

CG-1: Rhetorical Shift

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From The Encyclopedia of Arabic Rhetoric

Definition

Rhetorical Shift, or Reference Switching is when the communicator changes between:

- Persons: first person, second person, third person
- Tenses: past tense, present tense, future, imperative
- Morphology: verb, active participle, passive participle
- Sentence type: verbal sentence, nominal sentence

This shift keeps the addressee engaged and provides stylistic diversity.^{[1][2][3][4]}

When the shift occurs between second and third person, it may overlap with [Apostrophe](#).

The term Rhetorical Shift may also apply to the use of a parenthetical aside for rhetorical purposes.^[5]

Example

When Salim has lost his key:

سليم: أين مفتاحي؟ كان في جيبِي. أين وضعت المفتاح يا سليم؟
كيف يفقد الرجل مفتاح بيته؟ تعال يا سالم ... جد المفتاح بسرعة!

Salim: Where is my key? It was in my pocket. Where did you put the key, Salim? How does a man lose his house key? Come on Salim... find the key quickly!

Explanation

Salim refers to himself in the first person (“my key”), then the second person (“you”), and then the third person (“a man”). There are changes in verb from past tense (“was”), to present tense (“does”) to imperative (“find”).

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References

1.

↑

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2.

↑

Hussein Abdul-Raof, *[Arabic Rhetoric: A Pragmatic Analysis](#)* [↗](#) [PDF](#) (Oxford: Routledge, 2006), 257-258, [ISBN 9780415386098](#). DOI: [10.4324/9780203965399](#) [↗](#)

3.

↑

Ayman Amin Abd Al-Ghani, *[Al-Kāff fī al-Balāgha: Al-Bayān, wa al-Badī’ wa al-Ma’ānī](#)* (Cairo: Dār al-Tawfīqiyya lil-Turāth, 2011), 255-260.

4.

↑

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5.

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