

Argumentation in Arabic Heritage Texts

الحجاج في النص التراثي العربي

Mohammed Atallah*

Received: 22/04/2024

Accepted: 07/05/2024

Published:30/06/2024

Abstract:

Argumentation is considered one of the most important subject topics that scholars of language, philosophy, and Kalam, in the Arabic heritage, have written about. This topic has been taken quite versatily taking after the background and ideology of the authors. This has led to the diversification of the term and the increase of its richness by means of argumentation, evidence, persuasion, dispute, debate, or else. This topic has received a great deal of attention of scholars of religion and language. The article tackles the content of argumentation according to the Arabic heritage whether from the theoretical aspect as a historical pursuit or some studies which have been empirical in nature. Finally, the article aims at reaching a set of scientific outcomes and results.

Keywords: argumentation; evidence; dispute; debate; Arabic heritage.

ملخص:

يعتبر موضوع الحجاج من أهم المواضيع التي كتب فيها علماء اللغة والفلسفة وعلم الكلام في التراث العربي، وقد أخذ هذا الموضوع تنوعا واسعا في الاستعمال وذلك على

*University of Eloued, City elchat Eloued, atallah-mohammed@univ-eloued.dz

خلفية من يكتب فيه وأيديولوجيته الفكرية، الشيء الذي أدى إلى تنوع المصطلح وثرائه، من حجاج وبرهان وإقناع وجدل ومناظرة وغيرها، كما وقد أخذ هذا الموضوع اهتماما كبيرا لدى علماء الدين ومنه علماء اللغة، وسنقف في هذه المقالة على فحوى الحجاج كما جاء في التراث العربي سواء في شقه النظري كتتبع تاريخي أو بعض الدراسات التي تخصصت في جانب التطبيق، على أن نخلص في نهاية الدراسة إلى مجموعة من المخرجات والنتائج العلمية.

كلمات مفتاحية: الحجاج، البرهان، الجدل، المناظرة، التراث العربي.

*** **

Corresponding author: *Atallah Mohammed,*
atallah-mohammed@univ-eloued.dz

Argumentative discourses are diverse whether they were rhetorical, linguistic, political, or philosophical. This leads to the realisation that the theory of argumentation is chained to different aspects as opposed to only being a linguistic manifestation. In that respect, it is also related to psychological, sociological, and cultural aspects as well as other aspects that contribute to the production of the linguistic argumentative discourse. Argumentation in Arabic heritage has gone through a lot of stages that are analogous to the etymological stages that a given term passes through, starting with the terms of dispute and debate and on with evidence, persuasion, then argumentation.

1- Argumentation and Debates

It is possible that argumentation in Arabic heritage first emerged in a dispute and debate format within numerous

sciences. Debates, as have always existed in Arabic heritage, is a dialogue between two parties or a dispute between two opponents over a single topic from two different points of view with each party having mechanisms and arguments that he may use to defend their position or attack the other'¹.

Debates have been present ever since the first century of Hijra when a dispute over belief occurred between Muslims and non-Muslims which lasted until the Umayyad Period. Such disputes were engaged by followers of political doctrines and theological, atheistic, and heretic denominations².

During the Abbasid Period, debates witnessed the peak of their prosperity and advancement given the nature of the Abbasid society at the time. It has known a mental and epistemological openness across multiple levels in knowledge, religions, denominations, and philosophies. Many theological, jurisprudential, syntactic, and literary debates took place then. Furthermore, many debates were created on behalf of debaters such as the ones that were written by Al-Jahiz as well as Abu Hayyan Al-Tawhidi, where ideas were transferred to arguing people, turning abstract meanings to living experiences³.

Debate speech has been, and is still considered, one of the most important kinds of speech that a sender would produce for the purpose of persuasion. It manifested the quality of deliberative competence and the capacity for implementation according to the contextual requirements in order to reach the objective of the overall speech. "Persuasion is the foremost objective of speech that occurs among those with different leanings,⁴" whether within the field of linguistic, philosophical, religious denominative debates, or else.

Society in the Abbasid Period was leaning more to the ancient Athenian society with regards to debate practices in terms of openness to diversity. Debates were practiced across all levels so that they became a celebrated game that was largely practiced, showcasing prowess and capability for sound or weak deduction as would happen with sophistry.

A debater would be an opponent to the speaker in what he said with purpose of persuading the listener, comprising an obstacle to speaker in persuasion; or he would be an explicit contender, following along the speaker's words and questioning his statements and their meanings, so that his own statement is more persuasive⁵.

Kalam would be soon established. It is a science of itself emerging out of the difference in the origins of belief. It required its practitioners to be highly abled in disagreement and contention, prevailing against opponents and showing the corruption of their opinions and the incoherence of their beliefs⁶.

Argumentation manifested most clearly among practitioners of this science since they introduced methods of dialogue, sophistry, evidence, proofs, introductions, and syllogism. Hence, argumentation is the pillar and foundation of Kalam.

Ibrahim Salama is one who made the link between mutakallimun and sophists in his book: Arab Rhetoric between Aristotle and Greece. He regarded the Arabs as “people who sophists disputed with in their dialogues and disputes and some of their sermons that were pushed forward with political aspects and motives for revenge, among whom the signs of sophistry in disputes between mutakallimun are most pronounced⁷.”

Perhaps the resemblance between sophistic argument and mutakallimun seems clearer in this sense which has been tackled by a lot of mutakallimun which is formal logic, as Aristotle called it.

In literalist argumentation, arguers use fallacious methods. They may even distort discourse and diverge off the context or twist facts. In other words, “to argue in favour of the blameworthy until it elevates him to the status of the praiseworthy, and the praiseworthy until he is portrayed in the image of the blameworthy, that is the ingenuity of formal argumentation.⁸” Of note, formal argumentation was practiced by mutakallimun and other orators in the first and second centuries AH.

Representation and implications are two elements that comprise persuasion as the significance of implications in discourse is similar to that of evidence in sciences and syllogism in argumentation.

Implications are utterances that are comprised of two interlocked introductions with persuasion resulting according to their result. Persuasion is achieved when the speaker hides one of the two introductions, refraining from stating it, thus implications are implied⁹.

Ibn Rushd tackled circumlocution in terms of argumentation and discourse, considering them to be proportional. He said, “The art of rhetoric is suitable for the art of argumentation as both of them serve the same purpose, which is addressing others...¹⁰” even if Arabic discourse was partially a syllogistic product that sought persuasion while the persuasion occurring within the listener was the ultimate objective behind the oration¹¹.

It takes a glance at the Arabic heritage to distinguish many forms of argumentation of which:

1. An argument that depends on using fallacious methods with the purpose of trapping and convicting the opponent, which in turn expresses the arguer's poor disposition. One of the most famous examples of this is the famous debate that occurred between the Sunni scholar Al-Awza'I in 175 AH and Ghaylan Al-Dimashqi who was considered one of the first mutakallimun in the case of fate. On the other hand, there is an argumentation or a debate that rely on fallacious methods during which different meanings are negotiated, praising one thing and its contradiction despite having good intent for the purposes of laughter and sarcasm. Some examples of which can be found in the book Al-Bukhala for Al-Jahiz.
2. There is such argumentation that simply seeks showcasing skill and capacity for reasoning such as the debate of Abd Al-Malik Ibn Salah in slandering counselling.
3. There is another type of argumentation and debate that relies on mind and logic, seeking the truth and winning for one opinion over the other without despotism. Here, the argument relied upon is the mind. The dialogues of Al-Tawhidi represent the peak of this form of argumentation¹².

2- Ancient Arabic Rhetoric and Argumentation

Hammadi Sammoud perceived this stage with the consideration that the rhetoric of argumentation is “the most accurate topic of the rhetoric lessons today and one of the most important to us¹³.” That is because it is considered the most

important manifestation of insight overlapping as the rhetoric of argumentation is based on making use of all neighboring supportive elements in understanding and delivering speech.

Arabic rhetoric, however, remained confined to expression and style for a long time without extending or analysing the attempts that tackled argument and evidence since Al-Jahiz and even Al-Jurjani.

Rereading this heritage is enough to reorder the Arabic theoretical rhetorical elements in a way that is different from the past, highlighting a clear conception for the rhetoric of poetry and even the rhetoric of argumentation. That is because Arabic rhetoric in the writing era responded to certain needs that emerged from particular intellectual, ideological, and sociological contexts¹⁴.

Furthermore, ancient Arab rhetoricians attributed the miraculous implications of the Quranic text to form, structure and speech. It had not occurred to them that arguments were also a miracle of speech that it was making, even the politics that it produces in terms of order that combines with form and structure, so that the text conveys its meaning to the listener¹⁵.

Arabic rhetoric emerged from the embrace of poetry. The favour of poetry on rhetoric is by means of form as opposed to its capacity for telling the truth and augmenting. Since poetry – being the most predominant form in rhetoric and the stronghold of its literary value – derives its entity from its form and its merit from its structure. It is no longer surprising that rhetoric in discourse relies on methods of expression rather than methods of evidence.

Arabic rhetoric according to classical or traditional sense – other than being a manifestation for reasons that are connected to the discourse form – is “an rhetoric of expression and phrase, not an rhetoric of speech and the policy of promoting discourse and its reception by hearts¹⁶.” Hence a question is posed: has Arabic rhetoric been confined to this field – phrase and form alone – without reference to other characteristics of discourse, which means the problematic of its interpretation – without reference to the other characteristics of discourse – that are the discourse content and the relevant literary context? Or does the issue lie in reconsidering and researching heritage rhetoric texts? That is, the issue of interpreting them, then the idea of researching rhetoric and argumentation came to be. “Rather, it lies in argumentation and its relevance to rhetoric since it eventually seems immersed in rhetoric heritage according to how it is commonly viewed¹⁷.”

Despite some rhetoricians’ awareness – as Al-Jahiz as will be seen – of the issue of argumentation and its significance in speech, subsequent rhetoricians and critics have not given this theory its due of study and analysis. Instead, they have been preoccupied with contemplating expression and its subsequent variations and aspects until rhetoric became that of expression rather than discourse, and one of sentences rather than speech¹⁸. In spite of rhetoric being concerned with the study of speech as it is considered a sequence of sentences based on influential strategies, starting with the rhythm of the sound, and ending with the text as arguments join along an ideological system and a verbal strategy which collectively constitute discourse.

When then have they neglected this to such degree knowing that they were able to analyse its issues altogether and

demonstrating how it functions in speech? This is due to many reasons with the most important of which being:

1. The bond of argumentation to oration among Greeks before them. The objective behind argumentation is realising short-term success and gains, especially among sophists, which contradicts Islamic principles.

2. Mutakallimun and logicians were concerned with the issues of argumentation as a way to prove the validity of their beliefs and refuting beliefs of other denominations. For this reason, it was taught from the evidential and argumentative aspects.

3. They presented the topics of argumentation under different names in a concise manner. They have not dedicated a single term for it to be known with as they have done with the terms of the other rhetorical topics such as simile, metaphors, and other literary tools. They have not encompassed all its topics under one name, which was proof for their unclear vision towards argumentation as a strategy that function in discourse through inherent means and methods.

Additionally, they have made informing the primary goal of discourse. As for persuasion, which was a result of argumentation and its ultimate objective, it ranked second. That is the reason it was confined to arguments and debates¹⁹. The two were the most important argumentative topics among ancient Arab rhetoricians, and they tackled them as was mentioned earlier from the perspective of understanding and explanation, and that those argumentative signs do not constitute a full awareness with the theory of argumentation.

3- Argumentative Concpetions in Argumentation and Debate.

3.1. Al-Jahiz and the Distinctive View of Argumentation

Al-Jahiz addressed argumentation and the issues that encompass it in several instances. On that note, some Indians said that: the essence of argumentation is perceiving the argument, and recognising where opportunities lie. In another context, he said, Sahl Ibn Harun used to say, “the politics of rhetoric are more challenging than rhetoric itself²⁰.”

Upon examining the definitions of rhetoric that Al-Jahiz provided in *Al-Bayan wa-al-Tabyin*, it is undoubtedly evident that rhetoric is indeed argumentation. That is because each boundary that Al-Jahiz has demonstrated addressed one of the major issues of argumentation, and one of its working mechanisms in discourse: distinction and connection, correcting divisions and perceiving the argument, and seeking the appropriate moment among other issues.

It is known that the goal of argumentation is persuading hearts. Al-Jahiz has addressed this goal by Islamic morals that ensure it does not deviate off honesty and truth so that argumentative means are not used in achieving this goal deceptively, which results in perceiving a false case for a true one. “It is not sought to silence the opponent with that which he has no knowledge of, and an argument is made so long it is true, no victory is made except with justice, and no equivocation is employed²¹.”

Some of Al-Jahiz’s opinions can be extracted in light of rhetorical argumentation, especially through his book *Al-Bayan wa-al Tabyin* as follows:

1- Al-Jahiz attributed the functions of Al-Bayan to three basic functions:

1. Informative epistemological function (state of neutrality) where a case is presented for the manner of informing, with the purpose of explaining.

2. Influential function: (state of difference) where the matter is presented in a persuasive manner, winning hearts.

3. Argumentative function: (state of dispute) where the matter is presented in a manner of objection and necessity, shifting from the influential function.

2- Al-Jahiz addressed an inherent case in rhetorical discourse which is the rhetorical stance. He views that “the speaker should know the proportions of meanings and make balance between them, the levels of the speakers, and the magnitude of the situations²².” For in the beginning, he wanted to clarify – for every certain class in society according to the its educational, and occupational levels – that the meaning spoken must be considered as every social class has its own lexicon, which the speaker must consider. As for his discussions over of the situations, he addresses the occasions of speech. The listener may be one but when the situation changes, meaning changes accordingly. Al-Jahiz’s efforts and special theoretical conceptions of argumentation are undoubtedly significant within the temporal context in which they have been said, which was the third Hijri century. However, they remain partial conceptions that do not rise to the level of a whole theory or even to the project of one²³.

Additionally, nothing is worth mentioning on the theoretical level was found in the Arabic heritage and culture after Al-Jahiz. Rhetorical studies ventured into other formal aspects which “deprived rhetoric of much, making us forget its discussive aspect associated with the theory of persuasion and expressed through contention, argumentation, and debates...²⁴”

Dr. Mohammed Al-Amri has argued that the most complete interpretation for Al-Jahiz’s conceptions was the one done by Ibn-Wahb in his book *Al-Burhan fi Wujuh Al-Bayan*.

3.2. Argumentation according to Ibn Wahb (argument and dispute)

Arguments are a persuasive justificatory discourse as it falls under the categories of causes among all other elements it is responsible for according to Abi Al-Hacen Ishaq Ibn Wahb (337 Hijri year). Since disputes occurs when two arguers’ beliefs disagree while emphasising the importance of moral consideration to regulate the rhetorical stances of debate²⁵. What can be understood from Ibn Wahb’s distinction between commended argumentation and reprehensible argumentation is “is but a distinction that is regarded as the presence of this account or its absence.²⁶” Ibn Wahb stipulated important perquisites to the etiquettes of argumentation which leads its adherents to transcendence, exaltation, and victory.

Ibn Wahb’s work in argumentation is considered by many historians to be one of the most important attempts at studying it. Thus, it is closer to a theoretical project.

Dr. Mohammed Al-Abd stands at this important attempt at studying argumentation²⁷, interpreting it in light of modern argumentation theories, presenting the sum of Ibn Wahb’s work in argumentation and debate as follows:

1. Ibn Wahb presented an accurate definition for argumentation and debate in which he pinpointed its purpose and its occurrence in controversial matters as both argumentation and debate are speech intended to establish an argument where the disputants differ...²⁸
2. Debate is a persuasive justificatory discourse due to its occurrence in a category of causes.
3. Even if debate was different, it is imperative that moral considerations are taken into account.
4. Some of what Ibn Wahb has mentioned in debate and argumentation, and the manners of debate can be viewed from the perspective of argumentative communicational strategies, which importantly include²⁹:
 - The disputant's constructing his introduction on what he and his opponent agree upon.
 - Not to accept a statement without argument and not to refute it without a cause.
 - To address people the way they know and understand, not to deviate from the circumstances that speech necessitates, and this is a consideration for the addressee and the context of speech according to his understanding as well as his social and scientific class.
5. The quote of Ibn Wahb "indeed, debate occurs due to a cause,³⁰" aligns with what the contemporary argumentative theory states, for creating a cause is a means to develop claims, therefore, convincing reasons are the reason to make the listener grant his allegiance.

As such, after this overview on argumentation in Arabic heritage texts, it is clear that there is no accurate definition to the concepts pertaining to argumentation and debate. Furthermore, there is no regulation to the mechanisms used in the process of persuasion, which leads us to make further efforts that begin with either agreement or disagreement, in an attempt to complete the lacking aspects.

It is not unfathomable that Ibn Wahb Najd Hazim Al-Cartaginian has not gone far with his view of this argumentative case³¹. The most important elements that can be extracted from his general theory Imagination and Persuasion are:

1. Its distinction to two sides of speech that have to do with the manner of presenting the topic as either being informative or evident-argumentative as if the distinction is made to distinguish between two types of texts: narrative and argumentative³².
2. Its distinction between two methods for persuading the opponent: disguising and enticement³³. Disguising “in what is attributed to statements while enticement is by presenting the speaker themselves in a manner that is inclined to be accepted or by charming the addressee and endearing him by endorsing him so that his speech becomes acceptable to the judge while his opponent’s speech is not³⁴.”

4. CONCLUSION

What remains in the end of this article is to point to results and outcomes. In the Arabic heritage text, many persuasion methods have been used as arguments. Some of which belongs

to what is called logical persuasion methods like syllogism, examples, and witnesses while others belong to what is called lingual persuasive methods which is tackled to the fourth part of this research that has been dedicated to studying methods of persuasion.

Generally, among Arabs, mutakallimun and logicians were interested in argumentation so that they prove the validity of their beliefs and refute the beliefs of others. Argumentation among them was represented in debates, arguments and proof as they have discussed it under different names as there was no unified term for all of them. This is evidence to the obscurity they had with regards to argumentation. Moreover, they defaulted to making informing the primary purpose of argumentation as opposed to persuasion which was considered secondary and confined to topics of debate, evidence, and reasoning.

5. Bibliography:

- ¹ - ينظر: هدى وصفي، في فن الحجج والجدل، دار الهاني للطباعة والنشر، القاهرة، (د ط)، 2002، ص 44.
- ² - أحمد أمين، المناظرات في التراث الأدبي العربي إلى نهاية القرن الرابع، المكتبة الأزهرية للتراث، القاهرة، ط1، 1995، ص29.
- ³ - راجع تفصيل ذلك: أحمد أمين، المناظرات في التراث الأدبي العربي، ص 28 وما بعدها.
- ⁴ - عبد الهادي بن ظافر الشهري، استراتيجيات الخطاب - مقارنة لغوية تداولية -، الكتاب الجديد المتحدة، عمان، الأردن، ط1، 2004، ص 449.
- ⁵ - ينظر: أبو نصر الفراءى، كتاب في المنطق: الخطابة، تحقيق: محمد سليم سالم، الهيئة المصرية العامة للكتاب، القاهرة (د ط)، 1976، ص 29.
- ⁶ - ينظر: حمادي صمود، مقدمة في الخلفية النظرية للمصطلح، ضمن: أهم نظريات الحجج في التقاليد الغربية من أرسطو إلى اليوم، سلسلة آداب كلية الآداب منوبة، تونس، المطبعة الرسمية للجمهورية التونسية (د.ط.)، (د.ت.)، ص 24.

- ⁷- إبراهيم سلامة، بلاغة العرب بين أرسطو واليونان، ص 28. نقلا عن: هدى وصفي، في فن الحجج والجدل، ص 26.
- ⁸- صلاح فضل، بلاغة الخطاب وعلم النص، عالم المعرفة، الكويت، ع164، أغسطس / آب 1992، ص 155.
- ⁹- ينظر: أبو نصر الفراءى، كتاب في المنطق: الخطابة، تحقيق: محمد سليم سالم، الهيئة المصرية العامة للكتاب، القاهرة (د.ط.)، 1976، ص 31.
- ¹⁰- ابن رشد، تلخيص الخطابة، تحقيق: عبد الرحمن بدوي، دار القلم، بيروت، (د ط)، (د ت)، ص 3.
- ¹¹- ينظر: أبو نصر الفراءى، كتاب في المنطق: الخطابة، ص 7.
- ¹²- ينظر: هدى وصفي، في فن الحجج والجدل، ص (48 - 50).
- ¹³- حمادي صمود، من تجليات الخطاب البلاغي، دار قرطاج للنشر والتوزيع، تونس، ط1، 1999، ص 8.
- ¹⁴- ينظر: محمد سالم ولد محمد الأمين، الحجج في البلاغة المعاصرة، معهد البحوث والدراسات العربية، القاهرة، أطروحة دكتوراه (مخطوط)، 2002، ص 287.
- ¹⁵- ينظر: حمادي صمود، من تجليات الخطاب البلاغي، ص 110.
- ¹⁶- حمادي صمود، مقدمة في الخلفية النظرية للمصطلح، ص 5.
- ¹⁷- المرجع نفسه، ص 6.
- ¹⁸- ينظر: المرجع نفسه، ص 20.
- ¹⁹- ينظر: علي محمد علي سليمان، كتابة الجاحظ في ضوء نظريات الحجج، المؤسسة العربية للدراسات والنشر، بيروت، لبنان، ط1، 2010، ص (53 - 56).
- ²⁰- أبو عثمان عمرو بن بحر الجاحظ، البيان والتبيين، تح: عبد السلام هارون، مكتبة الخانجي، القاهرة، ط7، 1998، ج1، ص 88.
- ²¹- المرجع نفسه، ج1، ص 197.
- ²²- محمد العمري، البلاغة العربية أصولها وامتداداتها، إفريقيا الشرق، الدار البيضاء، (دط)، 1999، ص 213.
- ²³- راجع تفصيل ذلك: هدى وصفي، في فن الحجج والجدل، ص 62، 63. وكذا: علي محمد علي سليمان، كتابة الجاحظ في ضوء نظريات الحجج، ص (53 - 56).
- ²⁴- عبد الهادي بن ظافر الشهري، استراتيجيات الخطاب، ص 454.
- ²⁵- إسحاق بن وهب، البرهان في وجوه البيان، تح: أحمد مطلوب وخديجة الحديثي، طباعة ونشر جامعة بغداد، ط1، 1967، ص 225.
- ²⁶- محمد العبد، النص الحجاجي العربي: دراسة في وسائل الإقناع، فصول، مجلة النقد الأدبي، ع60، صيف - خريف 2002، ص 46.
- ²⁷- قدم الدكتور محمد العبد هذه الدراسة في كتابه النص والخطاب والاتصال، وقد رأينا أن هذه الدراسة هي الأقرب إلى فهم ما ذهب إليه ابن وهب في ظل نظرية الحجج، على أن هناك بعض الدراسات

الأخرى، غير أنها لم نوردتها لكونها لم تأت بجديد في مناقشة هذه الفكرة. من ذلك: بلقاسم حماد، آليات التواصل في الخطاب القرآني، قسم اللغة العربية وآدابها، جامعة باتنة، الجزائر، أطروحة دكتوراه (مخطوط)، 2005.

²⁸- ابن وهب، البرهان في وجوه البيان، تح: حفني محمد شرف، مطبعة الرسالة، القاهرة، ط1، (د ت)، ص 175.

²⁹- ينظر: محمد العبد، النص والخطاب والاتصال، الأكاديمية الحديثة للكتاب، القاهرة، ط1، 2005، ص 195، 196.

³⁰- ابن وهب، البرهان في وجوه البيان، ص 225.

³¹- ينظر: أبو الحسن حازم القرطاجني، منهاج البلغاء وسراج الأدباء، تح: محمد الحبيب بن الخوجة، دار الغرب الإسلامي، بيروت، ط3، 1936، ص 61.

³²- ينظر: محمد العبد، النص والخطاب والاتصال، ص 197.

³³- ينظر: المرجع نفسه، ص 197.

³⁴- باسل حاتم، نموذج المجادلة من البلاغة العربية، بحث مترجم في: بحوث في تحليل الخطاب الإقناعي. اختيار وترجمة د. محمد العبد، دار الفكر العربي، القاهرة (1419 هـ - 1999)، ص 39. نقلا عن: محمد العبد، النص والخطاب والاتصال، ص 198.