A-13: Brevity, Verbosity and Moderation

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From The Encyclopedia of Arabic Rhetoric

Definition

The lexical item under investigation should demonstrate a length which is appropriate to the context and the communicative needs demanded of it.[1][2][3][4][5][6]

Brevity and succinctness may be achieved by:

- Using precise words which convey expansive meanings and
- Omission of lexical items which are not essential to conveying the intended meaning, which could be inferred, or which are already known to the addressee.

Conversely, it may be appropriate to be **verbose** in order to achieve a rhetorical outcome. This may occur:

- When more information, details or clarification are required to be transmitted (الإيضاح بعد الإبهام),
- When further clarification is required,
- As a means of affirmation of the information already supplied,
- To influence the addressee by appealing to the addressee's emotions.
- With parenthetical asides (الاعتراض)
- With protective qualification (الاحتراس)
- In tail-end emphasis (التذييل)
- In purposeful repetition (التكرار)
- In specifying a particular after a general (ذكر الخاص بعد العام)
- In elaborating on a general statement (التفصيل بعد الإجمال)

A text is said to show **moderation** when there is a balance between verbosity and brevity.

الإيجاز والإطناب والمساواة

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Category	Sentence Construction & Syntactical Stylistics ('ilm al-ma'ānī)
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Example

> هذه الجامعة من أفضل الجامعات في البلاد بالنسبة للطالب. فاز نائب المستشار مؤخرًا بجائزة نوبل.
>
> For a student, this is one of the best universities in the country. The Vice-Chancellor recently won a Nobel prize.

Explanation

This is an example of Elaboration after Generality verbosity (تفصيل بعد إجمال). The Vice-Chancellor winning a Nobel Prize does not directly affect the quality of teaching but is a reflection of the excellence of the institution overall.

See also

- A-14: Ellipsis which applies at the word level, whereas Brevity, Verbosity and Moderation apply on the sentence or paragraph level.

References

1. ↑ Hussein Abdul-Raof, *Arabic Rhetoric: A Pragmatic Analysis* 📄 (Oxford: Routledge, 2006), 188-192, ISBN 9780415386098. DOI: 10.4324/9780203965399 ⧉
2. ↑ Ayman Amin Abd Al-Ghani, *Al-Kāfī fī al-Balāgha: Al-Bayān, wa al-Badīʿ wa al-Maʿānī* (Cairo: Dār al-Tawfīqiyya lil-Turāth, 2011), 381-397.
3. ↑ Hashim Muhammad, *First Steps to Understanding Balaghah* (Leicester: Al-Qalam Publications, 2016), 42-46, ISBN 9780957653474.
4. ↑ G.J.H. van Gelder, 'Iʿjāz', in *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature* ⧉, ed. Julie Scott Meisami and Paul Starkey (London: Routledge, 1998), 390, ISBN 0415068088.
5. ↑ Aḥmad al-Hāshimī, *Jawāhir al-Balāgha fī al-Maʿānī wa-al-Bayān wa-al-Badīʿ* (Windsor: Hindāwī Foundation, 2019), 223–240, ISBN 9781527316386.
6. ↑ Basil Hatim, *Arabic Rhetoric: The Pragmatics of Deviation from Linguistic Norms* ⧉, LINCOM Studies in Communication 04 (Munich: Lincom Europa, 2010), 198-231, ISBN 9780415386098.

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