Reviews of Barbara Johnstone, Repetition in Arabic Discourse

Barbara Johnstone
REVIEWS

It is not clear how solid is the evidence in favour of the view that the distant origin of Ramalla is rooted in the Arabian Peninsula, especially as I have not read Yusuf Qaddura’s book *Tarikh Madinat Ramallah* (New York 1954) which the author lists in his bibliography (p. 158). However, if footnote 43 on p. 32 is anything to go by, I cannot but suspend judgement on the veracity of the evidence. This note goes as follows: The following line excerpted from one of the wailing (funeral) songs which had been preserved through oral transmission from one generation to the next, suggests the Arabian Peninsula as the earliest source of origin (Qaddura 1950: 131, [but listed as 1954 in the bibliography]):

*yalbiyyati 'wâ sall ma lakamâ da'wa farrînâ ba'd makke wil madina mânasâma.

“We grieve over (the loss of) Abu Khalif for we did not find him any remedy
We fled the country of Mecca and Medina together”

It seems that the validity of the historical position taken up by the author in this particular instance rests on the translation of farrînâ as ‘fled’. But this may not be the most appropriate, if at all correct, meaning of the word farrînâ, which in this context means ‘roamed’. It may however be possible that the preposition min (from), which with the verb farrînâ means ‘fled’, was accidentally elided in the recorded version of the song. There is, however, no need for us to look for such a corrective interpretation, because the verb farrînâ in the second line above delivers perfect meaning in the context in which it occurs. It may, however, be argued that even under the new meaning of the verb the argument for an Arabian Peninsula original provenance for the first inhabitants of what later developed into the town of Ramalla can still stand. But this may be challenged by discounting the denominational meaning of the second line in favour of an interpretation which highlights the symbolic significance of the two towns of Mecca and Medina within a system of medical treatment where association with these two centres is thought to involve divine intervention through the figure of Prophet Muhammad. This may not be sufficient to prove the point I am proposing here, but it serves to illustrate the type of arguments which may be deployed in looking at the evidence for or against an Arabian Peninsula origin for the Abu Khalif family.

This and other points should not be taken as criticisms of what is a stimulating and thought-provoking study, but as genuine differences of opinion between two scholars whose interests intersect but do not totally overlap. The book is very well written and is very clearly presented. It is virtually free of any typographic errors, the only one which the present reviewer noted being on p. 26 where the underlying structure (US /liyudinu/) and its derivatives should have /lal/ instead of /lad/ and on p. 128 where a /t’alammânâbel/ should probably be rendered as /t’alammânâbel/. On p. 40 the forms /mistâkal/ and /mistâkal/ (spoon) in the BR and /Ur/ urban varieties should probably be replaced by /mas‘tal/ and /ma’tal/ as given on p. 43. Also on p. 40 the arrow in “BR /kek/ hala-xâl — /U’akf/ hala-xâl” should point the other way round.

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

YASIR SULEIMAN


In the Introduction the author sets out the objectives of her book as follows:

385

Jal of Semitic Studies 40: 2 1995
paradigmatic treats the phoneme as the smallest orderable unit in the language sequentially, thus excluding the possibility of the reiteration which the repetition

of the unordered distinctive features in phonemes may have as a textual device.

One of the problems in dealing with the author's notion of lexical couplets as a type of repetition (Chapter 1) — for example al-sab'a wa al-mu'addah (aid and help, p. 40); jaww suffering; sharq al-qaul (power and gravity, p. 41); and hamzah wa-

shadda (obstacles and dams, p. 42) — concerns their treatment as 'roughly syn-

ononymous words' (p. 37). While it is true that the members of each couplet in the above examples are semantically related, it is also true that some are more related

than others. Thus, the semantic distance, measured in terms of meaning overlap,

between the members of the second couplets seems, at least intuitively, to be greater

than that between the members of the first pair; and these in turn exhibit a greater

semantic difference than exists between the constituent members of the first pair,

which by no means are synonymous. The author is not unaware of the difficulty of

establishing synonymy in the language (pp. 48-50), but this does not seem to mat-

ter very much in her approach, because what seems to hold sway descriptively in

this approach is the suggestion of sameness, though this may be, which pairs

of semantically related items may signal.

But this is not the only part of the book where the power of suggestion and

impressionism forms the basis for argumentation. Consider the following:

The Arabic morphological system is partially (though by no means completely) iconic, in two ways. First, it is iconic in that the simplest, shortest patterns are used for many primitive nouns in the singular and for simple transitive verbs, whereas longer, more complex patterns tend to be used for verbs with more complicated grammatical meaning (reflexive, passive, inchoative) and nouns which are plural or emphatic in one of a number of ways, such as diminutive or pejorative. (p. 71)

One would be excused for thinking that the above does capture a significant fact of

Arabic morphology, not least because the statement seems to be intuitively appeal-

ing. But this is no basis for arguing that Arabic is 'partially iconic' in the above

sense, or that it is not, for that matter, simply because it is not clear what 'partially'

means here. Furthermore, a close look at the above assertion is bound to make us

question what is meant by 'simplest [and] shortest' and whether these two notions

are technically the same or different. Also, one may legitimately ask about a book

which deals with argumentative and persuasive discourse what it means by a 'prim-

itive' noun. These may be seen as taut and tired types of questions, and perhaps

they are, but they seem to me to be the only kinds of question which one could

sensibly ask when faced with a claim whose power of suggestive reference surpasses

its empirical validity.

Consider the following also:

The second way in which Arabic morphology is iconic has to do with the way in which

the morphological system has been seen as a metaphor for the language as a whole ... Syntax was treated by the Bara school in the same way as morphology, as a highly rigid analogical system ... The competing grammatical theory of the Kufa school, which was less analogical and thus less inclined to use morphology as a model for the other levels of language, eventually died out ... (pp. 71-72)

Ignoring the problem of whether the two trends of Bara and Kufa deserve to be

regarded as different or autonomous schools of grammar, a question which nowa-

days is answered more in the negative than in the affirmative, the view that an iconic

relationship pertains between morphology and syntax, whatever that means in this

context, is stated by the author without any empirical proof. If what is meant in the
above quotation is that syntax, like morphology, had to account for the recurrent features of the language, then is not that what all sensible non-variational grammars declare to be their aim? Also, is it true that Arabic morphology and syntax as set out by the grammarians are as rigid as the author suggests? What about the huge corpus of dialectal materials which Arabic linguistic studies have preserved for us? And how, under this view, would one be able to explain the existence of the vast body of literature on *lahn al-‘ammah* and the many empirically relevant questions it raises? (Suleiman, 1996). And, also, how would one explain the early existence in the Arabic intellectual tradition of the theologically and linguistically important *qirda* as literature? These are by no means all of the questions which may be raised concerning the author's claim about the rigidity in Arabic grammar and the iconicity argument it is intended to support. For example, one may raise the important issue of what happens when an iconic relation is somehow treated as a metaphor. Does not that lead to indeterminacy and, most probably, confusion in a field whose foundations are still, both methodologically and epistemologically, very fragile? And how would one classify the above positions in terms of the author's distinction between the Western proof-based and the Arab presentation-based types of argumentation (pp. 113-119)? Is it possible that it belongs neither to the one nor to the other, but that it is argumentation through speculation? As Walos (1994) writes: 'The principle of iconicity is ... seen as being vulnerable to impressionism and subjectivity in the correspondences that are identified' (p. 226).

The book's main contribution to the ethnography of rhetoric seems to lie in the adoption of the following position concerning the relationship between the dominant mode of argumentation in Arabic and the culture which envelops and interacts with it. Roughly speaking, we may reconstruct the general outlines of the author's position in this regard as follows. On p. 109 she puts forward the view that 'there are ways in which Arabic itself, and not just discourse in Arabic, is parallelistic and paratactic [i.e. asysterecial]'. This position is later reiterated on p. 113: 'Repetition and parataxis are, at least to some extent, called for by the structure of Arabic' and not by any orality or poetic constraints. On p. 115 the author develops her argument in two ways. She first asserts that 'there is a difference between argumentative discourse of the Arabic sort and Western argumentation'. She then goes on to specify this difference by drawing a distinction between what she calls argumentation by *presentation* and argumentation by *proof*, which characterize Arabic and Western discourse in that order. So far, it is the very nature of Arabic which seems to dictate the mode of argumentation in persuasive discourse. This is later related to the very nature of Arab society and culture, but, thankfully, without telling us which of these two motivates the other. This is how the author sets her position at this stage in the argument:

Argument by presentation has its roots in the history of Arab society, in the ultimate, universal truths of the Qurān, and in hierarchical societies autocratically ruled by caliphs who were not only secular rulers but also the leaders of the faith, and later and until very recently by the colonial powers. Arabic argumentation is structured by the notion that it is the presentation of an idea — the linguistic forms and the very words that are used to describe it — that is persuasive, not the logical structure of proof which Westerners see behind the words. (p. 117)

The finale of this argument comes in the middle of p. 119, when the author declares that 'repetition and balance, synomyns and paradigms, are essentially and authentically Arabic. They are at the heart of the language, the discourse, and the rhetoric in a way which cannot simply be disposed of'.
REVIEWS

This conclusion amounts to saying that persuasive Arabic discourse cannot rid itself of the fact that it is inescapably locked into a 'linguistic war' where presentation and not proof is the dominant mode of argumentation. In effect it boils down to saying that, when it comes to argumentation, Arabic native speakers have no access to 'the truth', whatever that means, save through presentation, even when they shift to a Western language for self-expression, as the author's Arab students' work in English is taken to testify. At the risk of repeating or paraphrasing myself as an Arab user of English, thus proving the author's point, an Arab under her study will always be an Arab no matter how hard he or she may try to escape, so far as they continue to work within the norms of their language in persuasive discourse. But a few issues may have to be cleared before this can be accepted with confidence. First, can it be legitimate to generalise about an entire genre, i.e. persuasive Arabic discourse, on the basis of an examination of a very small sample of Arabic writings (one longish piece by Siq‘ al-Ḫṣūṣṭ and three small passages by the same author, Jamāl ‘Abd al-Ḫādir and Shawqī Dāyi) probably not exceeding 10,000 words, especially when some of the categories in the analysis (e.g. synonymy) are not sufficiently well-defined? Second, can it be legitimate to discuss the whole issue of repetition, parallelism and paraphrase in persuasive discourse without raising the issue of style, especially as stylistic preferences may vary from period to period and, within the same period, from writer to writer, and especially since the present reviewer would have been able to identify the Ḫṣūṣṭ and the Nāṣir passages as texts which most probably belong to their authors? Third, can it be legitimate that conclusions about the dominant mode of argumentation in persuasive Arabic discourse are arrived at without reference to the polemical nature of the subject-matter (pan-Arab nationalism) of three of the texts concerned, and especially in view of the polemical nature of most nationalist writings in many Western and non-Western languages? Fourth, what does it mean to say that 'Ultimately, argumentation [in persuasive texts] has to do with truth, and that argument rests on established truths' (p. 115)? Is it not possible that argumentation is more generally concerned with convincing the addressee of the addressee's point of view, and this may sometimes invoke the truth, whatever that may be, or even plain falsehoods? Fifth, could it be that other modes of argumentation in persuasive Arabic texts may exist in the vast body of literature of this type, for example the recent book by Ḥalim Barakāt on contemporary Arab society (1991) It may of course be argued that Ḥalim Barakāt is not a good example for the point I am making as far as he was trained in the West and he is currently working in the United States. But would this not prove the point that it is possible for an Arab writer writing a persuasive text in Arabic not to resort to presentation as a mode of argumentation. Put differently, and here I am paraphrasing what I have just said! does this not show that what has been declared by the author to be 'essentially and authentically Arabic' (p. 119) and therefore 'cannot be disposed of' is in fact something that can be disposed of? Sixth, is it not wise, before arriving at the addressee-oriented conclusion that Arabic argumentation is presential, to approach argumentation from the addressee's end and to see if what the addressee 'intends' to be persuasive is viewed similarly by the addressee? Such an investigation may reveal the pleasant surprise that at least some of the 'consumers' of a given presentially-oriented persuasive text may judge the argument it sets forth to be counterfeit, or even bogus.

These are some of the questions which may be raised in connection with the author's position about the relationship between language, rhetoric and culture. They should not, however, be taken to invalidate some of the most interesting styl-
REVIEWS

istic/discoursal conclusions the author extracts from her limited corpus (cf. Chapters 5 and 6). I have found this book to be at its best when it sticks to points of stylistic description per se and when it eschews the temptation to extrapolate from its limited database to a vast body of ever-evolving and therefore infinite persuasive texts. In these instances the author must be congratulated for providing perceptive and stimulating analyses of her data. But she must also be congratulated on the other parts of the book which I have not been able to accept, simply because they will provoke the reader to react, as the constrained length of this review may help to show. For this, if not for anything else, I will recommend this book to my students as I am sure we will have a few lively seminars discussing it and the wider issues it raises.

REFERENCES


UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

YASIR SULEIMAN
in this chapter is Maḥmūd Ḥamdī Zaqṣūq. Judging by the extracts quoted, his style of writing seems considerably more moderate, although his point of departure is almost identical to that of al-Jundī: Islam is essentially 'true' and its origins do not admit of historical analysis. Zaqṣūq is an indefatigable proponent of joint ventures which Muslim scholars should undertake in order to refute, once and for all, western attacks on Islam. Prominent among these ventures is a mawṣūḥ ‘at ar-radd ‘alā ‘l-mustashriqūn, in other terms: an orientalist-refuting encyclopedia. Rudolph does not let out which, if any, of these ventures, and if so to what extent, they have been realized.

The third author dealt with in this chapter is Qāsim as-Samarrahī, whose Al-isṭisḥārāt bayna l-mawdū‘iyā wa‘l-flī‘i‘līyya (Riyād 1983) is summarized in a way strongly resembling a dispassionate but critical book review. Even here Rudolph succeeds in leaving an impression of unbound objectivity which deserves to be commended.

The theologian Muhammad Husayn ‘Alī as-Sāghir from Nājaf is dealt with in the next section. Whether or not his being a shī‘a has played any special role in formulating his on the whole moderate point of view could not be considered, but fact is that his assessment of orientalists who have in one way or another addressed themselves to studying the Qur‘ān is in comparison with similar assessments of his predecessors outstandingly balanced. But here again there is no hint that Wansbrough's Quranic studies (London 1977) has also been drawn upon in this context, something which might have set his final appraisal on its head, nor was as-Sāghir able to dissociate himself from the threadbare argument that orientalists are simply not cut out for grasping the divine origin of the Qur‘ān, with the ensuing inaccessibility of the intricacies of its style.

In the short fourth chapter several 'outsiders' are described. With this qualification (kharājīyyūn) is meant all those oriental scholars and writers who, as a result of long exposure to western society through education and/or domicile, can no longer be called proponents of a distinctly araphile ideology with its concomitant apologetic attitude in 'defense' of Islam.

The work is concluded by a brief recapitulation of some crucial issues made in the foregoing chapters.

Finally, it should be pointed out that this on the whole excellent book is produced in a way that can only be qualified as shoddy, with as one of its salient shortcomings a constantly varying letter height which may put off many readers. The book urgently needs a decently printed edition with, for good measure, a comprehensive index added, which is now lacking.

The Hague, October 1991

G.H.A. Juynboll

Most Arabists dealing with Modern Arabic texts are familiar with the feeling that somehow these texts often differ in argumentative structure from comparable texts in English, but it is very hard to put your finger on the exact points in which they differ. The aim of the book under review here is to formulate the differences and to explain them on the basis of one conspicuous aspect, namely paradigmatic patterning, i.e. 'structuring of the lists, matrices, or sets from which items are selected to be placed in context' (p. 16). The corpus for this study consists of samples of persuasive discourse: a collection of essays by Sā‘īd al-Husri (sic! not: al-Husari), two speeches by Nasser and an essay by Sawqi Dayf.

Arabic discourse, in the view of the author, is structured by parallelism and paraphrase, not because of an inherent fondness of repetition on the part of the Arabs, but because of constraints imposed by the structure of the Arabic language and Arab society. Lossily basing herself on structuralist theories of paradigmatic and syntagmatic relationships in language, she first deals with the linguistic aspect of paraphrase and parallelism, which, she maintains, is closely interwoven with their rhetorical function in argumentation, and accordingly cannot be studied in isolation. Starting with the simplest device — lexical couples, synonym groups, and freezes (pp. 36-51) — she makes the point that freezes, i.e. couples such as ‘each and every’, ‘beak and call’ are gradually developed through constant use (p. 50). Repetition breeds paradigmatic coupling and by combining words you turn them into near synonyms and eventually frozen, idiomatic expressions.

Much of the parallelism in Arabic is, however, structured on a higher level, on the basis of morphological completeness, either roots or patterns. In this connection she remarks (p. 71) that "English discourse rules (codified in rhetoric texts under "variety in word choice") encourage writers to avoid repetition of this sort", in Arabic there is a definite tendency towards the use of identical roots or identical patterns. This point is well taken, but I find it highly doubtful that one could ascribe this contrast to an alleged iconicity in Arabic morphology (p. 71) and I certainly do not agree with her subsequent contention that in the Arabic grammatical tradition "Arabic morphology became a highly developed science, while Arabic syntax remained in the background" (p. 72). As a matter of fact, the whole of Arabic grammar is based on the syntactic principle of dependency, and while it is true that morphology, too, was a significant part of grammar, it certainly did not push syntax to the background.

According to J. the root and pattern repetitions are not just a figure of speech, but they have a central function in the structuring of argumentative discourse: "they not only express the argument, but, via paradigmatic patterning, they are the argument" (p. 75). This is a central thought in her book and we shall come back to it at the end of this review. At the textual level paraphrase has partly the same function as repetition at the sentence level. J. maintains that in Arabic prose one very frequently finds patterns of paraphrase, i.e. repetitions of content, that are unusual in English prose. It is here that I find it sometimes difficult to agree with the categorization. Take the example on pp. 82-83, where al-Husri argues that the 19th century was rightly called the age of nationalism. He proves his point by stating that a) nationalism was a significant factor in the 19th
century, and b) that it was not a significant factor before the 19th century. In my view, this cannot be called a reverse paraphrase or a repetition of content at all, since both statements individually contribute to the argument. In other words, I find this analysis highly subjective and I suspect that with this procedure almost any text — including the book under review here — could easily be turned into a series of paraphrases, near paraphrases or reverse paraphrase. Now it is true that J. emphasizes the role of formal markers, but pointing out that sentences are conjoined with wa "and" (p. 82) or that there is an "overt marker of negation in the second half of the paraphrastic doublet" (p. 84) in my view does not qualify as an identification of formal markers.

In connection with another example J. states — and this is again connected with the basic thesis of the book — "maybe Arabic arguments do not work the way we expect them to do" (p. 91). The paraphrases in her view, do not signal or highlight any logical thesis, they are "at least in part, its substantiation" in the rest of the book the author then gives evidence for this point of view. In the first place, she introduces the concept of 'presence' in rhetorical theory (pp. 92-95), i.e. the presentation of those elements in discourse which are to function as the topic of the discussion. This is done by various means, one of them being paraphrastic repetition, which "is among the key techniques for creating presence" (p. 49). Paraphrastic repetition presents the elements, which are then emphasized by particles such as inna, qad, or by various forms of ra'á. J.'s point is that "if the thesis has been stated 'presently' enough (often enough and with enough external markers of presence), it is its own substantiation" (p. 95). In other words, Arabic argumentative discourse does not use real arguments, but relies almost entirely on internal and external markers of 'presence'. Parallelism, too, is a means of creating 'presence' (pp. 99-108), since the repetition of structure either serves the purpose of cohesion, by showing which elements belong together, or that of cumulative force, by giving the argument momentum and reinforcing it rhetorically. As an external marker for this parallelism the conjunction wa- is often used, as we have seen above.

Both repetition of content (paraphrase) and parallelism structure the argumentative discourse and lead to a high degree of persuasion, to a much higher degree than the logical force of the argument does (p. 108). This is one part of the main conclusion in the last chapter, in which J. speculates about the reasons for repetition in Arabic discourse. The inevitable conclusion one draws when reading this last chapter is that there is something specific about the way Arabs argue, since "constraints on discourse are constraints on thought" (p. 109), and as we have seen already, their discourse differs from ours in being more directed towards the presentation of elements than towards logical argument. In speculating about the origin or cause of the contraint leading to repetition, she asserts that it is partly caused by the syntactic structure of Arabic itself (adverbial modification by cognate accusatives, paratactic construction, indefinite relative clauses and circumstantial clauses), and partly by the structure of a hierarchical and autocratic society in which presentation of the truth is more important than argumentation. (cf. Qur'anic message, caliphs, colonial powers (?), p. 117). In short, both Arabic language and Arab society conspire in constraining the form of discourse, with is based on presentation, rather than logic or argument. We' Westebergs believe that form is not identical to function, whereas even sophisticated Arabs (p. 120) consistently fail to see the 'main idea' in a text, because for them the truth is as much in the form as it is in the function. In view of J.'s warning about dichotomizing (p. 115, quoting Said) — which is "a rather Western thing to do" — it is remarkable that she herself falls prey to this tendency to dichotomize. What it all boils down to is that a certain style of discourse, a certain fashion of speaking is made into a determining factor of the Arab 'mentality', which, she then declares, may be as valuable as 'our' Western logical thought. But what about the Arab logicians and theologians and grammarians and historians, who attached great importance to the logical structure of their arguments? What about the style of some of 'our' Western politicians? I am convinced that J.'s argument is absolutely bona fide, but I do believe that this kind of argument is potentially dangerous, since it may easily lead to the point where meaningless repetition and turgid style — which is found in some Arab writers — is seen as a kind of mystic truthsaying. This, in its turn, may be for others the confirmation that Arabs cannot think 'properly'. In order to avoid such interpretations I believe that we should concentrate on the style and see if for what it is: partly the result of a rhetorical fashion which is perpetuated by education, and partly a device that is used all over the world by people who hold public speeches. It certainly is not something inherently Arabic or Arab.

The foregoing may have created the impression that I view this book rather negatively. But in all fairness, in spite of the criticisms formulated above, I appreciate the author's attempt to formalize and formulate the characteristics of Arabic writing, and although I object to the speculations in which she leads us, I can see the positive sides of her approach, inasmuch as it brings out these characteristics.

Nijmegen, December 1991
Kees VERSTEEGH


During a recent conference on substratal influences in the Arabic dialects in Madrid (November 1990), the author of the book under review here remarked on the fact that there are still many interesting dialects in the Arabophone world waiting for a scientific description, and the main task of the dialectologist should be to contribute towards a better knowledge of these dialects. These remarks are repeated in the preface to the present book where the author emphasizes the fact that many Arabic dialects are threatened by extinction, and should be documented by dialectologists. Regardless of whether or not one agrees with this delimitation of the task of the dialectologist, there can be no doubt that Jastrow himself has done more than his share in the exploration of 'interesting dialects', mainly in the field of the qatlu dialects (I refer to Jastrow 1973, 1981 to mention only a few, and to Fischer & Jastrow 1980).
Ladejogus used some made-up data in their textbooks, I propose that this format finally be abandoned since so much reliable descriptive information on so many languages is now readily available in the literature.

To sum up, Roger's book is well organized and well designed (e.g., it makes excellent use of bold face). I recommend it to instructors who would like to use a recently published textbook instead of an older one. It contains, as I have already pointed out, all the usual material one has come to expect in treatises such as these plus some extras as duly noted. Like most books, though, there are a few printing errors to report: *fricatives* for *fricatives* (319), *grammar* for *grammar* (369), etc.

*Linguistics Program  
California State University  
Fullerton, CA 92634-9480*


Reviewed by ALAN S. KAYE

This is a revised version of the author's University of Michigan (1981) Ph.D. dissertation. As she so eloquently puts it at the very outset, her book can be viewed as applied linguistics, pragmatics, ethnography of rhetoric, and linguistic theory (p. 1). I find this an accurate assessment, but I would add that it is certainly also a contribution to discourse analysis. The tome carefully investigates repetition, parallelism, and paraphrase in Modern Standard Arabic as components of so-called 'persuasive' discourse. It is based primarily on an essay by the well-known Iraqi writer, Sati al-Husri (1880–1968); however, it should be noted that her data were also drawn from the writings of Egypt's Gamal Abd al-Nasser and Shawqi Dayf. This is all explained in Chapter 1, 'Introduction', in which we also learn how the author became intrigued with the workings of Arabic discourse (actually, the circumstances result, quite unexpectedly, from teaching English to Arab students).
Chapter 2, 'Paradigmatic Structure and Parallelistic Discourse', demonstrates that 'parallelistic discourse serves not only to evoke, but also to create paradigmatic structure, and that repetition is thereby a central process through which language is created in discourse' (p. 11). The author successfully uses material from Ferdinand de Saussure and Roman Jakobson about paradigmatic structure and the poetic function of language. Furthermore, she has investigated some cross-linguistic parallels quoting authorities on Rotinese ritual language (Indonesia) and Kuna, among others. The idea of 'paradigmatic patterning' (p. 33) is put forth as 'a textual device' (ibid.); however, it is important to keep in mind that the notions of poetic vs. prose text are probably not universal dichotomies.

Chapter 3, 'Lexical Couplets and Semantic Paradigmns', focuses on the so-called lexical couplet (two synonyms connected by wa 'and'). The lexical couplet is a frequent example of paradigmatic patterning in Arabic. Some examples include ḫudāhum wa jala?an 'clarity and clarity', or at-ta?iydu wa-l-musā'adatu 'the aid and the help'. The author then asks whether or not the aforementioned terms are synonyms (p. 48), to which the answer is: in the couplet, often yes; but elsewhere, no (ibid.). Unfortunately, a detailed discussion of her point of view is lacking. That would have, I believe, added substantially to the book's theoretical perspective.

Chapter 4, 'Morphological Repetition', presents the well-known root and pattern structure of the Semitic languages along with elaborate remarks of the consequences of the repetition of the vocalic pattern with augments and of the root. The latter type of repetition is, in fact, thoroughly investigated, and known in the Semitic linguistic literature as the 'cognate accusative'. One illustration cited is muxt-lafqan (sic) . . . ḥaffan 'differing a difference' = 'differing greatly' (p. 65). The author's examples support her conclusion that this type of repetition 'not only express(es) the argument . . . they are (emphasis mine) the argument, for without repetition there would be no argument' (p. 75). The mode of thinking is, in my view, quite Whorlian pointing to an underlying Arabic 'mind' in the sense of Patai (1973).

The author's short tangential excursion into the Arab grammarians (pp. 71-72) tries to make a case that Arabic morphology was much more scientific than was Arabic syntax. Specifically, Johnstone states that 'Arabic syntax remained in the background' (p. 72). While I certainly agree that the Arab grammarians carefully scrutinized both inflectional and derivational morphology, Owens (1987, 1990), and
Versteegh and Carter (1990), if one considers only a few recent publications, have shown that Arabic syntax was a highly developed and thoroughly investigated scientific discipline.

Chapter 5, ‘Paraphrase and Rhetorical Presentation’, is a good defence of classical contrastive analysis (here the name Robert Lado comes to mind) on the discourse level. The author examined three sentences in English by an Arabic-speaking graduate student (p. 77); however, she found that they were ‘rhetorically quite non-English’ (ibid.) because they were all more or less paraphrases. The examples of the prose quoted demonstrate that repetition and paraphrase are effective rhetorical strategies in Arabic (and also, incidentally, in Biblical Hebrew, pp. 93–94).

Chapter 6, ‘Parallelism and Parataxis’, demonstrates that ‘syntactic parallelism is clearly a cohesive device’ (p. 105). The examples from Nasser’s The Philosophy of Revolution clearly show how the Egyptian and Arab masses could be so moved by the Egyptian President’s strategy of repetitive parallelism.

Chapter 7, ‘Reasons for Repetition: Sources of Constraint on Arabic Discourse’, presents the thesis that repetition and parataxis occur in Arabic because they are mandated by its structure. I agree with the author’s reasoning that the cognate accusative ‘is highly favored by the structure of the language’ (p. 110), and that ‘root repetition plays a role at an abstract level of syntax’ (p. 111).

Johnstone’s book is proof that discourse analysis can reveal aspects of language, thought, and mind and, to be sure, of Weltanschauung. These areas represent but a few of the reasons why cognitive linguistics (in its broadest sense) has recently become so popular.

Linguistics Program
California State University
Fullerton, CA 92634–9480

ENDNOTES

1For some inexplicable reason, Johnstone incorrectly vocalizes his name as al-Husari throughout her work (many times on pp. 5–6 alone). His full name was Mustafa Sāfī ibn Mohammad Ḥiḥiḥ al-Husari (Cleveland 1971:14). His named is spelled correctly, however, when Cleveland (1971) is cited in her bibliography (p. 124). Further, his first named is inconsistently spelled as both Safī and Saāfī (under References, p. 125). Although the book has been carefully proofread, there are some errors to report. Among the more important are in the names of linguists: Given should be Givón (p. 123), S. Gerrits should be Gevitz (p. 125), and Roulton Wells should be Ruon (p. 34, p. 130).
not be as simple as it hitherto appeared to be, it compensates for the restrictions in the structure of the syllable by a suprasegmental freedom – Hualde rightly cites Tokyo Japanese as a language with comparable compensations.


This book is a condensation, revised, and updated version of Barbara Johnstone’s doctoral dissertation (University of Michigan, 1981). It is a study of the rhetorical workings of written expository discourse in contemporary Arabic, placed in the larger framework of the interplay of rhetoric and the emergent structuring of language. ‘Rhetoric produces the structure of language, and language produces rhetoric.’ Barbara Johnstone’s initial motivation for this study was the peculiarity of the writing in essays in English written by Arabic-speaking students. For her study, Barbara Johnstone analyzed text samples of persuasive discourse in Modern Standard Arabic written by students of al-Nasir b. D al-Nasir, and Shawqi al-Dyf.

Chapter 2, ‘Paradigmatic structure and paradigmatic discourse’, provides the cornerstone for what is to follow: in her study Barbara Johnstone is going to sustain her hypothesis that parallelism and paraphrase by which Arabic is structured is not simply reflexes of the fact that ‘the Arabs love repetition’, but that they are also particularly clear and elegant illustrations of how structure and grammar emerge out of quite concrete repetitions in discourse. Syntagmatic structuring (structure of sequences) and paradigmatic structuring (structure of choices) create parallelisms, repetitions of form and repetition of content. The interplay between syntagmatics and paradigms, or paradigmatic patterning by Barbara Johnstone, has a rhetorical function.

In chapter 3 lexical couplets and semantic paradigms are treated. In Arabic, lexical couplets form sets of two roughly synonymous words connected with wa (‘and”). These lexical couplets in Arabic are then separated in a number of groups: modified-modifier couplets (bi-kulli gawwa w-thaqba); implicative couplets (ri’shit khawf wa-ta’ayyub); Hendiadic couplets (al-wahm wali-khayd); metaphorical couplets (kannat hiya al-hall il-kulli mushkila wa-hiya al-dawa’ il-kulli da’); synonym groups (tasawwurit wa-taqlubat); near freezes (al-sham wali-sabb); freezes (a l-qad’ wali-qadar).

In the following chapter 4 morphological repetition, very typical for Arabic, is explained. For the non-Arabist reader the morphological system of Arabic is explained. Arabic is characterized by its root and pattern system. Roots are ordered sets of usually three consonants. Each root has a general meaning which is the common denominator of the meanings of all forms in which it is realized: K-T-B has to do with writing, Q-T-L with killing. Each pattern can be associated with one or more grammatical functions, or meanings: makTIB ‘written’, maQiL ‘killed’, QaBa ‘he wrote’, QaLa ‘he killed’; maKtaB ‘place of writing’-office, maQtaL ‘place of killing’, ‘murderous battle’. Examples are studied of morphological parallelism (repetition of patterns), which mostly consists of synonym groups, and it is pointed out that in Arabic repetition of a morphological pattern often automatically creates repetition on the phonological level; if spoken aloud, the morphologically identical items rhyme.

Repetition of roots is another frequently used phenomenon in Arabic. Johnstone gives examples of the cognate accusative: DaRaSu al-kadab DiRaaSau tanfiayatan (‘I had studied the book a detailed studying [studied in detail]’) (verb form + ma’afar), BaTaD kulla l-BaD (‘distant all distance [as distant as possible]’) (adjective + idafa genitive construction); of root repetition consisting of a verb together with a noun of place: Qam‘a maQamahu (‘he took the place of’); and of root repetition within a single clause and at close syntactic range: taMiyat al-qarn ... bi-QaM asr al-qawmiyyat (‘naming the ... century by the name of “The era of the nationalities”’). She notices that the morphological system of Arabic is highly productive and easily accessible, and that Arabic speakers are very much aware of this system, and use it in punning and creating aphorisms.

Then Johnstone goes on to explain her contention that lexical couplets and root and pattern repetitions are not mere figures of speech, that they are not mere ornaments and deviations from the norm. They not only express the argument, but, via paradigmatic patterning, they are the argument.

At this point, the inclination I noted with Arab students of mine towards using repetition in discourse when wishing to stress a point or an argument while writing in their own language crossed my mind. Their language tends to become what I used to call ‘associative’, redundant, lacking analysis. Words tend to conceal analytical arguments. On this phenomenon Johnstone dwells in a scholarly way in the consequent chapters.

Paraphrase and rhetorical presentation are characteristic of the portions of persuasive texts in which Arab authors set forth their claims. In chapter 5 Johnstone presents examples of paraphrase from a variety of texts, and discusses the rhetorical function of paraphrase, using the notion of rhetorical presence and presentation to explain how elegant paraphrases can sometimes constitute effective arguments. Presence and presentation indicate selecting
certain elements and presenting them to the audience, state a problem, consider it, and then continue restating the problem, discussing and restating it until the reader’s only defense is to concede the importance of the problem. Making certain things present in discourse is a way of arguing about them, and paraphrastic repetition is among the key techniques for creating presence. If the thesis has been stated ‘presently’ enough (often enough, and with enough external markers of presence), it is its own substantiation. Perhaps this analysis helps in explaining the strange, ‘incomplete’ quality of some Arabic arguments, to the eyes of Western readers.

In chapter 6, parallelism and parataxis, repetition of structure (parallelism) and repetition of meaning (paraphrase) are analyzed. A distinction is made between cumulative paraphrase and listing paraphrase. Syntactic parallelism is seen as a cohesive device, it can simultaneously organize information and create information. Cumulative paraphrase is a rhetorical device as well as a text-building device.

In the final chapter of her book, Johnstone turns to questions like: What is particularly Arab, or Arabic, about the way of arguing and of writing in the texts examined for her study? And why is it so different from our traditional, Western ways of thinking about how we persuade? She comes to speak about constraints on discourse, which may be rooted in the language itself as much as they are constraints on thought, rooted in the rhetorical practices of a culture. Some of the Arabic discourse constraints examined by Johnstone are actually rooted in the structure of the Arabic language itself. In other words, there are ways in which Arabic itself, and not just discourse in Arabic, is parallelistic and paratactic. Examples studied in this connection are the cognate accusative, the circumstantial clause (hiš), and the relative clause in Arabic.

While speaking of the difference between argumentative discourse of the Arabic sort and Western argumentation, Johnstone presents several considerations, like: ‘Arabic argumentative style has its roots in the oratory of an oral culture; the purpose of argumentation is simply to convey the truth’. This kind of argumentation can be called presentation. ‘Presentation is the dominant mode of argumentation in hierarchical societies, where truths are not matters for individual decision. In a democracy, there is room for doubt about the truth, and thus for proof, in a more autocratic society there is not’. ‘Arabic argumentation is structured by the notion that it is the presentation of an idea that is persuasive, not the logical structure of proof which Westerners see behind words’. The centrality of the word and the form of discourse is a recurring theme in commentaries about Arabic and the Arab ‘mentality’.

Despite all these considerations by different writers, Johnson claims that ‘paradigmatic patterning has a crucial and universal function in linguistic dynamics’, and that ‘it is more dominant in English and other Western languages than we realize’.

There is no doubt about this, just as there is no doubt about the different way of argumentation in Arabic persuasive discourse. No Westerner who reads Arabic persuasive discourse or listens to it can deny this. Apart from the particularity of the Arabic language with its root and morphological patterning system, repetition in Arabic discourse reflects also the Arabs’ way of persuasive argumentation.

Johnstone’s book presents the Arabist with a clear insight in what goes on, or what probably goes on, in Arabic persuasive discourse. Her study is structured very systematically, the examples are clear, and analyzed in a scholarly way. Her hypotheses and contentions for Arabic are always placed in a broader, theoretical context of general text analysis, both linguistically and culturally. To myself, being almost exclusively occupied with teaching the practical use of Modern Standard Arabic, Johnstone’s study in many respects has provided a deeper insight in automatically noticed aspects of argumentation in Arabic discourse, and of the role of and the (probable) reasons for repetition in it.

Hogeschool Maastricht,
Faculty of Translation and Interpreting

MARTIN CUSTERS


Sociolinguística para hispanoamericanos es un manual que los hispanos interesados en esta disciplina llevábamos esperando mucho tiempo. Se trata de un libro de texto perfectamente estructurado y escrito con una extraordinaria claridad, ideado para estudiantes hispanoamericanos, pero válido para cualquier persona que se dedique al estudio de la lengua española. En él se nos ofrece una gran cantidad de información y de ejemplos tomados, especialmente, del mundo americano, además de una valiosa bibliografía básica que nos permite profundizar en todos los temas que se explican, aunque, en algunas ocasiones, no se recoge al final la nota bibliográfica correspondiente a la cita que aparece en el texto. La autora resume, con gran maestría, gran parte de las investigaciones realizadas dentro del marco teórico y metodológico de las tres grandes corrientes sociolingüísticas (sociolinguística variazionista, sociología del lenguaje y etnografía de la comunicación), siguiendo una progresión temática lógica que confiere unidad a la disciplina y al manual.

El libro que nos ocupa está dividido en nueve capítulos, a través de los cuales se nos explica en qué consiste la diversidad lingüística, cuál es la
Ladefoged used some made-up data in their textbooks, I propose that this format finally be abandoned since so much reliable descriptive information on so many languages is now readily available in the literature.

To sum up, Roger’s book is well organized and well designed (e.g., it makes excellent use of bold face). I recommend it to instructors who would like to use a recently published textbook instead of an older one. It contains, as I have already pointed out, all the usual material one has come to expect in treatises such as these plus some extras as duly noted. Like most books, though, there are a few printing errors to report: *fricatives* for fricatives (319), *grammer* for grammar (369), etc.

---


Reviewed by ALAN S. KAYE

This is a revised version of the author’s University of Michigan (1981) Ph.D. dissertation. As she so eloquently puts it at the very outset, her book can be viewed as applied linguistics, pragmatics, ethnography of rhetoric, and linguistic theory (p. 1). I find this an accurate assessment, but I would add that it is certainly also a contribution to discourse analysis. The tome carefully investigates repetition, parallelism, and paraphrase in Modern Standard Arabic as components of so-called ‘persuasive’ discourse. It is based primarily on an essay by the well-known Iraqi writer, Sati’ al-Husri (1880–1968); however, it should be noted that her data were also drawn from the writings of Egypt’s Gamal Abd al-Nasser and Shawqi Dayf. This is all explained in Chapter 1, ‘Introduction’, in which we also learn how the author became intrigued with the workings of Arabic discourse (actually, the circumstances result, quite unexpectedly, from teaching English to Arab students).
Versteegh and Carter (1990), if one considers only a few recent publications, have shown that Arabic syntax was a highly developed and thoroughly investigated scientific discipline.

Chapter 5, 'Paraphrase and Rhetorical Presentation', is a good defence of classical contrastive analysis (here the name Robert Lado comes to mind) on the discourse level. The author examined three sentences in English by an Arabic-speaking graduate student (p. 77); however, she found that they were 'rhetorically quite non-English' (ibid.) because they were all more or less paraphrases. The examples of the prose quoted demonstrate that repetition and paraphrase are effective rhetorical strategies in Arabic (and also, incidentally, in Biblical Hebrew, pp. 93–94).

Chapter 6, 'Parallelism and Parataxis', demonstrates that 'syntactic parallelism is clearly a cohesive device' (p. 105). The examples from Nasser's The Philosophy of Revolution clearly show how the Egyptian and Arab masses could be so moved by the Egyptian President's strategy of repetitive parallelism.

Chapter 7, 'Reasons for Repetition: Sources of Constraint on Arabic Discourse', presents the thesis that repetition and parataxis occur in Arabic because they are mandated by its structure. I agree with the author's reasoning that the cognate accusative 'is highly favored by the structure of the language' (p. 110), and that 'root repetition plays a role at an abstract level of syntax' (p. 111).

Johnstone's book is proof that discourse analysis can reveal aspects of language, thought, and mind and, to be sure, of Weltanschauung. These areas represent but a few of the reasons why cognitive linguistics (in its broadest sense) has recently become so popular.

Linguistics Program
California State University
Fullerton, CA 92634–9480

ENDNOTES

1For some inexplicable reason, Johnstone incorrectly vocalizes his name as al-Husari throughout her work (many times on pp. 5–6 alone). His full name was Mustafa Salihi Muhammad al-Husari (Cleveland 1971:14). His named is spelled correctly, however, when Cleveland (1971) is cited in her bibliography (p. 124). Further, his first named is inconsistently spelled as both Salihi and Salihi (under References, p. 126). Although the book has been carefully proofread, there are some errors to report. Among the more important are in the names of linguists: Givon should be Givon (p. 123), S. Givon should be Gevitz (p. 125), and Roulon Wells should be Rulon (p. 34, p. 130).