

Linguistic Patterns in Algerian Poetry: Selected Models

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Abstract

The third and fourth centuries of the Hijra witnessed intensive scholarly activity across a wide range of disciplines, most notably in linguistic and rhetorical studies. Indeed, Arab intellectual activity — from the appearance of al-Khalil ibn Ahmad's dictionary *Kitab al-ʿAyn* (d. 175 AH) and Sibawayh's *al-Kitab* (d. 180 AH), through to the rhetorical scholarship of ʿAbd al-Qahir al-Jurjani (d. 471 AH) — was consistently directed toward delimiting the concepts of Arabic and mapping their boundaries and scope. The earliest inquiries within this tradition addressed speech (*kalam*), the single word, and the sentence, which remain the essential concepts underpinning the present syntactic study. This raises the question that guides the present inquiry: how is the verbal sentence constructed, and what is its relationship to syntactic composition?

Keywords: Arabic language; verb; composition; structure; sentence.

Introduction

The third and fourth centuries of the Hijra witnessed intensive scholarly effort across various fields of knowledge, an effort felt particularly in linguistic and rhetorical studies. Arab intellectual activity, from the appearance of al-Khalil's dictionary *Kitab al-ʿAyn* (d. 175 AH) and Sibawayh's *al-Kitab* (d. 180 AH), through to the rhetorical scholarship of ʿAbd al-Qahir al-Jurjani (d. 471 AH), was consistently aimed at delimiting Arabic concepts and charting their boundaries and scope. The earliest inquiries that occupied these scholars addressed speech, the single word, and the sentence — the very concepts foundational to the present syntactic study, which had already engaged the attention of grammarians and linguists before us.² Investigation of the word (*kalima*) in turn gave rise to theories worthy of study concerning the sentence and the coherence of its parts. This leads us to ask: how is the verbal sentence constructed, and what is its relationship to syntactic composition?

I. Defining the Sentence

A precise, deliberate definition of the sentence, considered in and for itself, has not received extensive attention from earlier scholars, nor have discussions of plurality and collectivity — as opposed to the singular — moved beyond this general concern. The Qur'an states: {And those who

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²See: al-Tarkib ("Syntactic Composition"), al-Munsif ʿAshur (Algiers: Diwan al-Matbuʿat al-Jamiʿiyya, 1982), 11.

disbelieve say, "Why was the Qur'an not sent down to him all at once?"³ that is, had it been revealed in a single instance rather than piecemeal, as were the Torah and the Gospel.⁴ This is close to the sense in which al-Fayruzabadi understood the term, considering it to denote "the gathering of things after their dispersal, that is, a collectivity (jama'a) comprising the whole of anything."⁵

1. The Sentence in Lexical Terms

Lisan al-'Arab states: "The singular of jumal is jumla; al-jumla is the collectivity of a thing, the gathering together of what had been dispersed (ajmala al-shay'a jama'ahu 'an tafriqihi); one says ajmala lahu al-hisab, meaning he cast up the account for him as a total, that is, he consolidated it."⁶ Taj al-'Arus offers a similar explanation: "Ajmala al-shay' means he gathered it after its dispersal; ajmala al-hisab wa-l-kalam means he reduced the account or the speech to a summary before elaborating it point by point and clarifying it. Al-jumla, vocalized with damma, denotes the totality of anything — as though it had been cut off from a larger bundle (jumlat al-habl), because it forms a substantial, cohesive portion of it."⁷ It is from this sense that any undivided collectivity came to be called a jumla, a meaning also reflected in the verse cited above, {Why was the Qur'an not sent down to him all at once} (Qur'an 25:32), that is, gathered together and not dispersed.

2. The Sentence as a Technical Term

In its broadest technical sense, the term jumla ("sentence") denotes the existence of a predicative relation ('alaqa isnadiyya) between two words, in the sense that one is predicated of the other, or that there exists a relation between two nouns, or between a noun and a verb — that is, "the mental operation that links the musnad (predicate) to the musnad ilayh (that of which it is predicated)."⁸ The concept of the sentence will be developed at greater length in the sections that follow.

II. The Sentence in Arabic Linguistic Scholarship

Although Sibawayh's al-Kitab is among the most important sources of Arabic linguistic scholarship, the term jumla does not occur there in its now-established sense; rather, it was used to denote a summary or synopsis of an utterance or of speech, as in his statement: "this is the jumla ('summation') of the entire matter of inflection (i'rab), inasmuch as it consists wholly of the nominative, the accusative, the genitive, and the jussive."⁹ Consequently, no single precise definition of the sentence can be extracted from his usage: "if we trace the contexts in which Sibawayh used kalam in the sense of jumla, we find that we cannot derive from them a precise definition of the sentence";¹⁰ rather, the jumla in his work occurs as synonymous with the kalam he was in the habit of using, in the sense of utterance, prose, and language generally — and jumla as well.¹¹

For Sibawayh, then, the jumla was simply a part of kalam, and some early linguists did not clearly distinguish between the two terms. The plural jumal occurs in Kitab al-'Ayn, where al-Khalil states: "This book contains the jumal ('totalities') of inflection, since the whole of grammar consists of the nominative, the accusative, the genitive, and the jussive; we have composed this book and gathered in it the jumal of the nominative, the accusative, the genitive and the jussive, together with the jumal of alifs, lams, ha's, ta's, and waws, and whatever else derives by way of the alif."¹² Al-Khalil thus offered no definition of the jumla as such but rather associated it with inflection (i'rab) and its related terminology. It appears that al-Farra' (d. 207 AH) was the first to employ the term jumla in a proto-

³Qur'an, Surat al-Furqan 25:32.

⁴See Tafsir al-Tabari, Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, n.d.), 19:265; and Tafsir al-Qurtubi, 13:29.

⁵Al-Qamus al-Muhit, al-Fayruzabadi, ed. Muhammad Na'im al-'Arqasusi (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risala, 2005), s.v. "jml," 6:112.

⁶Lisan al-'Arab, Ibn Manzur, ed. Yusuf al-Khayyat (Beirut: Dar al-Jil, 1998), 11.

⁷Taj al-'Arus min Jawahir al-Qamus, Muhammad Murtada al-Zabidi, 1st ed. (Beirut: Dar Maktabat al-Hayat, n.d.), 364.

⁸Al-Nahw al-'Arabi: Naqd wa-Tawjih, Mahdi al-Makhzumi, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Ra'id al-'Arabi, 1986), 35.

⁹Al-Kitab, Sibawayh, 3:193.

¹⁰Madkhal ila Dirasat al-Jumla al-'Arabiyya, Mahmud Ahmad Nahla (Beirut: Dar al-Nahda al-'Arabiyya, 1988), 17.

¹¹Ibid., 17.

¹²Al-Jumal fi al-Nahw, 'Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani, ed. 'Abd al-Ghani 'Abd Allah, 1st ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, n.d.), 33.

technical sense, using it three times in his *Ma'ani al-Qur'an*;¹³ al-Mubarrad (d. 285 AH) subsequently used the term with greater precision, stating: "The subject (*fa'il*) takes the nominative because it stands as itself, and the topic (*mubtada'*) is a jumla upon which one may properly pause, and through which benefit (*fa'ida*) is conveyed to the addressee."¹⁴

From this statement we may infer that, for al-Mubarrad, the jumla is that which permits a pause, or the possibility of a break in speech, on condition that it conveys some benefit. Al-Mubarrad also discussed certain constituents of the jumla and its basic content, such as the verb, the subject, the topic and the comment, stating: "This is the chapter of the subject, which takes the nominative... the subject takes the nominative because it stands as itself, and the verb together with the subject form a jumla upon which one may pause and through which benefit is conveyed to the addressee; the subject and the verb thus occupy the position of the topic and the comment."¹⁵

With the advent of the fourth century AH, the term jumla entered a phase of maturity and conceptual innovation — a phase extending from the fourth century to the end of the sixth, during which the concept of the sentence became firmly established, owing significantly to the contributions of Ibn al-Sarraj, Ibn Jinni, 'Abd al-Qahir [al-Jurjani], al-Zamakhshari, and Ibn Mada'.

Ibn Jinni (d. 392 AH) succeeded in deriving, from Sibawayh's discussion of kalam, a concept specific to the jumla, stating: "Sibawayh said: know that *qultu* ('I said') occurs in the speech of the Arabs solely to introduce reported speech; and what follows a *qawl* ('a saying') is necessarily kalam and not *qawl* itself — thus he distinguished between kalam and *qawl*, as you see... And it became clear to me from this that kalam consists of self-sufficient jumal, independent of and dispensing with anything beyond themselves."¹⁶ Because the jumla was synonymous with kalam for early linguists, we may distinguish two broad orientations: the first holds that kalam is synonymous with jumla — represented by Ibn Jinni, who states, "as for kalam, it is any self-sufficient utterance, and I have derived from it, as the fruit of its meaning, the jumla";¹⁷ the second, represented by al-Astarabadi, distinguishes between jumla and kalam, considering kalam to be that which conveys complete meaning: "Kalam is that which comprises two words joined by predication, which is achieved only in the case of two nouns, or of a verb and a noun; whereas the jumla may or may not convey complete meaning, as in the case of a relative clause or a conditional clause."¹⁸

Inquiry into the concept of the jumla among Arab grammarians and linguists thus proceeded along clear lines: some held that jumla and kalam are distinct, while others treated any discussion of kalam as, in effect, a discussion of the jumla; nonetheless, all concurred that the jumla is a predicative construction (*tarkib isnadi*) that performs its function whether it occurs independently or is embedded within a larger predicative construction.

Al-Massadi holds that completeness of construction and completeness of meaning are together the defining features of the jumla, giving priority to the whole over its constituent parts — a position closely paralleling Bloomfield's definition, inasmuch as he considers the jumla to be "an independent linguistic form that does not enter, by way of any grammatical construction, into a larger linguistic form."¹⁹ Mahdi al-Makhzumi, by contrast, gave priority to predication (*isnad*) in his definition of the

¹³In his commentary on the verse "Had he not made clear to you those who do evil, that He would requite them?" al-Farra' states: "kam here occupies the position of accusative, since nothing else can occupy that position," and likewise in speech (*kalam*) one may say "awa lam yubayyin laka man ya' malu khayran yujza bihi," so that the jumla of kalam here carries the sense of *raf'* (nominative)... See *Ma'ani al-Qur'an*, al-Farra' (Beirut: Dar 'Alam al-Kutub, 1983), 2:195, 2:333, 2:387; and al-Tarkib al-Nahwi, Farouk Manhi, 279.

¹⁴Al-Mubarrad used the term kalam alongside the term jumla, though his use of jumla is more frequent; for him the two are synonymous. See al-Muqtadab, al-Mubarrad, ed. Muhammad 'Abd al-Khalik 'Udayma (Cairo: n.p., n.d.), 1:87.

¹⁵Al-Muqtadab, 88.

¹⁶Al-Khasa'is, Ibn Jinni, 1:4.

¹⁷See al-Khasa'is, Ibn Jinni, 1:17. Ibn Jinni is counted among the first scholars to discuss the jumla and to devote dedicated treatment to it in his works; he was the first to concern himself with the construction of the sentence and to describe it in terms of *tarkib* (composition). 'Abd al-Qahir [al-Jurjani] later built upon what Ibn Jinni had begun, foregrounding the constructional meanings of syntax through the new terminology he devised, such as *nazm* ("ordering") and *ta'liq* ("connection"). See *Dala'il al-I'jaz*, 'Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani, introduction.

¹⁸See *Sharh al-Kafiya*, al-Astarabadi, 1:8.

¹⁹*Fiqh al-Lughah wa-'Ulum al-Lughah*, Muhammad Sulayman Yaqut, 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'rifa al-Jami'iyya, 1991), 24.

jumla, stating: "the jumla rests fundamentally upon a predicative relation that conveys a general idea,"²⁰ predication being understood as "a mental operation that functions to link the musnad to the musnad ilayh."²¹ Al-Makhzumi also attended to the semantic dimension, linking the concept of the jumla to meaning when he described it as "the minimal verbal form that encapsulates within itself a complete idea, issuing from the speaker's own mind so as to reach an anticipated addressee."²² Beyond his reliance on the concept of predication in defining the jumla, al-Makhzumi also underscored the role of context and situation in bringing out and clarifying meaning, holding that the jumla, in his view, exceeds "the basis of expression and the vehicle of mutual understanding, subject as it is to the circumstances of utterance and to the relationship between speaker and addressee."²³

Context thus plays a considerable role in the process of communication, such that the jumla itself cannot be considered meaningful unless it fulfills the purpose of conveying benefit. In his discussion of context, al-Makhzumi followed the conclusions reached by Arab grammarians when they observed those external elements that contribute to the construction of the jumla, despite not having used this particular term themselves; they concluded that "kalam is composed of purely linguistic elements together with other elements drawn from the external world, which we see or hear and which come to function as though they were themselves parts of the fabric of language, taking the place of the purely linguistic elements composed of words."²⁴ The surrounding context thus plays a considerable role in the construction of the jumla and in determining its function, a point already anticipated by al-Jurjani when he observed that "words derive their merit from their aptness in relation to the meaning of the word that follows them."²⁵

‘Abd al-Rahman Ayyub, for his part, distinguishes between the jumla and kalam, considering "kalam, in this sense, to be broader than the jumla" — a position close to that of modern linguists; these latter, however, have gone on to distinguish between the jumla considered as an actual, realized utterance and the jumla considered as an abstract model, constructed by analogy from a number of actual sentences, the model in question being (noun-as-subject + noun-as-predicate), which does not by itself convey linguistic benefit in the way an actual utterance such as "The diligent student" does — the latter being merely an application of that abstract model.²⁶

It would appear that the term jumla has come to prevail over the term kalam in contemporary linguistic scholarship; from this we may conclude that kalam denotes actual, realized linguistic activity — language being viewed as a system, such that kalam is the application, by way of sound, of a mental image — whereas the jumla is a minimal unit of kalam, or the smallest unit of a meaningful utterance upon which one may properly pause. It is perhaps this very function of pausing that distinguishes between sentences; for this reason, the study of syntax is not concerned with sound as such, nor with the isolated word and the morphological changes it may undergo, but rather with the word as it combines with others to form a meaningful sentence. We may thus conclude by regarding the jumla as a set of mutually cohesive units whose interrelation signals a determinate meaning.

III. The Sentence in Western Linguistic Scholarship

Western scholarship has produced an enormous range of definitions and conceptions of the term "sentence," some closely convergent and others sharply divergent and contradictory — a point confirmed by Robert de Beaugrande, who observes: "studies of linguistic structure have relied, almost without exception, since their inception in antiquity, upon the concept of the sentence to the

²⁰Al-Nahw al-‘Arabi: Naqd wa-Tawjih, Mahdi al-Makhzumi, 53.

²¹Ibid., 31.

²²Ibid., 255.

²³Ibid., 95.

²⁴Nazariyyat al-Nahw al-‘Arabi fi Daw’ Manahij al-Nazar al-Lughawi al-Hadith, Nihad al-Musa, 2nd ed. (Amman: Dar al-Bashir, 1987), 89.

²⁵Dala’ il al-I’jaz, ‘Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani, ed. Muhammad Rashid Rida, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Ma’rifa, 1998), 38.

²⁶Dirasat Naqdiyya fi al-Nahw al-‘Arabi, ‘Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Ayyub (Kuwait: Mu’assasat al-Sabah, n.d.), 125.

exclusion of any other; and it is troubling that this fundamental construct remains, even in our own time, shrouded in ambiguity, with widely varying definitions."²⁷ Perhaps the most widely cited definition in Arabic scholarship is that of Dionysius Thrax (1st century BCE), who held the sentence to be "an arrangement of words conveying a complete thought."²⁸

It is notable that Dionysius Thrax's definition combines two of the conditions constitutive of the sentence — form and content. As is commonly observed, although the modern linguistic tradition is generally traced to Ferdinand de Saussure, the term "sentence" is conspicuously absent from his lectures.

Elsewhere, Joseph Vendryes offers a conception of the sentence, stating: "the sentence may be defined as the form through which the verbal image is expressed and which is apprehended by means of sounds; the sentence, as verbal image, is the fundamental element of speech."²⁹ Vendryes thus focused on the form of the sentence and its phonetic character while also attending to the function it performs. Leonard Bloomfield, among those who offered a more scientifically rigorous definition of the sentence, stated: "every sentence is an independent linguistic form, not included, by virtue of any grammatical construction, in any larger linguistic form."³⁰ Bloomfield thus reinforces the notion of the syntactic independence of the sentence, though he neglects its semantic dimension.

Among Western linguists who regarded the sentence as an abstract entity bearing no relation to context, we find Palmer, who affirms this position in stating that "the sentence is, in its essence, a grammatical unit."³¹ On this view, the sentence is defined through its internal structure, independently of context. Leymann, for his part, defined the sentence as "a sequence of selected grammatical elements, combined into a unit according to mutually agreed patterns of ordering and conveying meaning";³² accordingly, the internal constituents of the sentence lie in the coherence of its elements together with the necessity of their proper ordering, such that any deviation from this system disrupts meaning.

André Martinet, representing the functionalist school, defines the sentence as "the utterance in which all elements are connected to a single predicate, or to several predicates joined to the first,"³³ meaning that the sentence is formed from a set of independent elements related to a single predicate, or to several predicates, by means of conjunctions, exceptive particles, or other connective devices. Here a divergence emerges between Arabic scholarship, which regards the musnad and musnad ilayh as an indivisible unit, neither dispensable in relation to the other, and Martinet, who treats the predicate as the nucleus of the sentence's construction while dispensing with the subject of predication altogether; it appears that Ibrahim Anis was influenced by Martinet's conception when he likewise dispensed with the musnad ilayh.

The work of Noam Chomsky is considered to have brought about a radical shift in the trajectory of descriptive linguistics, directing scientific inquiry toward a cognitivist orientation that stood in intellectual opposition to what Saussure had proposed — representing, in effect, "a genuine revolution that undermined the very foundations upon which modern linguistics had been built."³⁴ This is because Chomsky moved beyond a concern with the sentence as such toward uncovering its internal structure, distinguishing between its deep and surface structures; in his theory, the sentence

²⁷Text, Discourse, and Process [al-Nass wa-l-Khitab wa-l-Tjra'], Robert de Beaugrande, trans. Tammam Hassan, 1st ed. (Cairo: 'Alam al-Kutub, 1998), 88.

²⁸Madkhal ila Dirasat al-Jumla al-'Arabiyya, Mahmud Ahmad Nahla, 11.

²⁹Le Langage [al-Lughal], Joseph Vendryes, trans. 'Abd al-Hamid al-Dawakhili and Muhammad al-Qassas (Cairo: Maktabat al-Anjlu al-Misriyya, 1990), 100.

³⁰John Lyons, Linguistique générale: introduction à la linguistique théorique, trans. Françoise Dubois-Charlier and David Robinson (Paris: Larousse, 1970), 133.

³¹Semantics ['Ilm al-Dalala], F. R. Palmer, trans. Majid al-Mashta (Baghdad: n.p., 1995), 46.

³²Nizam al-Irtibat wa-l-Rabt fi Tarkib al-Jumla al-'Arabiyya, Mustafa Hamida, 148.

³³Cited in al-Tarakib al-Nahwiyya wa-Dalalatuhā fi al-Mufaddaliyyat, Mansouri Miloud (unpublished manuscript, Library of the Department of Arabic Language, University of Oran, 2007–2008), 3.

³⁴Al-Nahw al-'Arabi wa-l-Dars al-Hadith, 'Abduh al-Rajihi (Beirut: Dar al-Nahda al-'Arabiyya, 1995), 108.

is "that which is generated by one and the same set of transformational-generative rules."³⁵ From this definition we may extract the salient feature that Chomsky sought to foreground; and beyond his concern with the sentence's two structural levels, he attached great importance to the creative dimension of language and to the speaker's capacity to generate an infinite number of sentences from a finite set of constructions.

IV. A Study of the Diwan Asrar al-Ghurba ("Secrets of Exile")

Asrar al-Ghurba ("Secrets of Exile") is the title of a collection of poems published by the poet Mohamed Mustapha El-Ghomari in 1978. It comprises thirty-two poems, among them "Munajat" ("Invocation"), "Ma'wak fi al-Ghab" ("Your Refuge in the Forest"), "Ana Majnun ya Layla" ("I Am Mad, O Layla"), "Asrar al-Ghurba" ("Secrets of Exile"), and "Atun" ("Furnace"), among others — poems that embody the various intellectual and expressive values the poet drew upon to give voice to the concerns preoccupying his society.

The intellectual value at the heart of the collection Asrar al-Ghurba centers principally on Islam: the poet's verses convey the humane message of Islam in all its dimensions and extensions, addressing both the glories of its past and the tribulations of its present, while also painting scenes concerned with its future and illustrating how the deviations to which this religion has been subjected might be overcome. His engagement with all these concerns stems, inevitably, from his religious commitment, and the vocabulary and phrasing of his poems are, for the most part, drawn from the Holy Qur'an. He titles several of his poems after the opening words of particular Qur'anic surahs, as in the case of the poem "Bara'a" ("Repentance"), which includes the following lines:

*They disbelieved in the miracle of the ages,
By the Sower who reaps a nation from arid rocks,
By the Messengers...
The Storms...
The Scatterers...*³⁶

We likewise find, among his Qur'anic borrowings, other titles such as the poem "Adghath Hulm" ("A Medley of Dreams"), drawn from the words {They said, "[These are] confused dreams, and we are not learned in the interpretation of dreams"}³⁷ and the poem "al-Wa'd al-Haqq" ("The True Promise"), drawn from the words {And the true promise has drawn near}.³⁸ Islamic military history likewise finds a place in El-Ghomari's poetry: he sings of the Battle of Badr, saying:

*Green are the shades
On the nights of ardor, they gave them life
And they gave life amid the two parties
On the path of Badr, I beheld them*³⁹

At other times he sings of the Battles of al-Qadisiyya and al-Yarmuk, saying of al-Qadisiyya:

*For al-Qadisiyya the drums were beaten,
And the lesser faces recoiled in defeat*⁴⁰

And he says of the Battle of al-Yarmuk:

³⁵Qawa'id Tahwiliyya lil-Lugha al-'Arabiyya, Muhammad 'Ali al-Khuli (Riyadh: Dar al-Marikh, 1981), 31.

³⁶Maqati' min Diwan al-Rafd, Mohamed Mustapha El-Ghomari (Algiers: Al-Mu'assasa al-Wataniyya lil-Kitab, 1989), 67.

³⁷Qur'an, Surat Yusuf 12:44.

³⁸Qur'an, Surat al-Anbiya' 21:97.

³⁹"Qira'a fi Ayat al-Sayf," in Maqati' min Diwan al-Rafd, Mohamed Mustapha El-Ghomari, 60.

⁴⁰From the poem "'Urs fi Ma'tam al-Hujaj," Mohamed Mustapha El-Ghomari, 43.

The helms grew bright across our expanses,

*News came of al-Yarmuk, as once from Badr*⁴¹

Woman, too, finds a place in El-Ghomari's poetry: he calls upon her to embrace piety and noble virtue, saying:

O woman, be a Fatima,

*Chaste, abstaining from immorality*⁴²

From these lines it is evident that the poet employs poetic symbols and seeks to project his own persona onto his subject matter; he says one thing while alluding to another, such that the text becomes a sign built upon a constellation of expressions through which the reader arrives at the meaning the poet intends to convey.

A. Verbal Structures in the Diwan

We have inventoried the following verbal structures occurring in the corpus under study. It may be observed that the verbal structures in the poems occur in a variety of syntactic configurations, which may be analyzed as follows:

a. The Verbal Sentence with an Intransitive Verb

Statistical distribution: the verbal sentence with an intransitive verb account for 27 sentences in total. Of these, the subject (fa'il) is overt in 18 instances — realized as an overt noun in 3 cases and as an overt pronoun in 15 — and covert (mustatir) in 9 instances. The verb itself is realized in the present tense (mudari') in 21 instances and in the past tense (madi) in 7.

Arabic Verbal Expression	Syntactic Pattern
yarwī ("he narrates")	Verb + implied subject
yakhtaṣīru al-madā ("curtails the horizon")	Verb + implied subject + object
taḍummu raw'atahu al-ḥudūd ("the borders embrace its splendor")	Verb + fronted object + genitive annex + delayed subject
yarūḥu ("he departs")	Verb + implied subject
yaskuru... al-darb ("the path grows intoxicated")	Verb + subject
ta' shaquhu al-wurūd ("the roses adore him")	Verb + object (pronoun) + subject
ta' nū al-ṣukhūr ("the rocks bow down")	Verb + subject
yaḥtariqu al-ḥadīd ("the iron burns")	Verb + subject
mā ikhḍalla al-wujūd ("existence was never moistened")	Negation + verb + subject

⁴¹From the poem "Hadith al-Shams wa-l-Dhakira," Mohamed Mustapha El-Ghomari, 11.

⁴²From the poem "Qira'a fi Ayat al-Sayf," 110.

Arabic Verbal Expression	Syntactic Pattern
yamtaddu ("it extends")	Verb + implied subject (understood: "love")
a-namlīku nārahu? ("do we possess its fire?")	Verb + implied subject + object + genitive annex
ḥuṭṭimat al-sudūd ("the dams were shattered")	Verb + deputy subject (passive)
intashala fī al-ṣaḥrā' wajh ("a face was rescued in the desert")	Verb + prepositional phrase + subject
sharaqat binā al-āḥāt ("the sighs choked us")	Verb + prepositional phrase + subject
ujḥiḍat al-ru'ūd ("the thunders were aborted")	Verb + deputy subject (passive)
arnū ("I gaze")	Verb + implied subject
tamḍughunī al-wujūh ("the faces chew upon me")	Verb + fronted object + subject
yarnū masjid ("a mosque gazes")	Verb + subject
aḍummuhā wardan ("I gather her, a rose")	Verb + implied subject + object (pronoun) + accusative of specification
lā aḥīdu ("I do not swerve")	Negation + verb + subject
aqūlu ("I say")	Verb + implied subject ("I")
yusāfiru ("he travels")	Verb + implied subject
ta'ūdu ("she returns")	Verb + implied subject
tukhāṣiruhu al-marāyā ("the mirrors flank him")	Verb + fronted object (pronoun) + subject
tukhāmīruhu al-nuhūd ("the breasts intoxicate him")	Verb + fronted object (pronoun) + subject
quṭi' al-warīd ("the vein was severed")	Verb + deputy subject (passive)

These sentences continue on the pattern (verb–subject) at the level of predicative structure, with certain complements sometimes added to the pair:

Arabic Verbal Expression	Syntactic Pattern
talidhdhu lakum ("it delights you")	Verb + implied subject + prepositional phrase

Arabic Verbal Expression	Syntactic Pattern
takhḍarru al-wurūd ("the roses turn green")	Verb + subject
tatanāfakhūn ("you puff yourselves up")	Verb + subject (bound pronoun)
taḥsabūn ("you suppose")	Verb + subject (bound pronoun)
bihim sa-tanṭaliqu al-ru'ūd ("through them the thunders shall burst forth")	Fronted prepositional phrase + verb + subject
ghurridat al-wurūd ("the roses sang")	Verb + subject
astāfu 'iṭrahum ("I draw in their fragrance")	Verb + implied subject + fronted object + genitive annex
fa-tasfaḥunī al-mawājid ("passions pour themselves over me")	Verb + fronted object + subject
turaffu ajniḥatī ("my wings quiver")	Verb + subject + genitive annex
yā qudsu... sa-astazidu ("O Jerusalem... I shall ask for more")	Vocative + prepositional phrase + verb + implied subject
ahwā al-wujūd ("I love existence")	Verb + implied subject + object
sakirat ("she grew intoxicated")	Verb + subject (bound pronoun)
ṣayyarnā jiyādan: tabtanī / taghzū / tarūd ("turned us into steeds: they build / raid / roam")	Causative verb + implied subject + first object (pronoun) + second object; subordinate verbs (tabtanī, taghzū, tarūd)
yarnū maṣjidan (yartāduhu al-alam) ("a mosque gazes, [that pain frequents]")	Verb + subject (pronoun) + delayed subject
tuḥāṣirunā al-wu'ūd ("the promises besiege us")	Verb + subject (bound pronoun) + subject
iḥṭilī ("pour down [imperative]")	Verb + subject
yuljimuhu al-wa'id ("the threat bridles him")	Verb + subject (pronoun) + subject
tuqāmu lahā al-sudūd ("dams are raised for it")	Verb + prepositional phrase + delayed subject
lā nithāla fī ḍama' al-madā ("no equal in the thirst of the horizon")	Negation particle + verb + implied subject + prepositional phrase
tughrīhā bi-ḥasnā'ī ("it tempts her with my beauty")	Verb + implied subject (pronoun) + object

Arabic Verbal Expression	Syntactic Pattern
turfaḍuhā al-kinānātu ("the quiver rejects it")	Verb + fronted object (pronoun) + subject
yuzawwjuhā lakum sharrah ("its evil weds it to you")	Verb + fronted object (pronoun) + prepositional phrase + delayed subject

b. The Verbal Sentence with a Transitive Verb

Statistical distribution: the verb is realized in the present tense in 34 instances and in the past tense in 2. The subject is realized as an overt noun in 19 instances, as an overt pronoun in 1, as a covert pronoun in 11, and as a verbal-noun equivalent (masdar mu'awwal) in none. The object is stated explicitly in 28 instances and elided in 7; where the object is a single word, it is realized as an overt noun in 8 instances and as a pronoun in 20, with one further instance functioning as the complement of a verb of saying (maqul al-qawl).

Pattern One: A Verb Transitive to a Single Object — Verb + Subject + Object

A careful reading of the poem shows that the object regularly appears as an overt noun, while the subject is often a covert pronoun, as in the following lines: a-namlīku nārahu? ("do we possess its fire?"); yarhaqu khuṭwahu ("it burdens his stride"); yarfūḍu qātilu al-alam ("the slayer of pain refuses"); astāfu 'iṭrahum ("I draw in their fragrance"); ahwā al-wujūd ("I love existence").⁴³

Pattern Two: Verb + Subject + Overt Pronominal Object

This configuration, sanctioned by Arabic syntax, does not occur in the poet's corpus; the object invariably precedes the subject and remains bound closely to the verb.

Pattern Three: Verb + Subject + Object as a Relative Noun

The poem contains only a single instance of this pattern, occurring in an imperative (talabiyya) sentence, in the poet's words:⁴⁴

I love existence, though it be intoxicated,

For I do not ask what existence is

In addition to this pattern, the poet employs a further construction: Verb + Subject + Object as the Complement of Saying (maqul al-qawl), as in his line: wa-aqūlu: yā nāru ihṭilī ("and I say: O fire, pour down"), where the reported speech occupies the syntactic position of a direct object.

Pattern Four: Verb + Subject + First Object + Second Object

The poet employs two instances of this pattern:

al-ḥubbu ṣayyaranā jiyādan ("love has turned us into steeds") — first object: pronoun; second object: overt noun ("steeds").

taḥṣabūna al-arḍa fī yadikum tamīd ("you suppose the earth to sway within your grasp") — first object: "the earth"; second object: "to sway."

c. The Verb Transitive by Means of a Preposition

⁴³See al-Bunya al-Tarkibiyya lil-Hadath al-Lisani, Ben Aissa Abdelhalim, 107.

⁴⁴Diwan Asrar al-Ghurba, Mohamed Mustapha El-Ghomari, 163.

A verb may be rendered transitive through one of the following prepositions: *bi-*, *li-*, *‘alā*, *ilā*, *‘an*, *fī*, *min*; it thereby reaches its object indirectly, as in the sentence "I passed by Zayd" (*marartu bi-Zaydin*). Here Zayd takes the genitive case because the sentence began with the verb rather than with a noun to be predicated upon; had the utterance instead begun with the noun, the object would have been assigned the accusative directly, as though one had said "I passed Zayd" (*marartu Zaydan*), the difference being that the verb here reaches its object only by means of the connecting preposition. This construction occurs in the poem according to the following patterns:

Pattern One: Verb + Subject + Object — the object appears as a prepositional phrase in the form of an active participle, given that the active participle operates syntactically like its corresponding verb, as in the poet's line: *yā shāribīna min al-barā’a* ("O you who drink of innocence"); reformulating the participle as a finite verb yields *shariba min al-barā’a* ("he drank of innocence"), understood as *shariba al-barā’a* ("he drank innocence").

Pattern Two: Verb + Subject + *li-* + Object (Pronoun) — as in his line: *ta’ nū lahu al-ṣukhūr* ("the rocks submit to him").

Pattern Three: Verb + Implied Subject + Prepositional Phrase — as in his line: *īmānun yahīmu shalālun ‘alā ḥanāyāhu* ("a faith that wanders, a cascade upon its folds").

Pattern Four: Verb + Prepositional Phrase + Subject — as in his line: *sharaqat binā al-āhāt* ("the sighs choked us").

Pattern Five: Prepositional Phrase + Verb + Subject — as in his line: *fī jurḥihi intafaḍat ‘uhūd* ("in his wound, covenants shuddered").

Pattern Six: Bound Pronoun Governed by a Preposition + Verb + Subject — as evident in his line: *bihim sa-tanṭaliqu al-ru’ūd* ("through them the thunders shall burst forth").

Conclusion

The study of the syntactic structure of a given corpus bears directly on the levels of language — phonological, morphological, and semantic — as well as on their lexical realization. Among the findings recorded in this study, the following may be noted:

Verbal sentences predominate throughout the collection, even within nominal sentences, indicating a correspondence between its vocabulary and the theme under treatment.

The [syntactic] structure is not a domain of random convergence among a set of constructions but rather a well-balanced system, in which context plays a considerable role in bringing out and clarifying meaning. While the achievement of communicative benefit (*ifada*) is generally required of *kalam*, it constitutes a condition from which the sentence itself may, in certain instances, be exempt — a fact borne out by the present *diwan*.

The poet's reliance on the vocabulary and lexicon of the Holy Qur'an attests to his commitment to Islam and to his Arab identity.

The poet demonstrates a thorough command of the rules of Arabic grammar, evident in his skillful deployment of fronting and postponement, ellipsis, and grammatical shift (*iltifat*) — techniques in which he excels admirably.

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