the question is directed at essence and being, while the answer is based on functionality and benefit. This method creates a clear break in the questioner's horizon of expectation, prompting him to ask questions in his original speech and contemplate answers that differ from his horizon of expectation (9).

● Eloquent silent answers: This is a description of the answer to a question, a response to a statement, or a comment on a statement. It is described as brief, conclusive in meaning, difficult to refute or doubt, closing the circle of communication or dialogue, and not devoid of irony or sarcasm. The Arab rhetoricians did not give this argumentative rhetorical style the importance it deserves. Most of the lists of rhetorical methods and viewpoints that Arab rhetoricians wrote were devoid of it, including the major list prepared by Ibn Abi al-Asba' al-Adwani in Badi' al-Qur'an al-Karim, as well as the dictionary of rhetorical terms by Ahmed Matloub. There are examples of this, and it confirms that silent answers are a model called in public rhetoric ((eloquent responses)) (10).

● Saying the affirmative: It is a rhetorical phenomenon in which the addressee interprets the speaker's words in a way that is different from what the speaker intended, as Ahmed al-Mutallub defined it as: ((Reply the speaker's words and reverse their meaning)) (11), Dr. Imad Abdel Latif mentions an example of this rhetorical phenomenon from Safi al-Din al-Hilli's poem:

I said, "Crying and grieving"   She said you were concerned about our love

He believes that saying the affirmative is one of the mechanisms that helps in producing eloquent responses. Through the reverse interpretation of the speaker's speech, the addressee may be able to produce responses that resist authoritarian discourses by refuting them and revealing their contradictions (12).

● Keeping up with the opponent: It is believed that keeping up with the opponent is a well-known dialectical method that relies on the illusion of agreement. Then the opponent calms down and expresses his support for the speaker. Then comes the moment of surprise with the violation, which paralyzes the opponent's ability to refute, especially since he had previously shown his support, if he backed down from it, his credibility before the public would decrease (13).

● Question and answer method or (review method): which is that the text includes a question and an answer, as in the similar questions that formed a dialogue that took place between the Prophet Moses, peace be upon him, and his opponents about slaughtering a cow. Al-Hamawi calls it (the review method).(14)

Thus, Dr. Imad Abdel Latif, after his detailed presentation of the rhetorical phenomena that constitute a model for public rhetoric, answers his question about what public rhetoric offers to Arabic rhetoric, summarizing it with three additions:

● New material for the rhetorical lesson (audience responses).

● A new purpose for the rhetorical lesson: community service.

● New cognitive questions for the rhetorical lesson (the relationship between response and discourse).

The researcher concludes that public rhetoric brings about a radical change in the subject of rhetorical research and moves it from the circle of the individual speaker's speech and texts to the circle of verbal and non-verbal responses produced by the audience in the contexts of public communication. It is a material that is completely different from the material that Arabic rhetoric has been concerned with throughout its long history. And therefore ((since the text is capable of having multiple and diverse readings according to the multiplicity of its readers and the diversity of their talents, culture, etc., it is also capable of being multiple and diverse according to the multiplicity and diversity of these readings)) (15).

Thus, we find that public rhetoric opens wide the door to rhetorical research, which contains a wide range of new rhetorical material that the eyes of rhetoricians have not paid attention to before, such as: applause, cheering, whistling, signals, comments, impromptu questions, shouts of admiration, and others. As they are responses that produce in all contexts of technical and direct public communication now, public rhetoric sought to crystallize a new functional form for the science of rhetoric (16). The dialectical function reveals its purpose through brief and concise phrases through which it seeks to direct the mind of the addressee to specific evidence and proofs based on persuasion, all in order to remove doubt and suspicion from the mind of the addressee. (17)

Critic Dr. Imad Abdel Latif, based on the principle that a political revolution cannot take place without being accompanied by a rhetorical revolution, says: ((Whenever the revolution carves a new path for itself, a new eloquence is formed, revolutions give birth to their eloquence)) (18).

We admire the courage of our researcher in presenting his ideas with boldness and credibility, especially his rhetorical project, as he opened a new path in our contemporary Arabic rhetoric by focusing on studying the addressee's rhetorical responses, whether verbal or non-verbal. For this project, we find our researcher has provided, as we have noted, a definition of it, its topic, material, method and functions. In addition to denying the affiliation of the rhetoric of the addressee to any book or scholar in our Arab

rhetorical heritage, except for indications that were presented in the form of hints and ideas (19), as we mentioned previously for rhetorical phenomena.

We agree with him on that, but our rhetorical heritage, which is being addressed, is present and cannot be dispensed with. It is the first goal, and if it seems marginal to the speaker, then how about that, since attention to his circumstances, psychological and social conditions, and his tendencies is the center of rhetorical practice. It is for this reason that the discourse is built, the quality of which is measured by the extent of its influence, persuasion, appeal, and the impact reflected on his thought and behavior. The rhetorical aspects he mentioned are few, but they represent the most important rhetorical methods that require the intelligence of the speaker to influence the recipient. Here, the role and power of the speaker does not emerge as much as the role of the addressee, who is the main axis in this important rhetorical practice, and the recipient is not of the same type of thinking, inclinations, and diligence. Each person has his own way of interpreting the text. However, several factors interfere in each person's departure to his chosen destination, and thus the meaning of the text varies from one recipient to another (20). The audience's eloquence and interest in the addressee within our researcher's project are of great importance, especially since the audience here is diverse in its cultural, social, and even ideological orientations and backgrounds. Moreover, we also commend the nobility of the endeavor that his project embodies. It discusses the most important issues in contemporary Arabic studies, especially the challenges it faces, as well as the issue of the death of rhetoric, and we should not forget the discussion of the effects of Arab rhetoricians' vision of Arabic rhetoric.

The most prominent challenges facing contemporary Arab studies have been summarized in four matters: (21)

• Its preoccupation with the Arab rhetorical heritage and its neglect of contemporary theoretical and applied rhetorical achievements.

• Its preoccupation with higher discourses, such as poetry and literary prose, and its neglect of the discourses of daily life.

• Its separation from societal problems and its transformation into an academic practice almost isolated from the social and political contexts of its production.

• Ignoring the non-specific nature of rhetoric and not being open to related sciences such as communication sciences, politics, sociology, and psychology.

The solution I propose to overcome and confront these challenges is to be open to some contemporary rhetorical approaches and methods that are unfamiliar to Arab scholars. especially those that promise to enrich the Arab rhetorical lesson, such as rhetoric across cultures, or what is called contrastive rhetoric, and rhetoric between cultures, which are:

(Fields that are concerned with studying the rhetorical dimensions of written communication between different cultures and different languages, in addition to comparative rhetoric, which is concerned with comparing rhetorical standards and principles in different cultures). (22)

Therefore, within the framework of communication between civilizations, inclusion becomes better and more important than exclusion. Moreover, intercultural dialogue is not a mean to show superiority over the other, prove his faults, show his contradictions, or triumph over him. On the contrary, it is a mean to understand it and live with it.

In turn, it determines the success of intercultural communication: (23) The accuracy of the message, the transparency of the medium, the factors of confusion, and the causes of misunderstanding or over-interpretation.

In the case of communication between two cultures in different languages, other factors are added that affect the success or failure of intercultural communication. The most

important of them are: linguistic and cultural disparity, the difference in rhetorical styles between the two cultures in dialogue, and the stereotypical and negative images that each culture forms of other cultures and languages.

The Arabic language is a developed language with its own vocabulary, connotations, and contexts in which vocabulary is used. (24)

Therefore, intercultural communication is more vulnerable to failure and collapse due to the difference in linguistic symbols, the difference in the meaning of non-linguistic signs, the difference in the method of communication and dialogue between each culture, and the occurrence of cases of misunderstanding and collapse of communications. The planners of this communication must have a deep and comprehensive academic knowledge of the reasons that lead to this misunderstanding.

The myth of the death of rhetoric:

In addition to the researcher's attempt to demolish and refute what he called (the myth of the death of rhetoric), there are, in his opinion, reasons on which the advocates of this principle relied, and they can be summarized as follows:(25)

• The bad reputation of rhetoric as manipulation and deception and its science as knowledge that accomplishes manipulation and deception.

• Transformations in contemporary world indicate a decline in the impact of beautiful speech in life, and thus a decline in the role of science that studies beautiful speech, i.e. rhetoric.

• The science of rhetoric has lost its subject or function due to the emergence of other sciences such as stylistics, cultural criticism, discourse analysis, and others, which inherit it at times and marginalize its role at other times.

Dr. Imad Abdel Latif refutes all these arguments, confirming the remarkable prosperity of rhetoric in the modern era, whether Western or Arab.

Our researcher describes these arguments as bad, especially the claim of their bad reputation or the emergence of new sciences that inherit or displace them. He described that the principle that sciences are only built on the ruins of others are only allegations that show the extent of weakness represented in the cognitive particularities of the various sciences, and that the emergence of a new science does not necessarily require killing existing knowledge.

It comes in a description that represents the case of the claim of the death of eloquence, that the coffin in which eloquence was carried on their shoulders and shrouded in black is nothing but an (empty coffin), eloquence is not dead. It is ((you see it alive as you walk in the streets in the form of advertising banners stuck to an old wall, or advertising symbols and icons hanging between a road lamp post, or preaching sounds streaming from the speakers of a small mosque)). (26)

Our researcher criticizes Arabic rhetorical studies in its study of argumentation theory and its application, it is focused on analyzing argumentation in the higher texts of the Holy Qur'an, poetry, and literary prose. These studies do not develop their background knowledge or analysis procedures, and our researcher explains the reason for this to: (27)

• Relying mainly on limited translations of literature written in French, such as the works of Perelman and Decroux, due to the Francophone influence on the pioneers of dialectics who laid the foundations for its study. In contrast, there are fewer possibilities to benefit from studies written in English on dialectics, which are witnessing increasing prosperity.

• Relying on relatively ancient literature causes the relative scarcity of current translated works, as well as the decline in the ability of researchers in many parts of the Arab world, including the Maghreb countries, to communicate with foreign writings in their original

language. Most of the writings that rely on it date back to the period of the sixties and seventies of the last century.

• Many Arab studies on argumentation are based on other conclusions, theory, analysis procedures, and perhaps the structural division of research and contentment with changing research symbols.

In the midst of our researcher's defense of Arabic rhetoric and his fight against everyone who believes and promotes the myth of the death of Arabic rhetoric, we tend to praise his opinions. This is especially since the West has discussed its ancient rhetoric by questioning it and transforming it into descriptiveness to question reality with its disparate discourses and specializations.

While many rhetoricians in the modern era accused traditional rhetoric, trying to kill it and prove a new one that does not fit its specificity and does not connect with the heritage. (28)

But we must stop and warn our researcher that he may have overlooked this because of his extreme enthusiasm. The sword he carries to defend Arabic eloquence is double-edged, as he is capable of killing it as well, intentionally or unintentionally. It's the same thing, because killing Arabic eloquence is not just a preoccupation with Western achievement, but rather it is sanctifying our view of it, its texts, and its scholars, and making them gods that cannot be touched, criticized, or refuted. Our Arabic rhetoric, like any science, carries within it factors that build and destroy it at the same time. Our rhetorical heritage is like any heritage in any other nation, in which it goes through bright and prosperous periods, and periods of stagnation and darkness. The researcher who clings to his prosperous era and refuses to turn attention to its other side is the same one who clings to the other side, criticizes it and searches for an alternative to it. Both of them are murderers who bury the rhetorical heritage! The (empty) coffin described by Dr. Imad Abdel Latif at the present time, will it remain empty in the future?

The answer to this question is in the hands of Arab linguistic researchers, and depends on their approach to read the rhetorical heritage, how they deal with modern Western approaches, and the soundness of their reception of them.

The contemporary researcher may be biased towards modern knowledge gains in exchange for downplaying the importance of traditional achievement or trying to provide a description that indicates the presence of crises in the structure of inherited thought or in the structure of its realization.

It is better for us to go to what Abed Al-Jabri said: "We are not calling for a break with heritage, a break with its common linguistic meaning. No, what we are calling for is abandoning the traditional understanding of heritage, that is, freedom from traditional remnants in the process of our understanding of heritage.")). (29)

We agree with the reasons he mentioned for the lack of development of the cognitive background and analytical procedures for our contemporary Arab study, and in our opinion, these reasons are more results than causes.

Conclusion:

After this brief description of some contemporary rhetorical projects, do we have the right to wonder why Arabic rhetoric is still slow to keep pace with the caravan of development in contemporary rhetorical research??

The answer exists and is present in our minds, and Arab rhetorical researchers, whether they agree or differ in their opinions, do not come together to crystallize these efforts to develop our Arabic rhetoric to keep pace with global discourse.

To benefit from modern Western approaches, it is only possible to establish theoretical concepts and methodological procedures that distinguish science, away from blind transfer, whether from ancient heritage or modern theory.

The development we seek and the modernity we aspire to do not necessarily come from outside the rhetorical heritage. Renewal and development are not just research and returning to the starting point. Starting from the projects of linguistic researchers and their criticism can be built upon and the gaps in what they have arrived at can be filled!

Footnotes

(1): See: On the necessity of public eloquence, an article published online on Tuesday, September 8, 2020 AD, at 8:40 pm, www.alshoruknews.com

(2): See: Aliwi, Karim Obaid, The Silent Answers, a study in light of pragmatic theory, Journal of the College of Education for Girls, University of Baghdad, No. 31 (1), 2020 AD: 138.

(3): See: Abdul Latif, Dr. Imad, Public Rhetoric and Critical Knowledge, A Study of the Characteristics of Criticism from Virtue to Responsiveness, Al-Allama Magazine, Volume 6 (6), 1/8/2021: 22.

(4): See: Al-Badri, M.M. Rana Alaa, A Pause with Linguistic Interpretation in Interpreting the Holy Qur'an, Revival of Arab Scientific Heritage Journal, No.(50) 2021 AD: 519.

(5): Public Rhetoric: 20-23.

(6): Same source: 20.

(7): See: Abdul Latif, Imad, New Rhetoric, Paths and Approaches, Dar Kunooz Al-Ma'rifa for Publishing and Distribution, Amman, Jordan, 2nd edition, 2021 AD: 391.

(8): Key to Science: 327.

(9): New rhetoric paths and approaches: 392.

(10): Same source: 392.

(11): See: Matloob, Ahmed, Dictionary of Rhetorical Terms and Their Development, Arab Encyclopedia House, 2006: 3/145.

(12): New Rhetoric, Paths and Approaches: 393.

(13): New Rhetoric, Paths and Approaches: 395.

(14): Same source.

(15): Finjan, M.D. Liqa Musa, Semantic Openness in Modern Poetic Discourse (Night as an Example), Journal of the College of Education for Girls, Volume 22 (3), 2011 AD.

(16): See: New Rhetoric Paths and Approaches: 963–397.

(17): See: Hussein, A.Dr. Liqaa Adel, Employing eloquent Arabic proverbs in rhetorical evidence, Al-Ustath Journal for Humanities and Social Sciences, Volume 61 (1), 2022 AD, 1443 AH: 398.

(18): See: Abdel Latif, Imad, The Rhetoric of Freedom, Battles of Political Discourse in the Time of Revolution, Dar Al-Tanweer, Beirut, 1st edition, 2013: 23.

(19): See: Abdel Latif, Imad, methodologies for studying the public, a comparative study, within the book Rhetoric of the Public, Concepts and Applications, Dar Shahrbar, 1st edition, 2017 AD: 165.

(20): See: Al-Azzawi, Al-Badrani, Dr. Yasser Hussein Majbas, A.Dr. Uday Khaled Mahmoud, the effect of multiple meanings in directing the graphic arts, the book (The Battle of Peers) as an example. : 61.

(21): See: Abdel Latif, Imad, Rhetoric and Intercultural Communication, General Authority for Cultural Palaces, 1st edition, 2012: 32.

(22): See: Abdel Latif, Imad, Rhetoric and Intercultural Communication: 32.

(23): Rhetoric and Intercultural Communication: 34

(24): See: Al-Muhyawi, Dr. Abdul Hassan Khudair Ubaid, Semantic Features in Sadr al-Din Ibn al-Wakil's Muwashahat 665 AH-716 AH, Journal of the College of Education for Girls, Volume 19 (1), 2008 AD.

(25): See: New Rhetoric Approaches and Paths: 17.

(26): Same source: 18.

(27): See: New Rhetoric Paths and Approaches: 262.

(28): See: Ali, Dr. Hani, Muhammad Saeed, A Reading of Contemporary Rhetorical Projects and the Dialectic of Ancient and Modern in Rhetoric, Faculty of Arts, Fayoum University, No. 26, January 2022, Issue: 411.

(29): See: Al-Jabri, Muhammad Abed, Heritage and us: 20.

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