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# CB-5: Reversal of Word Order

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## Definition

This category includes rhetorical devices that reverse the structure or order of words in a sentence, often to create symmetry, contrast, or emphasis. Unlike lexical contrasts such as CB-1: Antithesis (al-ṭibāq), these devices work at the level of syntax and word arrangement.[1]

## 1) al-Inʿikās al-Tarkībī

Reversing or exchanging two terms or ideas, often to highlight contrast or paradox.[2] It may overlap with chiasmus and antimetabole.

**Example**

> لا مجدَ في الدنيا لمن قلَّ مالُهُ، ولا مالَ في الدنيا لمن قلَّ مجدُه
>
> There is no glory in this world for him whose wealth is little,
> and no wealth for him whose glory is little.
>
> - Al Mutanabbī

### Infobox

**CB-5: Reversal of Word Order**

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## 2) Chiasmus

A construction involving the inversion of structure, but not necessarily the exact words. A reverse-parallel structure (A:B → B':A').

**Examples**

> He knowingly led and we followed blindly.

> She has all my love; my heart belongs to her.

> He led bravely, and bravely we followed.

## 3) Antimetabole

A more strict construction than chiasmus, where the order of words or concepts is strictly mirrored in reverse (A:B -> B:A structure).

**Examples**

> When the going gets tough, the tough get going.

> Fair is foul, and foul is fair

## 4) al-Muqābala al-ʿAksiyya

A structured contrast involving two or more pairs of opposites, typically mirrored in reverse. The mirrored construction can be used to reverse the polarities of meanings, causing not only a syntactic but also a semantic inversion.[3]

**Example**

> يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ
>
> Quran 30:19
> He brings the living out of the dead and brings the dead out of the living

## See also

- CB-1: Antithesis (al-ṭibāq) - lexical contrasts

## References

1. ↑ Hussein Abdul-Raof, *Arabic Rhetoric: A Pragmatic Analysis* (Oxford: Routledge, 2006), 247-248, ISBN 9780415386098. DOI: 10.4324/9780203965399

2. ↑ W. P. Heinrichs, 'Rhetorical Figures', in *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, ed. Julie Scott Meisami and Paul Starkey (London: Routledge, 1998), 657, ISBN 0415068088. DOI: 10.4324/9780203020425

3. ↑ Aḥmad al-Hāshimī, *Jawāhir al-Balāgha fī al-Maʿānī wa-al-Bayān wa-al-Badīʿ* (Windsor: Hindāwī Foundation, 2019), 366, ISBN 9781527316386.

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