



Zikr and Hazf In Arabic Rhetoric

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Abstract: This article delves into the intricacies of zikr (mentioning) and hazf (omission) in Arabic rhetoric, particularly within the realm of ilm al-ma'ani (the science of meanings). The discussion explores the importance of these concepts in conveying nuanced meanings, achieving eloquence, and avoiding redundancy. Zikr refers to explicitly mentioning a component of speech, while hazf involves omitting a component that can be understood from context. Drawing on examples from the Qur'an and classical Arabic literature, the article highlights scenarios where zikr emphasizes or clarifies, and where hazf aids in brevity, avoids redundancy, or conveys deeper meanings. Insights from scholars like Abdulqahir Jurjani and examples from classical texts illustrate the rhetorical depth and aesthetic of these techniques. Mastery of zikr and hazf is essential for understanding the subtleties of Arabic literature and its rhetorical elegance.

Keywords: Arabic rhetoric, zikr, hazf, ilm al-ma'ani, eloquence, redundancy, Qur'anic exegesis, Abdulqahir Jurjani, Arabic grammar, linguistic aesthetics.

Introduction: The Arabic language stands out among world languages for its charm and beauty. Its vast linguistic capabilities have enabled the remarkable development of Arabic literature and poetry. Arabic grammar is studied across several disciplines, including *sarf* (morphology), *nahv* (syntax), *fiqh al-lugha* (linguistic jurisprudence), and *balagha* (rhetoric). The subject of this discussion pertains to the science of rhetoric (*balagha*). Rhetoric itself is divided into three branches:

1. **Ilm al-Bayan** (the science of clarity),
2. **Ilm al-Ma'ani** (the science of meaning),

3. *Ilm al-Badi'* (the science of embellishment).

The concepts of *zikr* (mentioning) and *hazf* (omission) are studied under *Ilm al-Ma'ani*.

- *Zikr* refers to including an element of a sentence explicitly, as in "Zayd came."

- *Hazf* refers to omitting a sentence element, such as saying "came," where the subject "Zayd" is implied.

In speech, repeatedly using identical words can reduce their impact. To avoid redundancy, parts of sentences are often omitted, i.e., *hazf*.

The Rhetorical Value of *Zikr* and *Hazf*

Abdulqahir Jurjani (may Allah have mercy on him), in his work *Dalail al-I'jaz*, describes *hazf* as follows:

"It is a subtle path, delicate in its foundation, remarkable in its nature, akin to magic."

A line of poetry emphasizes the complexity of *hazf*:

Were it not for omission and implication, Even the most ignorant would understand grammar?

The omission of certain elements has drawn significant attention from scholars because *hazf* allows for the expression of nuanced meanings. Jurjani states:

"You will find that omitting mention can be more eloquent than mentioning, and silence can sometimes convey more meaning than speech. You will feel most articulate when not speaking, and your expression will be most complete when you do not explicitly explain."

Both *zikr* and *hazf* have their respective roles and are analyzed based on their rhetorical purposes. When the goal is to convey a meaning explicitly, all sentence components must be present (*asliyya* or full expression). For example:

رأيت زيدا أمس في المدرسة
(I saw Zayd yesterday at the school).

If omitting an element does not compromise the intended meaning, it may be left out. For example:

من جاء؟
(Who came?)
زيد.
(Zayd).

Here, the predicate "came" is omitted, as it is understood from the preceding question.

Reasons for *Zikr*

1. Emphasis and elaboration:

For instance:

﴿أولئك على هدى من ربهم وأولئك هم المفلحون﴾

"They are upon guidance from their Lord, and they are the successful"

(*Surah Al-Baqarah: 5*).

The repetition of *أولئك* (they) emphasizes and elaborates the statement, even though it could have been omitted.

2. Addressing a listener with limited comprehension:

For example:

ماذا قال زيد؟
(What did Zayd say?)
زيد قال كذا
(Zayd said this).

Repeating "Zayd" highlights the listener's limited understanding.

3. Extending dialogue:

For example:

قال هي عصاي ﴿﴾ قال وما تلك بيمينك يا موسى
"What is that in your right hand, O Moses?" He said, "It is my staff..." (*Surah Taha: 17-18*).

Although "staff" could suffice, Moses (peace be upon him) extends his reply to prolong his dialogue with Allah.

Reasons for *Hazf*

1. Avoiding redundancy:

If a sentence element is understood from context, it is omitted. For example:

وما أدراك ما الحطمة. نار الله الموقدة
"And what can make you know what is the Crusher? It is Allah's kindled fire" (*Surah Al-Humazah: 5-6*).

Here, the subject *هي نار الله* (it is Allah's fire) is reduced to *نار الله*.

2. Urgency:

When time is critical, brevity is prioritized, as in shouting "Deer!" to a hunter.

3. Subtle denial:

For instance, omitting a subject allows one to deny responsibility if accused later.

4. Veneration or disdain:

Omission can signify respect, as in "His Highness decreed..." or disdain, where the subject is deemed unworthy of mention.

5. Linguistic elegance:

Majhul (passive) constructions omit the doer of the action to achieve rhetorical goals, such as obscuring identity, maintaining decorum, or focusing solely on the action.

CONCLUSION

As demonstrated, *zikr* and *hazf* are among the most intricate aspects of Arabic rhetoric. They have been the focus of entire books and serve as indispensable tools for conveying profound meanings. Mastery of these concepts requires extensive reading of Arabic literature

to develop a sensitivity to such subtleties.

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