



# The Role of Argumentative Connectors in the Construction of al-Bachir al-Ibrahimi's Articles: "Ramonā bil-Wahn" a Case Study

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## **Abstract**

Discourse has held considerable importance both in classical and modern contexts, assuming various forms that range from oral to written expression. Argumentative discourse is consistently employed in both modes and constitutes a fundamental pillar in the transmission of ideas and the fulfillment of communicative intentions between the speaker and the recipient. It incorporates diverse strategies of stimulation, persuasion, and dialogue, a feature that is particularly evident in Qur'anic discourse as well as in philosophical, judicial, and other types of discourse. Consequently, argumentative discourse represents a multifaceted field characterized by multiple sources and dimensions. From this perspective, the present study, entitled The Role of Argumentative Connectors in the Construction of al-Bachir al-Ibrahimi's Articles, aims to examine the function of argumentative connectors in structuring the essayistic texts of the Algerian reformist scholar al-Bachir al-Ibrahimi. The article "Ramonā bil-Wahn" ("They Accused Us of Weakness") is adopted as the corpus of analysis. The study seeks to identify the various linguistic argumentative connectors that ensure the cohesion of the argumentative text within the article and to analyze their influence on the recipient.

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## Introduction

Influence and persuasion in human communication require an effective rhetorical mechanism to be achieved. Argumentation therefore constitutes one of the defining features of this communication, with its diverse contexts and its multiple forms, whether oral or written.

It represents a fundamental pillar of purposeful texts that involve intentionality, discussion, critique, and debate. Such texts include Qur'anic, philosophical, juridical, and literary discourses, among others.

The study of argumentative texts dates back to ancient times, beginning with the works of Aristotle, particularly *Rhetoric*, followed by what the Arabs inherited concerning the foundations of oratory and the qualities of the orator.

This tradition ultimately developed into a vast intellectual legacy that has encompassed all the possible dimensions of argumentative texts through the applications of major thinkers, philosophers, and jurists to various types of discourse.

## The Concept of Argumentation

Major linguistic dictionaries converge in their definitions of *ḥijāj* (argumentation) on what is stated in *Lisān al-‘Arab* by Ibn Manẓūr, who notes: “It is said *ḥājjajtuḥu uḥājjjuḥu ḥijājan* until I prevailed over him, that is, I defeated him by means of the arguments I put forward [...]. *Al-ḥujja* denotes proof; it is also said that *al-ḥujja* is that by which an opponent defends himself. Al-Azharī states that *al-ḥujja* is the aspect through which victory is attained in dispute; a *rajul muḥājjāj* is one who is highly disputatious. *Ḥajjahu yaḥujjuḥu ḥajjan* means that he overcame him in argument. In the ḥadīth: ‘So Adam prevailed over Moses,’ that is, he defeated him by means of argument.” (Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*).

In French, this notion corresponds to the term *argumentation*, which conveys closely related meanings, most notably, according to *Le Petit Robert*: the use of arguments, and a set of arguments aimed at achieving a single conclusion.

In English, the term *argue* refers to the existence of a disagreement between two parties, each attempting to persuade the other of their point of view by presenting reasons

that constitute an argument either in support of or against a particular idea, opinion, or behavior.

Based on these lexicographical definitions, the term *ḥijāj* or *muḥājaja* appears to carry a meaning derived from the nature of its communicative context, which is characterized by dispute, contention, debate, and dominance. This reflects its fundamentally intellectual and communicative dimension (**Ibn Jinni, Al-Khasa'is**).

## **Types and Characteristics**

The researcher Ḥabīb A'rāb argues that the complexity of the concept of argumentation stems from the diversity of its fields, the multiplicity of its uses, and the variation of its reference frameworks, such as rhetoric, discourse, law, and philosophy, among others.

According to this view, argumentation derives its meaning, scope, and functions from a specific discursive reference and from the particularity of the communicative field within which it operates, together with its associated strategies.

In this sense, it is not surprising to encounter rhetorical (linguistic) argumentation, rhetorical (stylistic) argumentation, as well as legal, political, or philosophical argumentation. (**Ahmad Matloub, Dictionary of Classical Arabic Criticism**).

Nevertheless, argumentation may be broadly classified into three main types: rhetorical argumentative discourse, philosophical argumentative discourse, and pragmatic argumentative discourse. These types differ according to their epistemological origins and methodological extensions, yet this does not preclude interaction and overlap among them.

### **1. Rhetorical Argumentative Discourse**

Rhetoric constitutes one of the mechanisms of argumentation insofar as it relies on persuasion and influence through argumentative strategies based on figurative imagery and aesthetic devices.

Its aim is to convince the recipient by simultaneously engaging both intellect and emotion, thereby leading to the acceptance of the proposition or action that constitutes the subject of discourse.

## **Stylistic Characteristics of Rhetorical Argumentative Discourse**

These characteristics consist of the central rhetorical devices and figurative images adopted by argumentative discourse, particularly in literary texts, as they energize discourse and fulfill a persuasive function. Among the most prominent are:

### **a. Metaphor:**

Metaphor derives from what is referred to as analogy ( l'analogie ) and its role in argumentative structures. It can be traced back to Aristotle, who classified it under what he termed "argumentative metaphor," whose purpose is persuasion and the modification of the recipient's emotional or intellectual stance. (Aristotle, Rhetoric).

### **b. Proverb:**

The proverb represents an extension of analogical metaphor. It is a fixed form that remains unchanged despite variations in the contexts in which it appears, functioning as an argument and a form of evidence.

It manifests in several forms, such as dialogical and non-dialogical proverbs, narrative texts, dialogic narration, and parables. (Ibn Faris, Al-Sahibi).

## **2. Philosophical Argumentative Discourse**

Argumentation constitutes a fundamental dimension of philosophy and functions as one of its core methodological procedures. The validity of philosophical argumentation is assessed according to external criteria, such as strength and weakness, efficiency or inefficiency, and success or failure in persuasion. Its ultimate aim is influence and acceptance.

### **Dialogical Characteristics of Philosophical Argumentative Discourse**

Dialogue and debate are essential requirements of philosophical argumentation. Debate (munāzara) represents the dialogical and dialectical feature of this type of argumentation and constitutes a cognitive structure for the interlocutor as an argumentative method. It reveals the mechanisms through which objection operates and is manifested in the following forms: (Ibn Jinni, Al-Khasa'is):

### **a. Debate (proximal dialogue):**

This form requires both a proponent and an opponent and is distinguished from dialogue by establishing a direct confrontation between opposing positions.

### **b. Intertextuality (distal dialogue):**

This operates in two ways:

–The explicit mode: the interlocutor presents evidence drawn from the statements of others through quotation, inclusion, narration, or commentary.

–The implicit mode: the interlocutor constructs their text through previous texts that are either similar or divergent, thereby opening the text to further complementary or alternative discourses.

## **3. Pragmatic Argumentative Discourse**

The term pragmatics evokes Speech Act Theory, since speech acts constitute a central concern of pragmatics. The identification of speech acts in their diversity, across multiple pragmatic levels, enables an understanding of the orientation of pragmatic argumentative discourse and provides answers to fundamental issues and key questions surrounding the communicative process, whether oral or written.

### **3-Dialogical Characteristics of Pragmatic Argumentative Discourse**

Dialogicality represents one of the most significant levels at which the pragmatic dimension of argumentative discourse is manifested. It refers to the communicative relationship between the speaker and the addressee, within which modes of performance vary and diversify through two main phenomena:

#### **a. Personification:**

This is an enunciative feature characterized by the intensity of the discursive relationship with the interlocutor, whether real or imagined, individual or collective. It involves the construction of a second self by the speaker, positioned as an implicit or explicit objector to their own claim.

#### **b. Context:**

Context is an abstract concept that denotes the communicative situation in which all argumentative elements converge, including evidential capacities, factual truths, rhetorical indicators, and various value systems.

It constitutes a pragmatic-rhetorical condition that requires speech acts to conform to the demands of the situation and its specific circumstances. (Hussein Rif'at Hussein, Positionality in Arabic Grammar).

#### **4. Anaphoric and Non-Anaphoric Argumentative Connectors**

Argumentative connectors operate within the framework of transcending the fixed propositional content of discourse. They are not limited to the linguistic system governing discourse and communication; rather, they impose semantic constraints on interpretation.

Ducrot proposed an argumentative conception of these connectors and devices that departs from the traditional view by focusing on their argumentative value. He emphasized the necessity of distinguishing between argumentative connectors ( les connecteurs ) and argumentative operators (les opérateurs).

Connectors link two statements or two or more arguments, whereby each statement or utterance assumes a clearly defined role within an overarching argumentative strategy. Examples of such connectors include *bal* (rather), *lakin* (but), *ḥattā* (even/until), and *idhā* (therefore).

Argumentative operators, by contrast, are not directly linked to the argumentative variable—that is, the argument and the conclusion—but rather serve to restrict argumentative possibilities. Examples include *raghma* (despite) and *siwā* (except).  
**Tammam Hassan, Arabic Language: Its Meaning and Structure).**

To clarify this distinction, consider the following example:

**The believers are brothers.**

**Only the believers are brothers.**

Both sentences share the same informative predicate. However, the second sentence, through the restrictive particle *innamā* (“only”), acquires a constrained argumentative value.

When we say “The believers are brothers,” the interpretive trajectory remains open and broad, allowing for multiple argumentative possibilities; brotherhood could potentially extend to both believers and non-believers.

With the introduction of *innamā*, the interpretive trajectory becomes narrowed, reducing argumentative possibilities to a single conclusion: brotherhood is exclusive to believers. This becomes the only acceptable argumentative interpretation for the community in question.

As for argumentative connectors represented by coordinating conjunctions such as *wa* (and) and *fa* (so/then), resultative particles such as *idhā* (therefore), and argumentative sequencing particles such as *ḥattā* (even/until), they function to link two or more units or propositions within a single discursive strategy, with the aim of enhancing discursive effectiveness and pragmatic utility.

These connectors—or inferential constraints—play a crucial role in ensuring textual cohesion and linking its components. They also contribute to the construction of implicit meanings through the various inferences made by interlocutors during discourse.

A purely grammatical definition that confines the role of connectors or particles to a syntactic function—ensuring linguistic correctness and directness—fails to account for their argumentative force, which is grounded in the coherence between the argumentative scale and the argumentative connector. (**Tammam Hassan, Arabic Language: Its Meaning and Structure**).

### **The Role of Pronouns in Linking, Reference, and Argumentation**

An examination of the corpus reveals several illustrative models:

#### **Model One**

**Arabic text:**

يقول إبراهيمي:

«إنّ القوم درسونا وفهمونا وتيقنوا أنّنا لن نضيع ولن نغنى ما دما متمسكين بالغرى القوية من الإسلام والعربية والشرق، فرمونا بالوهن في مقوماتنا حتّى تضععت.»

Transliteration:

Inna al-qawma darasūnā wa fahimūnā wa tayyaqanū annā lan naḍī'a wa lan nafna mā dimnā mutamassikīna bil-'urā al-qawīyya mina al-islām wa al-'arabiyya wa al-sharq, fa-ramawnā bil-wahn fī muqawwimātinā ḥattā taḍa'ḍa'at.

## Model Two

Arabic text:

يقول الإبراهيمي:

«وبدؤوا بالدين فسخرّوا علماءه بوسائل شتى حتّى أضعفوا سلطانهم، وأزالوا هيبتهم من نفوس المسلمين، ووجدوا ثغرة قديمة من ضلالتنا فيه فوسّعوها، وأدخلوا فيه ما ليس منه، وشجّعوا البدع المحدثّة في الدين بتشجيع أهلها، وأعانهم على ذلك كلّ الانحطاط العام الذي أُبتليت به العلوم الإسلاميّة من المائة الثامنة إلى الآن، فكاثروها بعلومهم المادية حتّى غمروها، وزهدوا أهلها، وأصبحت عقيدة جامدة.»

Transliteration:

Wa bada'ū bid-dīn fa-sakhkharū 'ulamā'ahu bi-wasā'ila shattā ḥattā aḍ'afū sulṭānahum, wa azālū haybatahum min nufūsi al-muslimīn, wa wajaḍū thughra qadīma min ḍalālātinā fīhi fa-wassa'ūhā, wa adkhalū fīhi mā laysa minhu, wa shajja'ū al-bida'a al-muḥdatha fī ad-dīn bi-tashjī'i ahlihā, wa a'ānahum 'alā dhālika kullīhi al-inḥiṭāṭ al-'āmm alladhī ubtiliyat bihi al-'ulūm al-islāmiyya mina al-mi'a ath-thāmina ilā al-ān, fa-kātharūhā bi-'ulūmihim al-māddiyya ḥattā ghamarūhā, wa zahhadū ahlahā, wa aṣḥaḥat 'aqīma jāmidah.

## Model Three

Arabic text:

يقول الإبراهيمي:

«ثمَّ عمدوا إلى الكبراء فأغووهم بالأموال والألقاب والرتب، وأغروا بينهم العداوة والبغضاء، وشغلوهم بالتوافه عن العظام، وبعضهم عن الأجنبي، وبأنفسهم عن الشعوب، فما استفاقوا وما استفقنا إلا وأوطاننا مقسمة، وقسمتنا هي القليلة، وممالكنا كثيرة، ولكن معانيها للأجنبي وألفاظها لنا»

Transliteration:

Thumma ‘amadū ilā al-kubarā’ fa-aghwawhum bil-amwāl wa al-alqāb wa ar-rutab, wa aghraw baynahum al-‘adāwa wa al-baghḍā’, wa shaghalūhum bit-tafāhāt ‘ani al-‘azā’im, wa bi-ba‘ḍihim ‘ani al-ajnabī, wa bi-anfusihim ‘ani ash-shu‘ūb, fa-mā istifāqū wa mā istafaqnā illā wa awṭānunā muqassama, wa qismatunā hiya al-qalīla, wa mamālikunā kathīra, walākin ma‘āniyahā lil-ajnabī wa alfāzuhā lanā.

### Ellipsis, Reference, and Discursive Coherence

Ellipsis, like other forms of definiteness, is contingent upon the addressee’s knowledge of what is omitted and the speaker’s awareness of the addressee’s knowledge, in order for discursive coherence to be achieved.

This is articulated by Sibawayh, who states: “A pronoun becomes definite only because one uses it after knowing that the person being addressed is aware of whom and what is intended.”

Thus, ellipsis occurs only after identification, specification, and determination have been established. Ibn Jinnī similarly argues that pronouns require an explicator to specify the referent, stating: “Nothing may be pronominalized without evidence or explanation.”

The explicator that removes ambiguity from the pronominal meaning is either situational and contextually present—relying on the shared communicative situation in the case of first- and second-person pronouns—or textual, relying on prior discourse and memory in the case of third-person pronouns. (Ibn Jinni, *Al-Khasa’is*).

### Repetition (Al-Tikrār)

Repetition is structured on two complementary levels: the verbal level and the semantic level.

At the verbal level, repetition occurs through different linguistic units, ranging from letters and words to entire sentences. For instance, a phrase may appear in a context different from the one in which it first appeared.

At the semantic level, repetition manifests through the re-articulation of meanings in various forms across linguistic structures. (Ahmad Matloub, Dictionary of Classical Arabic Criticism).

According to Ahmed Matlūb, repetition in its simplest form can occur in several ways:

1. The speaker may use a lexical item and repeat it exactly, whether the meaning remains identical or changes.
2. The speaker may present a meaning and restate it, provided the first and second meanings coincide.

If both the form and meaning are identical, the benefit lies in reinforcing and confirming the statement in the mind of the audience.

If the meanings coincide but the lexical forms differ, repetition still affirms the conceptual content.

If the lexical items are identical but the meanings differ, the benefit lies in conveying multiple distinct meanings through the same form.

Repetition is considered a hallmark of eloquence ( *fāṣaḥa* ). Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkashī (d. 794 AH) notes: "Whoever denies that repetition is one of the rhetorical devices of eloquence has erred, thinking it serves no purpose; on the contrary, it is among its virtues, especially when one instance relates to another." (Ibn Faris, *Al-Sahibi*).

Similarly, al-Suyūṭī (d. 911 AH) affirms:

"Repetition is more effective than mere emphasis and is among the beauties of eloquence, contrary to the mistaken opinion... It has been said that speech, when repeated, is established."

The phenomenon of repetition has been a consistent practice among the Arabs. Ahmad ibn Fāris (d. 395 AH) described it as one of “the Arab customs: repetition and reiteration to ensure clarity according to the care given to the matter,” as also observed by al-Ḥārith ibn ‘Abbād (the khafīf).

Example of Repetition in Classical Arabic Poetry

النص العربي:

قَرِّبَا مَرَبَطَ النَّعَامَةِ مِنِّي      لَفِخَتْ حَرْبُ وَائِلٍ عَنِ حِبَالِ

(Transliteration):

Qarribā marbaṭa an-na‘āma minnī

Lafiḥat ḥarbu Wā’il ‘an ḥibāl

"Bring the ostrich's tether closer to me;

The war of Wā’il has flared from the ropes."

The poet repeated the line “Bring the an-na‘āma 's tether closer to me” at the beginning of many verses, emphasizing the matter at hand and aiming to convey a warning or an alert to the audience.

This exemplifies semantic and structural repetition , reinforcing the message both emotionally and cognitively.

### **Repetition of the Same Lexical Item (Tikrār al-Lafẓ al-Dhāt)**

Tammām Ḥassān asserts that “in referential linkage through anaphora, repetition of the lexical item itself constitutes the norm” .

This is because repeating the same lexical item “more effectively prompts recollection and guarantees comprehension.”

Furthermore, repeating the lexical referent is stronger than using a pronoun, as the explicit word carries more force than an indirect reference.

The shift in Arabic from linking with the original lexical item to linking via other referential forms stems from the principle of brevity, which itself is derived from the principle of ease of expression (khafāf) .

Like other Arabic linguistic phenomena, repetition of the lexical item is conditioned by the avoidance of ambiguity. If ambiguity cannot be avoided, Arabic resorts to alternative referential forms instead of repeating the exact lexical item.

Examples from the Article

Example One

Arabic text:

يقول إبراهيمي:

«حسبكم منها أنها تفرّق بين المرء و أخيه و المرء وولده، فأصبح أبناؤنا يهرعون إلى معاهد العلم الغربية عن طوع منا يُشبه الكره، أو عن كُرّه منا يُشبه الطّوع».

Transliteration:

Hasabkum minhā annahā tufarriqu bayna al-mar'i wa akhīhi wa al-mar'i wa waladihi, fa-  
aşbaḥa abnā'unā yahra'ūna ilā ma'āhid al-'ilm al-gharbiyya 'an ṭaw' minnā yushbiḥu al-  
kurh, aw 'an kurh minnā yushbiḥu al-ṭaw'.

In this example, the lexical item “al-mar'” (“the individual/man”) is repeated instead of replacing it with a pronoun, because it constitutes the center of the discourse at this point. Similarly, the words “al-kurh” (“hatred”) and “al-ṭaw'” (“willingness”) are repeated.

The repetition strengthens syntactic cohesion and semantic resonance, whereas omitting the lexical items or substituting them with pronouns would have weakened the logical and rhetorical connection between clauses.

Example Two

Arabic text

يقول إبراهيمي:

«أرادونا على الانقسام، وزينوه لنا كما يزين الشيطان للإنسان سوء عمله، فأطعناهم وانقسمنا، فوضعوا شققة

الانقسام بيننا بأموالهم وأعمالهم»

Transliteration:

Arādūnā ‘alā al-inqisām, wa zayyannūhū lanā kamā yuzayyin ash-shayṭān lil-insān sū‘  
‘amalihi, fa-aṭa‘nāhum wa inqasamnā, fa-waḍa‘ū shuqqat al-inqisām baynanā bi-amwālihim  
wa a‘mālihim...

In this excerpt, the term “al-inqisām” (“division”) is repeated multiple times, even though pronouns could have been used instead.

Repetition is deliberately employed because the lexical item represents the core theme of the discourse, highlighting the gravity and danger of division within the community. In the article, “al-inqisām” occurs more than ten times, emphasizing warning, raising awareness, and provoking reflection among the audience.

This repetition also demonstrates a high communicative and argumentative efficiency, linking semantic and pragmatic dimensions.

### **Rhetorical Function of Lexical Repetition**

Lexical repetition is a rhetorical phenomenon recognizable to those with a deep understanding of Arabic eloquence. Its functions include:

1. Emphasis (ta’kīd).
2. Stylistic pleasure and aesthetic enjoyment of language (istilādh al-kalām).
3. Magnifying or exaggerating a matter to draw attention (ta’zīm wa tahwīl).
4. Enhancing alertness and audience attention.
5. Extending speech while reinforcing meaning to prevent forgetting.
6. Maintaining thematic and referential cohesion across multiple elements of discourse.

Thus, repetition of the same lexical item is both an argumentative and communicative device, serving to reinforce meaning, alert the audience, and secure coherence throughout the discourse.

#### Repetition of the Beginning of the Sentence or Clause (‘I‘ādat Ṣadr al-Kalām)

The second pattern of repetition involves repeating the beginning of a sentence or clause for the purposes of cohesion and argumentation. Sometimes minor modifications may accompany the repeated portion.

Tammām Ḥassān describes this type of anaphoric linkage as follows: "There is another type of linkage in the text, which resembles what has been previously mentioned in the discourse, involving the repetition of a lexical item, known as repetition of the beginning of the sentence ( ‘i‘ādat ṣadr al-kalām ).

This occurs after a long intervening portion that could cause forgetting or weaken the relationship with its predicate, agent, or response. Reintroducing the beginning of the sentence clarifies the connection with what follows."

The purpose of this repetition is to show that the part following the repeated segment is connected to the beginning of the sentence, establishing a relationship despite a long gap between the two.

#### Examples from Al-Ibrahimi’s Article

##### Example One

Arabic text:

«خلقنا خلقة الأرنب و خلقهم خلقة الأسد»

Transliteration:

Khalaqnā khalqat al-arnab wa khalaqahum khalqat al-asad

Here, the repetition of the verb *khalaq* (“created”) at the beginning of the clause establishes a semantic and syntactic link between the two creations, emphasizing contrast and clarity in the argument.

## Example Two

Arabic text:

« أن نكفر بهذا الانقسام، ونكفر عليه بضدّ »

Transliteration:

An nukaffir bihādhā al-inqisām, wa nukaffir ‘alayhi bi-ḍiddihi

In this example, the repetition of the verbal phrase nukaffir (“to reject/condemn”) reinforces the argumentative weight of the statement and maintains cohesion between the two clauses.

## Example Three

Arabic text:

« ولندكر من خصال الأمم ما فعلته إيطاليا في ضمّ أجزائها، وما فعلته ألمانيا وما فعلته فرنسا التي لم تنم لها عين في قضية اللرس و اللورين»

Transliteration:

Wa l-nadhkur min khaṣāl al-umam mā fa‘alat-hā Īṭāliyā fī ḍamm ajzā’ihā, wa mā fa‘alat-hā Almāniyā wa mā fa‘alat-hā Faransā allatī lam tanam lahā ‘ayn fī qaḍiyyat al-Lusses wa al-Lorraine

Here, the repetition of the phrase mā fa‘alat-hā (“what ... did”) at the beginning of each clause provides structural and semantic cohesion, linking the enumerated historical acts while emphasizing continuity and parallelism in the discourse.

## Conclusion on Repetition and Cohesion

In summary:

Argumentative connectors ( al-rwābiṭ al-ḥujājiyya ) play a crucial role in maintaining cohesion between arguments, ensuring syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic harmony, and enabling the text to progress gradually and coherently.

They also allow sequencing and gradation of issues, giving discourse a textual dimension.

Repetition is a fundamental device that supports arguments and proofs, providing additional rhetorical force that significantly impacts the audience, aiding persuasion and compliance.

Repetition facilitates clarity, comprehension, and retention, reinforcing ideas in the audience's mind.

Repetition of a lexical item or argumentative link ensures harmony between parts of discourse, strengthens unity between sections, and enhances the perceivable coherence for the audience.

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